



# THE FAST & THE FURRY

## Natalie Decker's Love for Animals

BY JARED TURNER

**N**atalie Decker couldn't be more thankful for the opportunity to pursue her dreams as a NASCAR driver. Competing for a second season in the NASCAR Gander RV & Outdoors Truck Series, Decker is able to travel the country and see lots of great people and places while participating in a sport she truly loves. Being at the track and out on the road is especially enjoyable thanks to some furry companions she brings along.

Those companions are a mixed greyhound dog named Cash, an aging cat appropriately named NASCAR, and two dogs – a black-and-brown beagle named Hoosier (after the tire brand) and a white beagle named Camber (after the tilt of a race car wheel).

Cash lives with Decker and her boyfriend in Charlotte, North Carolina, while the other pets reside with her parents at their more pet-friendly estate in Eagle River, Wisconsin. Decker adores all of the animals as if they were her own, however. In fact, the three animals that don't live with Decker travel with her parents in their motor home to all of her races and are reunited with Cash on weekends at the track.

"They're so special, and my mom is such a dog person," Decker said. "I think one of her dreams is to have a beagle farm and have just a bunch of beagles everywhere. My mom loves traveling with them, and it's great because she and my dad will bring

them to all the races and I get to see them every weekend. I swear they know how I do – if it's a bad weekend or a good weekend – from the way they greet me when I come back into the motor home after the race."

Decker's affinity for animals began in childhood.

"I always had a beagle growing up, and when I was really young, we had a Doberman pinscher," she said. "So, there was always more than one dog in the house."

When it came time for Decker and her boyfriend to search for a dog of their own, Cash was the perfect fit. From the moment they laid eyes on this sweet brown-and-white canine at a humane society near their North Carolina home, they knew he was the pet for them.

"When we got there, all the dogs were barking but Cash. I was like, 'Oh my goodness. I need this dog,'" Decker said. "I don't like really 'barky,' loud dogs. I was like, 'He doesn't bark. We need him.' But we were leaving for the Michigan race so we filled out all the paperwork and got approved to adopt the dog, but we had to wait until we came home to get him and pray that he would still be there. He was still there, so it was totally meant to be to adopt him."

For reasons they aren't sure of, Decker and her boyfriend don't typically refer to Cash by his real name.

"We named him Cash, but we call him Monkey," Decker said with a laugh. "I don't know how that all started."

Regardless of what they call him, Decker's dog is pretty big for his age. As of late February, he weighed in at around 40 pounds – heavier than the other three animals who Decker looks forward to being with at the track.

"If he was a human, he would definitely be a basketball player," Decker said of her beloved 1-year-old dog. "He's definitely the biggest and the heaviest and the strongest."

Although Decker spends more time with Cash than her parents' dogs, she holds a special place in her heart for the two beagles she sees at the track. Along with Cash and NASCAR the cat, they make her race weekends just a little more care-free.

"They're kind of stress-relievers, and they're so fun to play with, and they always make me happy," she said. "They're so cute. I mean, they're beagles, so they bark a lot and they're hairy, and I hate dog hair, so I have to have that little (hair) roller with me everywhere ... but I love them so much." //



## A SPONSOR'S DREAM

**LIKE THE ULTIMATE MATCH-**made-in-heaven, Natalie Decker has sponsorship this season from Pet King Brands – a company developing new and innovative pet care products, all designed to be not only beneficial to pets, but safe as well.

She couldn't be any happier to be partnered with a sponsor in which she truly believes.

"I like to say they sponsor Cash and I," Decker said. "It's so cool. We use all of their products, and I've used their products growing up with my dogs at home before we even partnered with them – and that was what was so cool.

"Our dog that stays at home with my grandpa, he's a Lab and he loves swimming. So, we always needed to clean his ears and we were using their ear cleaner, so it's so cool that it has circled back around and we are partnered with them and still use all of their products."

# Head Out on the Highway, Looking for Adventure

When a road trip takes you to a different climate, many pets can suffer from skin and ear conditions such as inflamed, itchy skin, ears or paws. Pet King Brands' veterinarian-recommended **ZYMOX**® products provide the relief your pet needs without antibiotics; and are safe, non-toxic and easy to use. Rely on **ZYMOX** to keep your best friend healthy and comfortable on every adventure.



Available at [www.zymox.com](http://www.zymox.com), online retailers, local pet specialty or veterinary clinics .

