

THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

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THE MIDWEST'S SHORT TRACK AUTO RACING AUTHORITY

July 2016 Vol. 20, No. 3



SLINGER NATIONALS PREVIEW

Inside...



Photo Gallery



Touring Series Action



Racing Nuggets

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Publisher's Note

Racing According to Plan



Dan Plan

I initially had some doubts about writing this column, as it seemed to me that it may come across to some readers as too personal. Eventually, I talked myself into it. I mean, it is my paper and I can write about whatever I want.

The First Win

As parents, we all hope for the success of our children. When your kid does well, you feel good. I've been lucky enough the last 20 years or so to see a number of friends at the tracks get their kids into racing. Watching their reactions to their kids' first win has been a pretty neat deal to see.

We're about 10 years behind schedule on the program to get our kid into racing. It seems that these days, most 17-year-olds are in Late Models, Sprint Cars or on their way to NASCAR. We're just now getting started in a Go Kart. It took my wife 17 years to finally cave in and give the OK. She was afraid her little boy would get hurt. In all honesty, I really didn't fight too hard for all of these years. There are some battles that aren't worth fighting. As the saying goes, happy wife – happy life.

This year the kid is racing Go Karts with the Midwest Karting Association at their home track in Eau Claire, WI. On the third race weekend of the year, the club was a little short staffed. They were nice enough to let me pretend to be a flag man. I've always joked about wanting to be a flag man, and jumped at the opportunity. Plus, I've always wanted to point the

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The Midwest

RACING

Connection

July 2016

Vol. 20, No. 3

P.O. Box 22111

St. Paul MN, 55122

651-451-4036

info@theracingconnection.com

www.theracingconnection.com

Publisher

Dan Plan

Contributing Writers

Shane Carlson

Dale P. Danielski

Jacklyn Daniels-Nuttleman

Dean Reller

Jason Searcy

Charlie Spry

Photographers

Jim Ambruoso (815-623-3200)

Jeff Blaser (715-498-7544)

Martin DeFries (651-346-1199)

TJ Harron (608-301-0993)

Doug Hornickel (920-563-0993)

Tom Loos (715-370-7895)

Mark Melchiori (414-463-0131)

Bruce Nuttleman (612-860-6622)

Vince Peterson (612-419-6372)

Mary Schill/Forte Design (608-792-1317)

Jerry Zimmer (715-792-2174)

The Midwest Racing Connection is published six times during the summer racing season by

The Plan Company, Inc.

All material is copyrighted 2016 and may not be reprinted without permission. Subscriptions are \$20 for six issues. Call 651-451-4036.

Cover photos by: Doug Hornickel, Holzhausen Family Collection, Bruce Nuttleman and Vince Peterson



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Publishers note from page 3

black flag at my buddy Bob Synder and I finally had a chance to do it.

Now as the day went on, I found myself in an awkward, yet exciting position. My kid took the lead about half-way through the second race of the day. Man, that last half of the race seemed like an eternity. I must admit it was pretty cool hearing Mandy in the scoring tower come across on the radio and say, "Next time around is the white flag for your boy."

As I was standing in the flag stand getting ready to wave the checkers, I almost felt like Ned Jarrett calling Dale Jarrett across the line for his first Daytona 500 win. In my mind I was thinking "I know he's got it to the floorboard, he can't do anymore. Take it to the inside, don't let him get to the inside coming around this turn. He's gonna make it!" Sure, it wasn't Daytona and there was no prize money, but the emotion of being a proud parent was the same. As much as I wanted to be the first one at the scales to congratulate him on his first win, having your kid win his first race while you're in the flag stand was truly a special moment.

THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION



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SATURDAY 3-SEP / DELLS RACEWAY PARK
SATURDAY 24-SEP / ELKO SPEEDWAY
SAT/SUN OCT 8-9 / LACROSSE FAIRGROUNDS SPEEDWAY

Friday 8-Jul 7:30PM Hall of Fame Night

Thursday 14-Jul 7:30PM Street Drags

Friday 15-Jul 7:30PM BUCK Night

Friday 22-Jul 7:30PM Triple Crown Round II

Friday 29-Jul 7:30PM Salute to the Workin' Man

Friday 5-Aug 7:30PM Badgerland Challenge / Fan Autograph Night

Friday 12-Aug 7:30PM Back 2 School Give a Way & Kid's Night

Thursday 18-Aug 7:30PM Thursday Night Street Drags

Friday 19-Aug 7:30PM Howie Lettow Classic

Friday 26-Aug 7:30PM Fan and Driver Appreciation

Friday 2-Sep 7:30PM NASCAR Championship Night

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KENSETH AND ELLIOT SET TO HEADLINE SLINGER NATIONALS

Bruce Nuttleman photo



By Dan Margetta

Boasting past champions such as Dick Trickle, Alan Kulwicki, Joe Shear, Butch Miller, Rich Bickle, and Kyle Busch, the SuperSeal Slinger Nationals presented by Miller Lite is one of the most historic and prestigious super late model special events in the nation.

This year's 37th edition of the nationals, set for Tuesday night July 19th at the Slinger Speedway, is shaping up to be one of the most competitive ever headlined by the return of six time Nationals champion and 2003 NASCAR Cup champion Matt Kenseth along with the just announced addition of NASCAR Sprint Cup rookie of the year competitor Chase Elliott who will make his Slinger Nationals debut.

Bruce Nuttleman photo



Once again the SuperSeal Slinger Nationals presented by Miller Lite will feature one of the largest purses available for an asphalt super late model show, paying \$10,000 to the winner of the 200 lap event and \$1,000 to start. Often overlooked is the lap leader bonus money available in addition to the purse which adds to the uniqueness of the event. Coordinated by longtime race fan Dan Casey in a grass roots type campaign, the lap leader bonus consists of donations by fans and sponsors that is separate from the purse. The funds are organized into separate envelopes and are awarded to the driver that leads each specified lap and historically every lap has been sponsored. Last year's Nationals winner, Dennis Prunty, pocketed nearly \$6,000 in lap leader bonus money.

The large payouts have attracted the interest of many top super late model drivers in the country as ARCA Midwest Tour and World Series of Asphalt champion Ty Majeski is expected to compete and Georgia hot shoe Bubba Pollard has verbally committed to make his Slinger debut. Harrison Burton, whose crew chief Chris Wimmer won the 2014 Nationals, has expressed

Bruce Nuttleman photo

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continued from page 6

an interest to compete and 2011 Redbud 300 winner Steve Dorer is set to return to the high banked quarter mile oval. Others expected to compete include seven time IRA Sprint Car champion Bill Balog who will make the transition from dirt to asphalt, Natalie Decker, who has already captured a win at State Park Speedway this season, and Rockford All Star 100 winner Jeff Holtz who opened the season by setting fast time at Slinger.

In addition to Kenseth, former Nationals winners looking to add to their total include four-time winner Lowell Bennett and last year's champion Dennis Prunty. They will be joined by veteran drivers looking for their first Nationals title such as Brad Mueller who came within inches of winning in 2000, Matt Kocourek who finished second in his Nationals debut in 2005, and three-time and defending Slinger track champion Steve Apel. The veterans are joined by a strong rookie contingent that includes Kulwicki Driver Development Program member Alex Prunty and dirt late model standout Mitch McGrath as well as 14-year old Grant Griesbach.

The super late model ranks at the Slinger Speedway have been extremely competitive this season and the fast weekly racers set to be on hand include 2016 feature winners Chris Blawat and Rob Braun as well as Travis Dassow, Brad Keith, Rich Loch, James Swan, and Gary LaMonte. Tim Lampman, Nick Wagner, Duke Long, Mike Egan, and Dave McCardle have all timed into feature events in 2016 as well and plan to stake their claim to the Nationals crown.



Bruce Nuttleman photo

Local Slinger racers such as 2015 Future's race winner Brad Kieth will be on hand to challenge for the title in this years running of the Slinger Nationals

Past winners of the Slinger Nationals include Kyle "Rowdy" Busch in 2011 (below) The four-wide salute to the fans during the 2015 running of the Slinger Nationals



Bruce Nuttleman photo



Bruce Nuttleman photo

Previous Slinger Nationals Champions

- | | |
|------|----------------|
| 1980 | Larry Detjens |
| 1981 | Alan Kulwicki |
| 1982 | Dick Trickle |
| 1983 | Dick Trickle |
| 1984 | Mark Martin |
| 1985 | Dick Trickle |
| 1986 | John Ziegler |
| 1987 | Joe Shear |
| 1988 | Butch Miller |
| 1989 | Dick Trickle |
| 1990 | Joe Shear |
| 1991 | Joe Shear |
| 1992 | Rich Bickle |
| 1993 | Joe Shear |
| 1994 | Matt Kenseth |
| 1995 | Butch Miller |
| 1996 | Rich Bickle |
| 1997 | Lowell Bennett |
| 1998 | Tony Strupp |
| 1999 | Conrad Morgan |
| 2000 | Lowell Bennett |
| 2001 | David Prunty |
| 2002 | Matt Kenseth |
| 2003 | Rich Bickle |
| 2004 | Lowell Bennett |
| 2005 | Nathan Haseleu |
| 2006 | Matt Kenseth |
| 2007 | Lowell Bennett |
| 2008 | Matt Kenseth |
| 2009 | Matt Kenseth |
| 2010 | Lowell Bennett |
| 2011 | Kyle Busch |
| 2012 | Matt Kenseth |
| 2013 | Rich Bickle |
| 2014 | Chris Wimmer |
| 2015 | Dennis Prunty |

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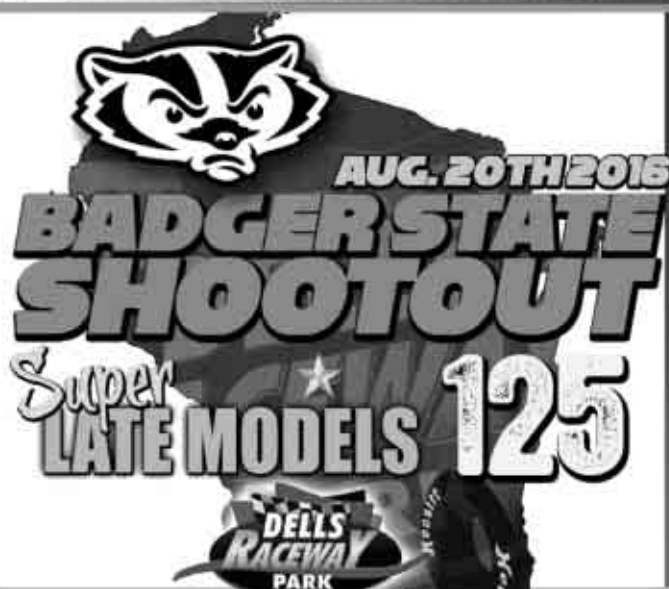
7/3 - Sunday: Afternoon (Noon-5pm) #4
Slide Society Drifting Association – Club Day

7/9 - Walbeck Classic 60 / CWRA
Super Late Model, Sportsman, Outlaws,
American Super Cups

7/16 - Assembly Products Shootout Rd-1 LM
Late Model 50, & Bandits, INEX Legends
Plus: Tomah Thunder Modifieds

7/23 - Mid-Season Championship Night 50
Assembly Products Shootout Rd-1 SLM
Super Late Model, Sportsman, Outlaws, Legends,
CSR Super Cups

7/30 - Historic Auto Attractions Night 50
Late Models, Outlaws, Bandits, INEX Legends



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Classic Corner

In celebration of Pan-O-Prog's 50th anniversary, a vintage racing display has been added to the Race Car Alley event. The cars scheduled for display are the 1970 Mustang, Purple Knight replica owned by Tom Kamish and a 1955 Ford Fairlane built by Skip Pollack.

All "Old Timer" drivers, crews, sponsors, fans & officials are especially encouraged to visit the vintage racing display and share their "back in the day" racing stories.



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Racing Nuggets



Jacklyn Daniels-Nuttleman

If you're like me, you probably went into a bit of a depression a few years ago, when Steve Holzhausen announced he would be retiring from racing. I haven't fully pulled out of the funk that announcement had on me.

Not only is he a phenomenal race car driver, but he's easily one of the funniest and nicest guys you'll ever talk to, particularly while enjoying a beer together. While I miss seeing him deftly pick his way through the field to grab the checkers, the good news is that you can still have a post-race beer with him in the pits, as he's generally found helping his son, Skylar, at races now.

I remember hearing about the throttle sticking in his race car at the Dells several years ago. It was horrifying news, and I probably abused my friendship by calling his cell phone to check on him, but I didn't care. My sources said it was one of the nastiest hits they had ever seen. It was ugly. I had knots in my stomach.

Steve was kind enough to return my call; chatting quite calmly I might add, from the backseat of a vehicle that

his wife was driving, as they were motoring home from the hospital. He was reassuring me that things were going to be fine, but the reality was, they weren't. His left side took a brutal beating, and his foot was crushed. It actually required three different surgeries in an attempt to fix it correctly. It's still not 100%.

Funny how life experiences like that force one to seriously look at the big picture. While Holzhausen's foot is not as good as it was; it is as good as it's going to get, and he can still walk on it. The injury certainly contributed to his decision to pull the pin on his career behind the wheel. He has his health, for the most part, and there is still plenty of fishing to do. Plus, he has a wife who deserves more attention than she has probably received over the past 30-plus years, as he chased his racing dreams.

I stopped out to visit him at his race shop recently. As expected, it was a night full of plenty of great stories and lots of laughs. And as is usually the case, I end up learning something more about my husband, Toby, who used to work on Steve's pit crew for many years. I had no idea that Toby worked 8 days a week on race cars! I'm kidding. He still does.

Everybody knows if you're going to be fast and successful, you need to work on your stuff. Some people, like Holzhausen get an early start on that lesson. His father, Bud, was a racer in his own right, and owned a Ford dealership in Bangor; Coulee Ford. Steve was hands on in the body shop since he was about 10 or 11-years-old.

He reminisced about how he would see guys like Dave Marcis, Everett Foxx, and Fred Beckler at his dad's shop. He would help sort nuts and bolts, just to hang out around the racers. It was only a matter of time before the competitive spirit was fully infused in his blood.

I was curious what race Holzhausen was most proud of in his storied career. Without much hesitation, he said the 1994 ASA race at Anderson Speedway. He qualified 2nd fastest, behind Mike Eddy, pulled to the lead on the first lap, and never gave the position up for 400 circuits.

It's completely understandable why that one would be the race he is most proud of in his career. He beat the likes of Eddy, Scott Hansen, Butch Miller, and Bob Senneker just to name just a few. Twenty-six cars started that race, and Holzhausen lapped all but seven of them. To say the

Hanging With Holzhausen



car was on rails is an understatement.

It wasn't always sunshine and roses for Holzhausen's team. A lot of work went into developing a reputation as a threat to win each race he entered. There was a lot to learn. Fortunately, there were plenty of successful drivers during those early years to try to glean advice from; like Dick Trickle, Tom Reffner, Jimmy Back, Marv Marvzofka, and Larry Detjens.

Not that any of them were forthcoming with everything Holzhausen needed to know. Don't get me wrong, they would help; IF he asked the right questions. Some things never change. It's pretty much the same case yet today with racers.

Holzhausen said he did the best thing any racer can do to get better—raced... A LOT. Back when he was cutting his teeth in racing, it wasn't unusual for guys to run five nights a week at various tracks.

One of those weekly stops was at the track in Wisconsin Dells. It's where he picked up his first ever super late model feature, his first ARTGO win, and it's oddly enough, the place he suffered that devastating accident, which turned out to be the lynch pin to end his driving career. It's almost a testament to Holzhausen's character; he holds onto the good and pushes aside the bad, because to this day, if you ask him, he'll tell you that Dells Raceway Park is still his favorite track.

That first career super late win happened in a car he purchased from Steve Burgess that was built by Dick Trickle.

Like most racers, regardless of the era, Holzhausen's race team was on a tight budget. He and Toby once used tractor weights, mounted on the left side door bars, because they didn't have any lead for their car.

Another time, during a race at the Dells, he bought two new tires for the right side of his machine, and

Racing Nuggets continued on page 19



Going in Circles



Charlie Spry

During the past month we have seen a truly diversified weather pattern, as we have had some nice and sunny days, but also some downright nasty and unpleasant stuff as well. Unfortunately, the rain and heat seem to have been present mostly on race days.

Madison International Speedway played host to round one of the “Badgerland Challenge.” This is a three-race challenge between MIS, Jefferson and Slinger Speedways, with an overall winner named. With temps in the mid-90’s and Thunderstorms looming later in the evening, Gregg and the staff at MIS went ahead with the show, hoping to beat the storms. A nice field of cars showed, with several visitors from the other two tracks taking on the MIS regulars. Gregg recently stated in a drivers’ meeting that, “If we can race, we will race”, and he means it.

The sportsman feature was rushed onto the track, with a really interesting race ensuing. Jefferson regulars Jason Thoma and Bobby Selsing looked strong, with a nice battle going between these two and MIS regulars Ryan Goldade and Robert Hansberry Jr. While Goldade has dominated this division the past couple of years, Hansberry looks very capable in doing his share of the winning, as he set fast time. Thoma was leading with seven laps to go when the caution flew. It was then announced that there was some severe weather on our doorstep, and a glance over my shoulder to the north confirmed a black sky. The races were temporarily suspended at this time in order to give fans time to get to the shelter of their cars before getting pelted with rain. Fans and race teams alike quickly hunkered down for the impending rain, which didn’t come right away. Eventually the rain did come, but not as hard as everyone figured. However, it was enough to make everything too wet to continue racing, so the remaining events will be rescheduled



Mark Melchiori photo

later. Giving the fans time to get to their cars or other shelter was a very good thing to do. Saved a lot of people from getting wet. Very well done. The race was called complete, with Thoma getting the win over Hansberry and Selsing.

The late model feature was shaping up to be a dandy, as the prelims were very exciting. Two drivers here seem to be looking to have outstanding seasons, as veteran Bobby Wilberg is having his hands full with relative newcomer John Beale. Kind of the old gunfighter vs. the new guy in town thing. Both have a lot of talent to showcase. Also took in the first round of the super late model triple crown series here. A great field of super lates were on hand, with Nicole Behar joining the stellar field. Nicole was here to run the ARCA race during the weekend, and also brought a car to run with the super lates. Ty Majeski continues to rule the roost in the super lates here, but Casey Johnson proved to be strong as well. The pair finished one-two, and while Majeski is getting a well deserved shot at some ARCA races, Johnson is another one who deserves a similar shot. Both have proven themselves in any car and any track.

The regular MIS late models were on hand and also had a stellar field. Don Wickstrum made his first start of the year, while a couple of Hawkeye Downs regulars also joined in, as Brody Willett and Zach Less made the trip from the Hawkeye state. Rockford regular Tyler Hromadka also joined in the fun, and another Rockford regular, Wayne Freimund has been coming for the past couple of weeks. It was a night of firsts, as Kevin Knuese won his first feature here in a late model, outdistancing the strong field. The Midwest trucks joined in tonight, with a good count as well. Again, it was a first time winner, as Dave Edwards took his first feature win here. When asked about his past racing wins, Dave stated, “I’ve won street stock features at lake Geneva, and won a sportsman feature at Rockford, as well as finishing a close second in a bracket at the Bahama Brackets there, and have had some good runs in the late model, career best in Big 8 was top fives, and top three in weekly late models.” Really good to see these first time winners. Bob Hansberry Jr. has been on a roll lately, and won the feature for the sportsman division. Some good battles throughout the pack here.

You may have noticed a “for sale” sign on Ryan Goldade’s potent

sportsman car here. Ryan has won many, many features and set fast times, had clean sweeps, etc. for the past couple of years. Why would he sell? “I’d really like to try something different,” stated Ryan. “I’m thinking maybe a truck. They run around and race at a lot of different tracks, and I’d like to do that. I’d really love to go racing in a super late, but we just don’t have the funds for it. I’ve driven a couple of them and it is just unreal, the speeds and the sensations. So much fun. I’d jump at an opportunity to drive one of them.

Ryan started racing back in 2003 when he was eighteen years old, but had experience prior to that, as he noted, “I hot lapped my Dad’s sportsman car at Jefferson since I was about fourteen. I probably had more laps on it than he did,” he laughed.

His current car has been a dominant car quite often, and has a good lineage, as Ryan noted that it was built by Bobby Wilberg in about three days. In addition to advice from Wilberg, he also has help from other places. “I live about three doors down from Casey Johnson, and we talk all the time.”

Last season, Ryan and crew raced both a NASCAR late model and the sportsman car weekly, but no more. “It was very hard, it was just too much to do for all of us. It was with the same crew guys and it was too much to do every week. We are just concentrating on the sportsman car for this year, and we will see where we can go from here.”

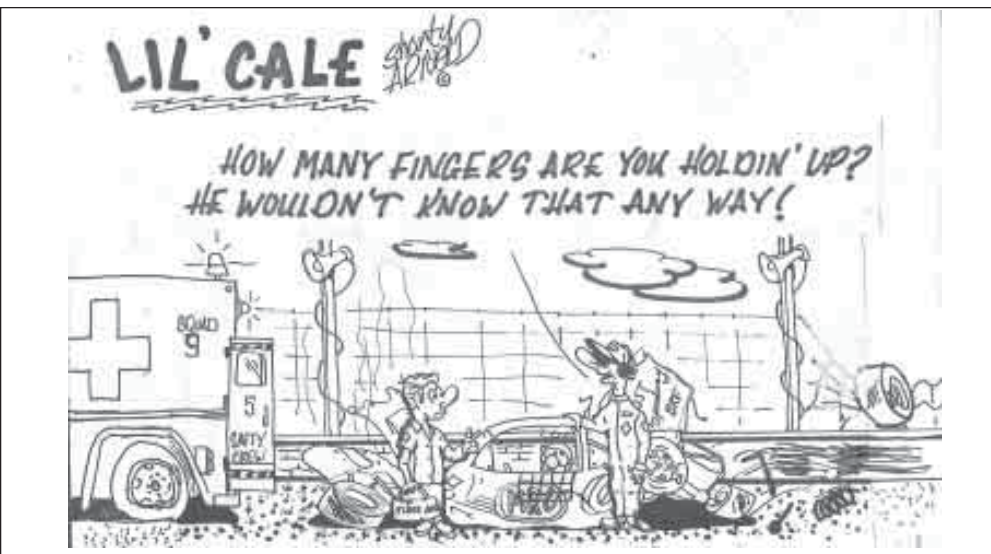
The Big 8 series then visited the famed speedplant the following week. A great field of cars and a packed grandstand were highlights. Jeremy Miller took the lead early, and was quite simply, gone. Michael Bilderback worked his way into second, but couldn’t really chase down Miller in the caution-free event. Casey Johnson did the same to finish third.

The Great Northern Sportsman Series cars were also on hand, everyone looking to track record holder Dave Trute to continue his domination. He did, but had to really work for the win, as Scott Luck and Mark Deporter ran up front for much of the race. Many cars came from quite some distance to compete, including a strong contingent from Minnesota. The Midwest Dash series for four cylinder cars also ran, again with a very strong field of cars from many tracks. I figured that Kyle Stark would be right up near the top, and also Rockford regular Zach

Going In Circles continued on page 23



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Coming in the August issue of
**THE MIDWEST
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USA Nationals Preview, highlights from the
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Charlie Weber photo

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1989	BILLY MOYER	1999	SCOTT BLOOMQUIST	2009	JIMMY MARS
1990	BILLY MOYER	2000	DAVEY JOHNSON	2010	SCOTT BLOOMQUIST
1991	RICK AUKLAND	2001	DALE McDOWELL	2011	JOSH RICHARDS
1992	BILLY MOYER	2002	RICK ECKERT	2012	DARRELL LANIGAN
1992	BILLY MOYER	2003	SCOTT BLOOMQUIST	2013	TIM MCCREADIE
1994	JACK BOGGS	2004	BRIAN BIRKHOFFER	2014	JIMMY OWENS
1995	JACK BOGGS	2005	DALE McDOWELL	2015	JONATHAN DAVENPORT
1996	JIMMY MARS	2006	SCOTT BLOOMQUIST		
1997	RICK AUKLAND	2007	BRIAN BIRKHOFFER		

THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

Photo Gallery



Dustin Doughty (D1) and Randy Luedtke (77) at Spring Lake Speedway
Tom Loos photo



3-wide Sportsman action at Madison
TJ Harron photo



The Power Stocks always put on a good show at Elko
Martin DeFries photo



Justin Berg with a familiar paint scheme on his LaCrosse Sportsmen
Bruce Nuttleman photo



The Roadrunner Summer Series at Rockford Speedway
Jimmy Ambruoso photo



AJ Diemel picked up the win on the opening night of the CLS Dash Series
Vince Peterson photo

THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

Photo Gallery



The famous Chicken Coupe paces the field for the Nabbelfeldt Memorial
Jeff Blaser photo



Paul Niznik during the National Anthem at Spring Lake
Tom Loos photo



Brad Powell leads the Six for Six dash at LaCrosse
Bruce Nuttleman photo



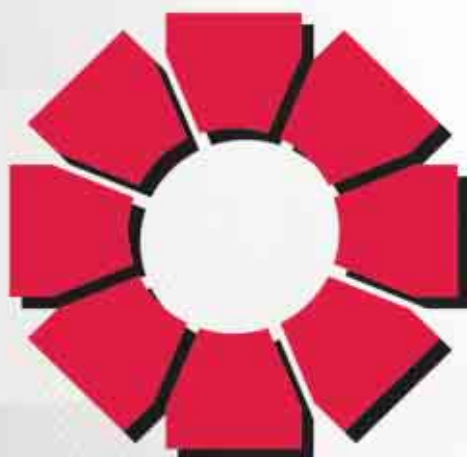
The Rockford pace car gets ready to kick off the nights activities
Jimmy Ambruoso photo



Chris Marek and Jacob Goede at Elko Speedway
Martin DeFries photo



"Marty on the Mic" interviews Matt Leer at Cedar Lake Speedway
Vince Peterson photo



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Dean & Jason Talkin' Racin'



Dean Reller

Some people say that trying to prep a dirt track for racing is a science, others may argue that it's an art form, but as I recently discovered there's a bit of magic involved too. Well, maybe it's not what you were thinking, but I had a chance to hear what it takes to make a great racing surface from Kim Webb, who's billed as "The Dirt Track Magician" of Princeton Speedway.



*Kim Webb "The Dirt Track Magician"
(Dean Reller photo)*

Inside The Magic of Dirt Track Prep

Webb started out in 1990 at the Princeton Speedway with some simple instructions. "You have to be here 20 Friday nights in a row AND here are the keys to the water truck and that was it," said Webb. Of course there's a lot more to it than that, which he quickly found out through trial and error.

"I kept a notebook in the water truck and I wrote down the weather conditions on the days I was hauling water. Then, I started looking at cloud cover and wind and rain and how much it rained the day before."

Besides the weather element, there are a lot of others studies (or science) involved in figuring what it takes to make a great race track. "I've spent a lot of time studying clay from other people's race tracks," noted Webb. "I have a microscope to look at the clay."

During the races Webb, dresses in all white, the safety standard at race tracks from years gone by and stands in the infield watching. However, unlike the fans, he's watching the track, not necessarily the cars that are racing on it. "Moisture and compaction is what I'm focusing on," said Webb. "Billy Joe Meyer drives the grater and he does an excellent job at that," added Webb about his coworker on the track.

After one race night ends, the preparation begins for the following week's races. On this particular night, the track became dry-slick by the end of the races and with rains expected the next day, it was decided to leave the track "sealed". In other words, leave the dry slick track alone, which would allow a heavy rain to run off rather than to soak in.

Webb will monitor the moisture in the track several times a day in the days leading up to a race program.

He employs the use of a not so high tech tool. Something that everyone reading this story probably has a least one of, a #2 four-inch screwdriver.

Looking at piece of clay on the tip of the screwdriver shows how much moisture there is. If you can see your fingerprints in the clay when you squeeze it, the moisture is right. "I pick it in the crust at the top and see how deep it is," explained Webb. Each tenth of an inch matters and the further down you stick the screwdriver, relates directly to how much more water the track is going to need.

Race day watering requirements have to not just focus on how much water to put on the track, but as they say in sports and in this case magic, timing is everything. "We have to start watering at 5:00 in order to be ready to race on time (7:00)," noted Webb. "When it rains right before the show, that's when we can get into trouble. Other times, we welcome rain around here, especially during the week."

Drivers each have their preference, some prefer the dry slick, others a more tacky track. Race fans would rather not have a face full of dust, so hitting the perfect track conditions to please everyone takes a little science and skill, almost like magic.



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Auto Racing Facts,
Observances and
Opinions



Dale P. Danielski

Is there a changing of the guard of sorts taking place at La Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway in the NASCAR Late Model Division this year? We bring this to our reader's attention as Mike Carlson for the first time in his career passed his dad Steve to win the 25 lap feature race on 6/11/18.

Mike started his racing career in the 4 cylinder division at the track before jumping into the Late Model Division there. There has been steady improvement each year and in 2016 with a new car and a crate engine, Carlson has found the right combination passing his dad on lap 22 of the feature race and going

on to the significant win. Significant in that when you beat your dad on the race track and not just finish ahead of, but pass him, it is truly a historic feat for a young driver. It's especially noteworthy when you have a racing father that's had the career in the sport that Steve has. I can remember Bryan Reffner winning a feature race over his famous father Tom and saying how from that point on he knew he had what it took to be a successful racer in this sport. It turned out just that way as Bryan went on to a very successful career of his own in racing.

So will we see more of this from Mike Carlson this year and beyond? More than likely, but don't count the veteran Steve Carlson out just yet as he turned the tables on Mike the following week winning the 25 lap main at the track with Mike right behind.

What we really need now days are more family rivalries like this in racing. More dads, sons and daughters involved in short track racing. Car counts continue to drop off everywhere (And we're speaking more of the pavement than dirt set here.) and no one seems to be able to offer a solution to the problem. Back when you had a sanctioning group mandating rules to keep everyone on the same page all benefited as tracks on the circuit saw the same drivers competing every week (Great for marketing and promotional purposes.) and those drivers knew they could compete with a uniform set of rules. Now days tracks are independently operated and all want to hold events on the same night. There is not a whole lot of cooperation between them anymore and it has really



Mike Carlson #50 driving his NASCAR Late Model

hurt the sport at the short track level as fewer and fewer people choose to get involved in racing.

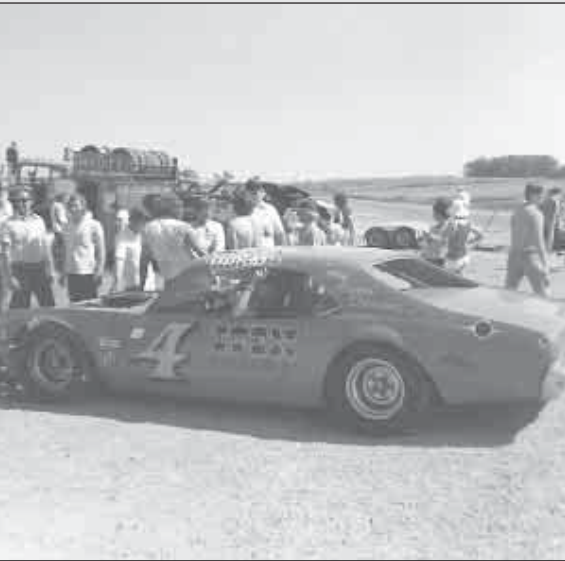
Sadly, some of it is the technological evolution that has taken place with fabricated race cars that can easily be purchased by anyone if the money is there. Gone are the days when home built ingenuity could compete and dad and kids would work together and all eventually race. Worse yet is the young kid catching a glimpse of the current product, showing some interest and finding out it is going to cost him \$50,000 and up to get involved. We're speaking of a top division of racing here obviously, but this is the scenario at all too many tracks. In addition with all the electronic devices available for amusement these days dads and their kids would rather play video games in the palm of their hand then put a steering wheel there. It's immediate gratification for a lot less money.

In spite of all that, as long as I've followed this sport it always seems to reach a point where you have to take a couple steps back to move forward. With 12 or

*Racing Facts, Observances and Opinions
continued on page 20*

Dale's Picture's from the past

Ernie Derr #1 raced with IMCA making frequent visits to Wisconsin including La Crosse Fairgrounds. He raced this potent Dodge Charger at Marathon Park of Wausau, WI. (From the Gary Hall collection) Minnesota traveler Don James raced this Chevelle throughout the State of Wisconsin in 1974. Another Minnesota traveler, Bob Jusola #4 raced this Nova frequently on the Wisconsin circuit in 1973.



Dirty Talkin'



Kris Peterson

When sixteen year old Hunter Custer was just four years old he had the opportunity to meet NASCAR driver Kevin Harvick and from that point forward becoming a race car driver was what he knew he wanted to do.

In 2009, at the ripe old age of 9, his grandpa bought him his first go kart and he began his racing career on the dirt of Thunder Hill Speedway in Menomonie Wisconsin. He developed an interest in sprint car racing when his mom began taking him to World of Outlaws and USAC sprint car races and that interest became a racing reality when the junior at Chippewa Falls Senior High School began racing his number 29 non-wing sprinter with the Upper Midwest Sprint Car Series (UMSS) in 2016. The UMSS traditional Sprints

race most often at Cedar Lake Speedway but also travel to other area tracks.

Hunter's race team consists of just him and his mom, unless the races he is participating in happen on a Friday night and mom is not off of work early enough, and then it is his grandma that arrives to the track with him. His mom has been his study crew chief and supported his racing dream from the beginning.

As of June 18, 2016 the young Rookie in the UMSS has raced 10 out of 10 feature races and sits 8th in the point standings. Hunter has a goal of working hard and giving it everything he has to win the Rookie of the Year for the Traditional Sprint Division of the series this 2016 race season.

As a racing mom myself I have watched in awe as this quiet young man and his mom show up at the track week in and week out working together to get him and his car ready to race. Hunter shows a lot of talent and promise as a young driver and gets better every week, I expect we will be hearing his name at area dirt tracks for some time to come.



Vince Peterson photo



Vince Peterson photo

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Full Throttle



Shane Carlson

For many racers, heading to a racetrack for the first time can be an intimidating feat. Not knowing where the preferred line is or what kind of setup to put beneath the car can cause headaches and a lot of sleepless nights. And when a driver makes their first start at a little place known as Eldora Speedway, well, it has the potential to make for a long weekend.

Bruening’s Dream Weekend

Every June, the nation’s best dirt late model drivers flock to Eldora Speedway for the Dirt Late Model Dream. Names such as Bloomquist, Davenport, and Lanigan make the trek, but also competing throughout the three-day event are young guns and drivers who have never raced at Eldora before. Tyler Bruening is of the latter.

The 30-year-old has had a successful dirt late model career thus far, as he holds six track championships among two different tracks in Iowa, with over 50 career feature wins. Eldora is a different animal than anything he had ever raced on before. “We’re just really excited to be here,” Bruening said. “It’s our first time coming.”

He turned his first laps at Eldora on day one of the Dream, Thursday, just hours before he would be competing in full race conditions. Bruening and his race team weren’t completely on an island by themselves though. “We’re teamed up with Capital Race Cars, and they’re a world of help,” he said. “We’ve walked back and forth a bunch a bunch of times picking their brains and seeing what they think and what we should try.”

On the first two nights of the Dream, Bruening managed to qualify for the A-Main Feature event,

finishing 18th, and 20th, respectively. Asked how he has adapted so quickly to the track, “This is a huge momentum racetrack,” he said. “The track is just really conducive to my style of racing. It gets good and slick from top to bottom, so then you have to drive the cars a little more, which is good for me,” Bruening told The Midwest Racing Connection.

“It helps a bunch when you can come to a racetrack like this, first time coming, and you can unload with your standard setup on and be competitive.” Drivers making their first start at a new track are forced to do their homework and act as a student, soaking up information any way they can get it. “I feel like I learn a ton every time I strap in.”

Bruening’s dream weekend didn’t quite end up the way he wanted, as he failed to qualify for Saturday night’s \$100,000-to-win A-Main Feature, “They at least knew we were here.” Now that he and his team have gotten a taste of Eldora, they want more. “We’ll be back for sure,” Bruening said. “The track is just really conducive to my style of racing. It gets good and slick from top to bottom, so then you have to drive the cars a little more, which is good for me.”

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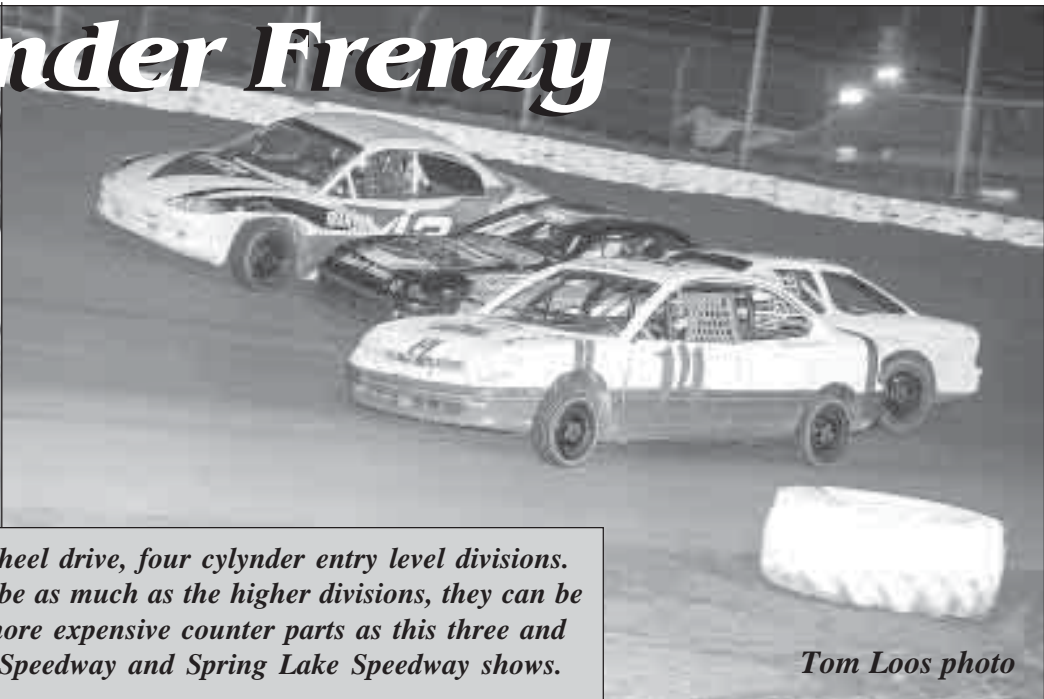


You Tube

Four Cylinder Frenzy



Bruce Nuttleman photo



Tom Loos photo

Many area tracks feature front-wheel drive, four cylinder entry level divisions. While the cost of the cars may not be as much as the higher divisions, they can be equally as entertaining as their more expensive counterparts as this three and four-wide action from LaCrosse Speedway and Spring Lake Speedway shows.

Looking Forward Into The Future Of Auto Racing

By Grant Brown

In modern day motorsports, it is not unusual to see teenagers driving racecars. Youthful racers have become a normality and can certainly have a positive impact on the future of auto racing. Many of the top NASCAR stars started out racing go-karts at just five or so years old, including top drivers like Kevin Harvick, Denny Hamlin, and Joey Logano. But in the last few years, auto racing has seen more and more young drivers stepping into faster cars with more horsepower and competing with men and women two and even three times their age. Wide eyed rookies stare right into the glares of grizzled veterans, and compete for wins racing door to door. But the young drivers can definitely do just as good as the drivers that have been competing for over twenty years.

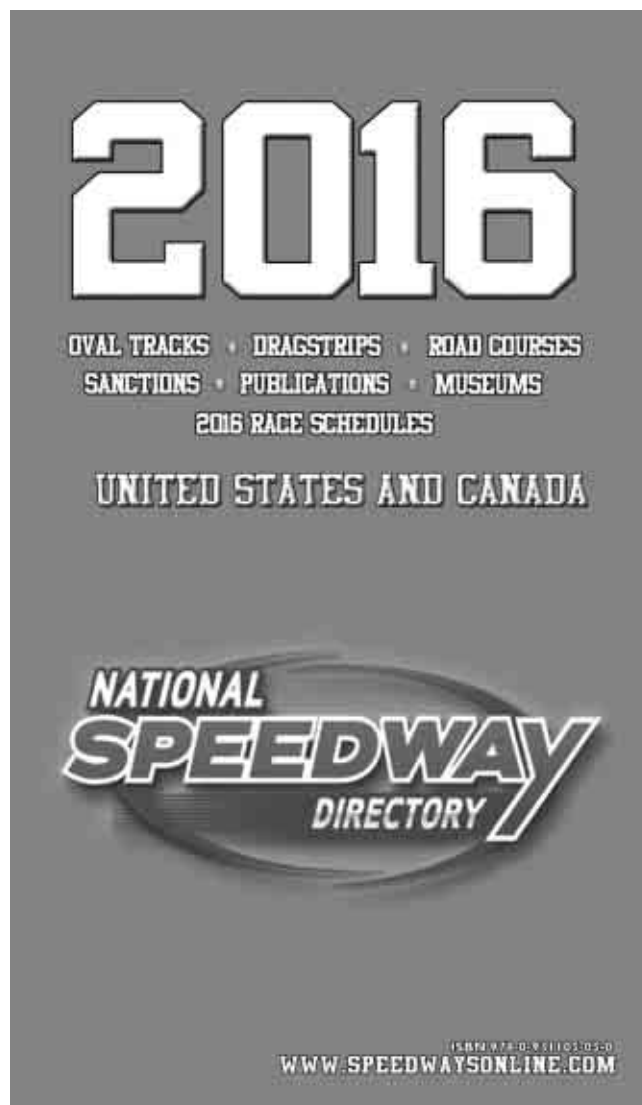
Many come from a racing family, with parents or grandparents that once drove racecars. I am one of many in that group, being the son of one of the best drivers at Elko Speedway, Doug Brown. He has 27 years of racing experience and has won five championships as a driver, and was the guy who bought me my first quarter midget. Since then I have won two track championships at Elko, and a national championship in the NASCAR Whelen All-American Series, and I'm only fifteen years old.

Other youth drivers get into racing because of curiosity, catch the racing bug, and end up racing for many years. The youth movement is extremely strong right now, with thousands of young men and women strapping in behind the wheels of racecars every weekend at their local short tracks across the United States. The youth movement is what will make is sport as popular or even perhaps more popular than it was in the 1990's. Fresh faces will bring new fans and a new look to auto racing. I strongly encourage anyone and everyone to help get kids started in racing if they express any interest in it. It teaches kids the value of teamwork, dedication, and how to show good sportsmanship. The youth movement is a lot more than a passing fad. It will shape the next generation of drivers and fans, and will determine the fate of our sport in the future. But in order for the local short track teenaged driver to become the next superstar of the Cup Series, he or she needs the correct backing from friends, family, fans, and sponsors. Help the young drivers market themselves to potential sponsors by making a portfolio of all of the accomplishments the driver has, and put pictures and information about the driver in it as well. Good sponsors pay large dividends when it comes to getting the driver noticed.

I am fortunate enough to have multiple sponsors that do whatever they can to see me succeed behind the

wheel of a racecar, like Doug Skaug of Elite Auto Works and Joanne Zacharias of Don't Tell Me I Can't. Both are wonderful people and they want to do their best to help me move up in the ranks of NASCAR. Also, make sure they have a good team that can communicate with the driver.

Communications are vital in a race team, but you also need to make sure the driver is giving good feedback so that the car can be adjusted on correctly and they have the opportunity to win races. Many young drivers in the Midwest should get a chance to drive in the higher ranks of NASCAR, like Derek Kraus, Caleb Adrian, and hopefully myself, among many other young men and women. Hopefully we will see many more young drivers in the Cup Series that cut their teeth on the short tracks of the Midwest.


**THE MIDWEST
RACING CONNECTION**

Racing Nuggets continued from page 8

then swung a deal for two old practice tires from Jim Sauter to put on the left. That night, he raced against the likes of Trickle, Sauter, Mark Martin, Dave Watson, and Al Schill, lapping all but six cars; picking up that first ARTGO career win.

Savvy racers learn to make do with less; even when it comes to a pit crew. In the early days, Holzhausen was running with a skeleton pit crew.

Like an event in 1989, when his team consisted of his very pregnant wife, Sherie, Toby Nuttleman, and one of Toby's younger brothers, Peter. They dug out one of the oldest, gnarliest-looking tires to put on the right rear, to prevent the track at Hawkeye Downs from chewing it up. They still weren't happy with the way the car was handling, so they decided to put different spindles on the car. It was then that Dick Trickle walked past their pit.

"I've changed a lot at a track before, but never two spindles," Trickle said.

As it turned out, that change and the gangrene-like tire made a huge difference, and Holzhausen would go on to win the first ARTGO show on the new asphalt which paved the once-dirt track at Hawkeye Downs.

Five years later, he would be piloting a Pontiac at that same track. Pontiac had a dandy sponsorship program in place that awarded the winning driver a \$5,000 bonus, if their race car was a Pontiac. If the winner didn't drive a Pontiac, that \$5,000 rolled over to the next race, and the pot grew.

It was the first ASA event at Hawkeye Downs in 1994, and Holzhausen pulled off the win, and picked up a \$20,000 bonus for running a Pontiac. Ah, the good old days of racing.

While Holzhausen assures me that he won't be getting back behind the wheel, he will always keep his fingers in racing. Whether he's helping his son, Skylar, or any of Jimmy Back's boys, or grandsons; Holzhausen says he just wants to work on race cars. Having a hand in racing in some way, shape, or form other than driving seems to be enough for him.

These days, Holzhausen mostly pilots a fishing boat. If your friends with him on Facebook (or Spacebook, as he calls it), you've likely seen a few photos of him and his wife, Sherie holding up some dandy catches.

I pointed out that it would seem that Sherie catches the bigger fish. I saw a little devil dancing in his eyes, as he quickly pointed out that he always hands her the pole with the biggest fish on the line.

It's good to know the competitive spirit is still flickering inside of him.

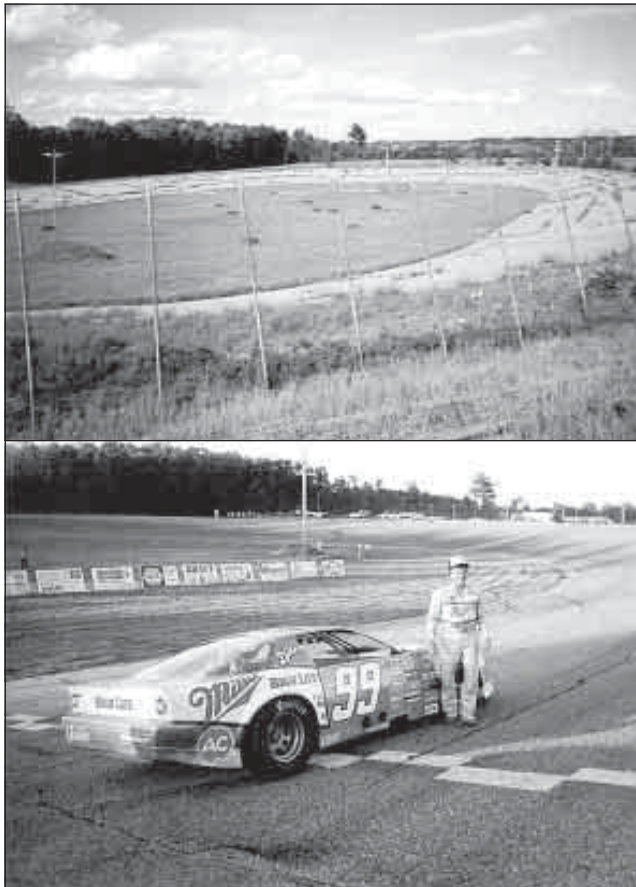
***Racing Facts, Observances and Opinions
from page 17***

better engine combinations available out there costing anywhere from \$8,000-\$30,000, and the hottest set up in shock absorber technology at your fingertips for \$6,000 or so, along with race car bodies that are too aerodynamically sound and unnecessarily expensive, I think that saturation point has been reached. If pay-offs at these tracks justified these types of expenses and maybe on a Touring Series they do, it might be a different story. Unfortunately purse pay-offs have remained the same or actually gone down for over 20 years. For a weekly show and to race for fun these expenses are just too much to overcome for the average racer. There are more entry level divisions of racing out there and they are an important part of a race program, but to sell an exciting show you need to promote the stars of it, the heroes, and they should be in your top billed class of racing. Taking a couple steps back here, bringing back more rules uniformity at the tracks that run similar divisions, and getting more people involved (Remember, more cars still do bring more race fans.) again in the sport would be a good place to begin.

Here and there...Nice to see Terry Schoppenhorst win the CWRA Lyle Nabbefeldt 55 lap Memorial race feature at Dells Raceway Park, Wis. Dells, WI., here June 18th. If you are going to pick a time to win your first ever feature of any kind as Schoppenhorst did here, a big race is when to do it. Lax Fairgrounds held a boat race here 6/11/16 as part of the race program and to say it was wild is definitely a big time understatement. Trailers carrying boats after promoter Chuck Deery had watered down the front stretch to simulate being on a lake made for great entertainment. There was so much debris lying around after the event it probably took a week to clean it up. Jared Novak was the happy winner of the race...After a two week hiatus Brad Powell came back to La Crosse Fairgrounds with a vengeance taking the 25 lap NASCAR Late Model Feature 6/25/16. Steve and Mike Carlson followed...Good to see nice guy Mark Challet take the feature win in the Thunderstox division on the night. Challet led the entire distance in that division's main event...

In the defunct race track category it's the Golden Sands Speedway of Plover, Wisconsin. The track was built and promoted by Sam Bartus opening in 1967. It held regular racing through 1983 before being shuttered for 5 years. Terry Preuser and yours truly provided a big push getting the track opened in late 1988. Unlike others there is a good ending here as the track is still operating today.

In the Quote of the column department, "I decided to go racing to stay out of the bar. I figured that would be cheaper so I bought Kevin Nuttleman's car and went racing." If you can figure out who said this, yeolde scribe will buy you a beer.



In the defunct race track file this is a photo (top) of the Golden Sands Speedway of Plover, WI. as it appeared in early 1988. The Speedway had been closed for 5 years before re-opening in late 1988. Photo of Dick Trickle (bottom) making his return to Wisconsin to race at Golden Sands in 1989 in his Miller beer Camaro.

And going back in time to June 20th, 1969 it was Lyle Nabbefeldt winning the feature race behind the wheel of the Dick Trickle 1967 Ford Fairlane. Following Nabbefeldt at the stripe were George Thornton, Jim Back, Dave Field and Homer Spink. Other results found Tom Jensen winning the Semi-Feature while Roy Gau took the consolation race. Heat race winners were Keith Kemnetz, Gene Theide, Ron Soma and Nabbefeldt. Field set fast time on the night at 13.28 seconds. On August 6th, 1971 it was Don James winning the 20 lap Feature at La Crosse Interstate Speedway, West Salem, WI. James was followed by Lyle Nabbefeldt and Jim Back. The 15 lap Semi-feature winner was Buck Linhart followed by Dale Pennel and Dale Walworth. Heat race victors were Linhart, Walworth and Roy Schmidtke. The fast dash went to James. (Thanks to Jim Cleveland and all his research for these race results.) Going back to August 17th, 1985 in a visit to Rockford, IL., Speedway (A track that was in the midst of taking a couple steps back economically in their track rules.) it was Bobby Hacker taking the 30 lap Feature win over Ricky Bilderback, Al Papini, Dave Watson and Wayne Lensing. Semi-Feature victor on the night was Wayne Swartout. The Fast Dash went to Jimmie Pierson with heat race wins going to Steve Moll, Gary Loos and Denny Miller. Fast qualifier around the high banked ¼ mile paved oval was Lensing with a new track record for the "Rockford Rules Late Models" at 14:259 seconds.

Questions, comments, opinions and other information welcome at Starmaker Multimedia 967 10th Ave N Ste A, Onalaska, WI 54650 608-783-5827 or at dale@starmakermultimedia.com

Back In The Saddle Again



In the Summer of 2015, young Cody Brightbill suffered a serious injury to his arm in an unfortunate incident. Cody returned to the seat again this year at Thunder Hill Speedway and swept his division during the mid-June race weekend. In true Brightbill fashion, the son of the Wild Child also utilized the high groove for the majority of the laps.



*The 2016 version of The Masters at Cedar Lake saw Billy Moyer sweep the weekend for the Late Models as part of the UMP Summer Nationals Hell Tour. Jason Vandekamp Nick Oreskovich picked up wins during the Thursday night Herbison Memorial race.
(Vince Peterson photos)*

THE MIDWEST
RACING CONNECTION



*Sometimes something old can become new again. This was the case at the ARCA Midwest Tour All Star 100 at Rockford Speedway as best 2 out of 3 match was took place between Ty Majeski and Driver X - Jon Reynolds Jr. Driver X took the win.
(Doug Hornickel photos)*

THE MIDWEST
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Going In Circles continued from page 9

Rodriguez. Some here have not seen Rodriguez race, but I have, and I knew he would be right there. This played out, as Stark took the win with constant pressure from Rodriguez to the end. Great race. James Bell ran well to finish third in what I believe to be his first time on this track.

It is not unusual to see Phil Malouf at any of these events anywhere in the Midwest. The Ford Probe driver runs all over on both asphalt and dirt, as well as racing a limited late model at a couple of central Wisconsin tracks. "We weren't going to travel as much this year," Said Phil, "But we are right up there in points, so here we are again." Phil's Daughter, Anna, also races Bandolero cars when she can, so Phil is busy.

Took in the ARCA Midwest Tour "All Star 100" at the famed Rockford Speedway. It was quite the show, as in addition to the ARCAWTC cars, the regular NASCAR late models that normally run at Rockford were also present, along with the Roadrunners, all as part of a "Gilley's Double Feature" presentation. Jake Gille took the opening feature for the Rockford regulars, with Jon Reynolds Jr. taking the second one. Reynolds was one very busy guy, as he ran in the both Rockford late models and in the ARCA Midwest race as well. On top of that, he also ran in a special match race against Ty Majeski, which he won. Overall, he had quite a night. Jim Olson also ran with Rockford late models, fielding two cars, and also in the ARCAWTC portion as well. All of this on a very hot and sweltering day/night. A couple of guys that put out a tremendous effort along with their crews. Taking the upset victory in the All Star 100 was Jeff Holtz, arguably his biggest and most

prestigious win ever. He drove a nice race and was hanging around when opportunity came, and he pounced on it, as Ty Majeski had a good lead, only to meet up with a car about to be lapped, when he dove low the same time the other car also went low to allow him to pass, putting both out and giving the lead to Holtz. Also of note was the drive that Casey Johnson put out. I think he came from the back to the front three different times during the course of the race, and ran out of time to mount a challenge to Holtz at the end.

Seventy-six year old Gene Marocco took the win in the first Roadrunner feature, showing the youngsters how to get it done. Gene is in incredibly good physical shape, allowing him to compete well even in the extreme heat. Chris McQuality took the second feature.



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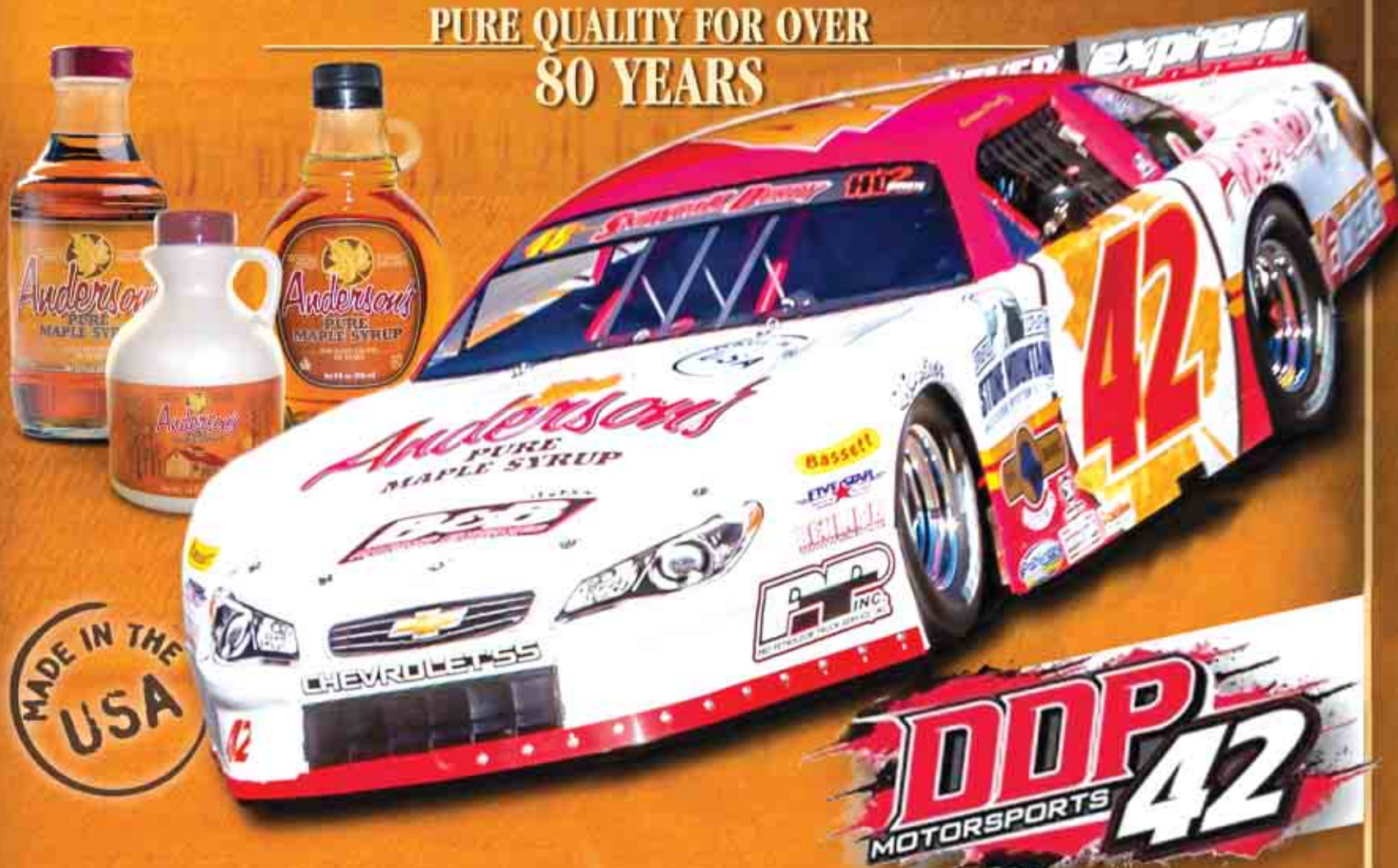
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