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November 2016



Season Ending Special Event Highlights



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Publisher's Note

Racing According to Plan



Dan Plan

There are some fans of the sport that profess one type of short track racing is better than other. "Asphalt is for racing and dirt is for farming"; or "Dirt is for racing and asphalt is for getting there" are two of the more popular sayings. It's always been that way, and probably always will be that way.

Sometimes my friends at the asphalt tracks will give me grief for going to dirt races, and dirt friends will give me grief for watching a race on pavement. It's all good. Honestly, I enjoy both asphalt and dirt short track racing equally. For me, the events I attend are mainly based on convenience and drive time.

Even when going to Speedweeks in Florida during February, I choose my hotel location based on being an equal distance between New Smyrna Speedway

Asphalt vs. Dirt

and Volusia County Speedway. This allows me to keep my options open. Well, the hotel location might also be based on the fact it's cheap, on the beach, and within walking distance of the local watering holes, but I tell myself the location is based on the racing in Florida.

When I started thinking about this topic, I was amazed at how many options I have within a 150 mile radius of my driveway. I've always realized there were more dirt tracks around than asphalt. I was somewhat blown away when I actually looked at a map and counted them out. I have one asphalt track left within the 150 mile range of home. I have 18 options for dirt track races in this same mileage range. Ten or 15 years ago, there were a few more asphalt tracks around, but the ratio between dirt and asphalt was probably the same as there were many more dirt tracks around.

Looking back at the races I attended this year, I realized it was just about an equal split between asphalt and dirt. Needless to say, I had to put on a lot of miles to attend asphalt races, but it was well worth it. As the month of October came to an end, dirt racing currently has a slight advantage in the attendance total. With 4 days at the Snowball Derby in Pensacola, FL coming up in December, the pendulum will tip slightly towards asphalt for the yearly total.

Now it's time to relax on Saturday nights for an entire month, before heading to my very first trip to Pensacola, Florida for the Snowball Derby.

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Going in Circles



Charlie Spry

Pretty much every season begins for me at the Rockford Speedway, and also ends there with the National Short Track Championships and the Bahama Brackets. 2016 is no different.

The 51st annual NSTC kicked off amidst weeping skies, and this was the theme for most of the weekend. However, Rockford is well versed in completing racing events even in the most difficult weather.

Friday's show started off with misty rain, although the skies stopped enough to get the features attempted. First off were the Great Northern Sportsman cars, with Dave Trute slicing through the pack, catching leader Dusty Mann. Just as Trute was ready to be scored as the leader, the caution came out, and along with that the rain returned. Mann collected the win as the race was called complete when it was apparent that the rain would not stop the rest of the night.



Dustin Mann leads Jeremy Wolff on his way to picking up the GNSS win at Rockford's National Short Track Championship
(Jimmy Ambruoso photo)

Saturday, the skies stopped leaking long enough to complete qualifying, and racing went off as planned, albeit with a few stoppages for a wet track along the way. The Big 8 cars were headlining the night, with a very stout field of 38 present. Some were racing here for the first time, others were very familiar with the track, and for others it had just been awhile since they had raced here.

A familiar face with his familiar yellow #16 was Russ Grossen, the veteran of many, many years. A former track champion at the Jefferson Speedway, Russ still

races there as well as MIS and others. "The last time I raced here was back in September of 1971, and the track hasn't changed," Said Russ.

Hunter Drefahl raced here at the start of his career, racing in the Bandit division on Wednesday nights. Since that time he has moved onto the late models, racing at various tracks, most often at MIS. He was disappointed in his qualifying time, but raced through the night without incident in his first late model start here.

2016 Rockford track champ Michael Bilderback looked to be the man to beat, but dropped back late in the race, with Casey Johnson taking the lead and the win. J.Herbst did his patented start-near-the-back-and-come-to-the-front thing, as he had to race into the feature through one of the qualifiers, and start back in the pack. He came through to finish second. The race saw Rockford regular Jake Gille impact the tire at the pit entrance and fly high into the air, slamming down on the roof. Reportedly, the culprit was a broken trailing arm coupled with a stuck throttle that caused the mess. The tire absorbed the tremendous impact well, and Gille spent the night in the hospital for observation only, and he returned to the track the next day to make the start with his super late in the 200 lap event. Great to see Jake come through in relatively good shape.

Kyle Stark dominated the

received said, "You will find success among the clouds." I guess that was very prophetic. The super cup drivers put on an outstanding show, with a gaggle of cars at the finish running amidst one another. Trevor Addams emerged with the exciting win. Nick and Dave Schmidt finished 1-2 in the Hornet/Bandit challenge.

The Mid-Am car feature saw not one, but two rollovers in one caution, with Cody Clubb and Dan Gilster both going over. Clubb's car was done for the day, but Gilster brought his car back out and ran some laps. Ron Vandermeir Jr. took the win over quick qualifier Kevin Gentile, perhaps leaving a few of the series regulars scratching their heads.

The super late model 200 lap headliner looked to be a runaway for Jon Reynolds Jr., as he seemed practically uncatchable. Even after cautions, he simply drove away from the pack. However, about three-



A dejected Jon Reynolds Jr. after dropping out at Rockford
(Doug Hornickel photo)

Midwest Compact Series feature event over George Sparkman and Phil Malouf. All of these drivers have put on a lot of road miles this year racing all over. The vintage racers took to the track as well late in the night, with Patrick Heaney

getting the win. Patrick Bruns took the win in the midget feature, which ran off very quickly.

Sunday looked to be a better day as far as the weather, but of course, it had to rain at least once during the day and halt the racing for just a tad.

The Roadrunners ran their rained-out feature on Sunday, with Adam Cartwright leading all the way. Adam said that he went out to a Chinese restaurant to eat the night before, and the fortune cookie he

quarters of the way during one of the cautions, his car faltered, and he dejectedly drove into the infield and parked. Michael Bilderback again had misfortune, as he dropped out while seemingly headed to the win, and Austin Nason and Steve Apel connected, putting both to the rear, and guess what? Casey Johnson was there to capitalize. Both Nason and Apel were able to work back up to second and third respectively, but their tires were likely toast by this point and they couldn't muster much of a challenge. Therefore, Johnson became only the second person in the history of this event to win both the Big8/NASCAR late model feature and the super late feature in the same year, with Joe Shear being the only other driver to do so, back in 1987. In victory lane, Johnson stated, "That is probably the only stat I will ever be tied with Joe Shear at, he's set so many records that way that I will probably never get close to, but it is cool to have that in the record books." He is a long ways from done setting records, I think.

Going In Circles continued on page 6

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Casey Johnson became the second person in the history of NSTC to win both the Big8/ NASCAR event and the Super Late Model feature in the same weekend. The first to accomplish this feat was the late Joe Shear. (Doug Hornickel photo)

Next up was the annual Oktoberfest race weekend at the Lacrosse Fairgrounds Speedway. This event truly is the racing family reunion, as pretty much everywhere you go you will find old friends. We were only able to attend one day this year, with Saturday working out for us, as it featured the Big 8 late models, Mid-American cars, the Midwest Dash series, and a



sampling of the ARCA Midwest tour, as they ran qualifying heats and dashes in preparation for their big show on Sunday.

It wouldn't come to anyone's surprise to say that Ty Majeski won the Big 8 feature event, as he has done well here at Lacrosse all season, and really, anywhere he has raced. He was able to give crew chief Toby Nuttleman his first Oktoberfest win in fine fashion. It should also be no surprise to see J. Herbst finish in the runnerup slot, as he has also tasted much success here at his home track. Unlike at Rockford, here Herbst qualified very well and didn't have to race through the qualifiers to make the show, as he admits to being a poor qualifier at Rockford. The sheer volume of cars testing the waters tonight was interesting in their varied home tracks and driving styles. Rockford champion Michael Bilderback finished in third, grabbing the Big 8 championship.

The Mid-Am cars also had a nice field on hand, with drivers from several locales competing. Dan Gilster came back from a rollover and fire at Rockford to get the win at his home track in front of hometown fans. Adam Oxborough ran his first ever Mid-Am series race with his sportsman car, making the show on time, while Taylor Dawson ran what I believe to be his first ever Mid-Am start, staying out of trouble and finishing in the top ten.

Kyle Stark continued his domination of four cylinder racing pretty much everywhere, handily winning the Midwest Dash race. All this came about after he accepted Gregg McKarns' Midwest Motorsports Auction challenge to start in back for an extra two-hundred smackers. It still didn't take him long to get to the front, where he took the win over George Sparkman and Scott Ciesielski, who has run real strong late in the year.

Long distance drive of the weekend would have to go to ARCA MWT competitor Brad Tilton, who came all the way from Cheyenne, Wyoming, to compete.

Next up we come to one of my favorite post season shows of all time, the Bahama Bracket nationals at the Rockford Speedway. This event was celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary this year, which is hard to believe, as I remember attending the very first one, which doesn't seem that long ago.

Arguably, the best feature of the day was in the AAAA bracket, which is the bracket with the slowest qualifiers in the large cars. It was a fun race to watch, as lap after lap it was former Lake Geneva Raceway driver Vaughn Lesko on the low side, and the mid-1970's Camaro vintage racer of Brian Ashmore on the high side. Plenty of room was given, as both ran this way for many laps, perhaps touching only once or twice. That is hard to do on a tight track like this, but shows a tremendous amount of respect and ability by both drivers. In the end, Lesko took the win in his car that looks largely untouched from the days it raced at LGR, circa 2006.

Matthew Clossey outlasted all comers in the top "A" division for the fastest cars. His car is still a stock stub late model, as the rules for this event don't allow for fab stub cars. Matthew was coming off a stellar fifth place finish at the NSTC Big 8 show, a great end to the season for this team. He had won this event some nine years ago in a modified.

Chris Woodall won the AA feature for the third time in four years. It was a good, competitive race with several drivers appearing to have a shot at the win.

The AAA feature was also a dandy, with Chris Czaszwicz getting the win in his beautiful Bob Dotter replica 1964 Impala. The car looked too nice to see a race track. The car did receive a few battle scars, but he definitely was not afraid to race it all out. Robby Robinson was running second but broke out on the last lap, giving second to Craig Mertes.

The four cylinders get their own brackets, with Mark English looking dominant in the "B" bracket for the

fastest of the four cylinders, and Destiny Genore winning in the "BB" feature, after setting fast time for the bracket.

Not to be forgotten, Christy Penrod won the "Foo-Foo" race for those not making the feature events, and got the wonderful trophy that goes along with the win, a porcelain bidet.



Kyle Stark on his way to picking up another Midwest Dash Series win (Bruce Nuttleman photo)

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Many drivers without a home track anymore have found a place at the brackets. The above mentioned Mr. Lesko raced at the old Lake Geneva Raceway, now pretty much races only at the brackets each year with what I believe to be the same exact car he ran at LGR. Craig Mertes and John Maki Jr. also race cars from 'Geneva. Maki's car, especially looks just the same as when it turned laps at LGR, even with the untouched original paint and lettering.

Ray Swan and Edwin Hast are two others who race here every year, and most often ONLY here. It gets so you look forward to seeing these drivers every year here, many who were displaced from the old Raceway Park in Blue Island years ago.

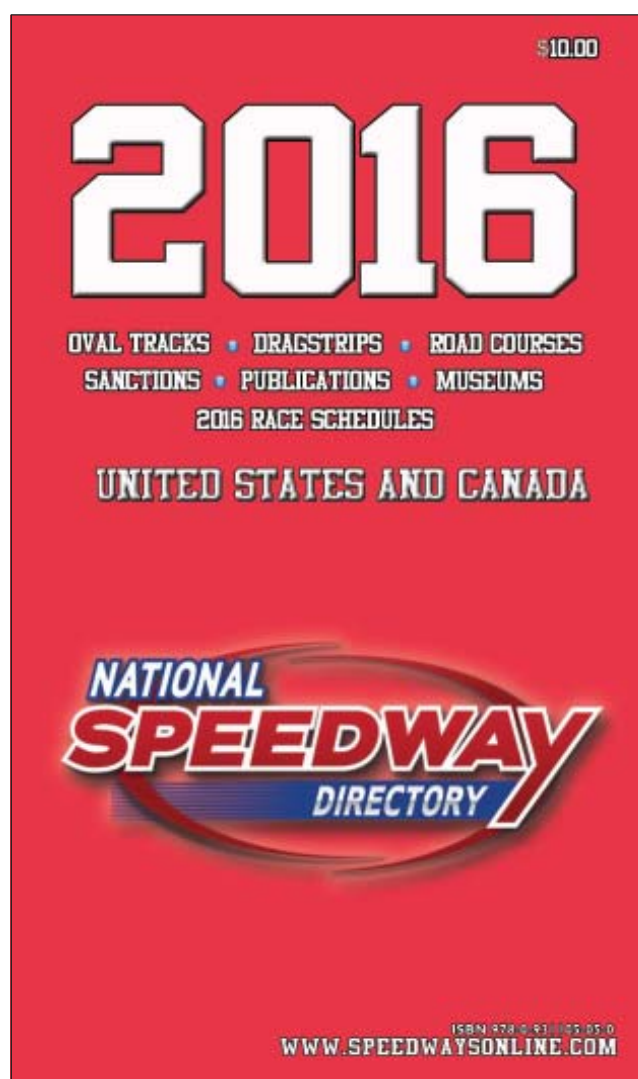
Another driver who was displaced this year was Wesley Dennis, who raced at Illiana. "They really threw a curveball at us," Said Wes. "Illiana was planning on racing this year, had practice scheduled and everything, then just announced that they weren't going to race. My car needed the motor redone anyhow, so I just sat out the year, then borrowed a motor for this show. I guess one race this year is fine with me, but not sure what to do next year. I'll probably either make some changes to the car and run Grundy, or maybe even here at Rockford. I love this track." Wes said that his last time at the brackets he was running in a transfer position in one of the qualifiers, but then wanted more, wanting to better his position, which didn't work out as planned. "I should have just stayed put where I was, but you always want to win."

The Husband/Wife team of Jeremy and Malena Clement were present, although only Malena was racing. She was leading a qualifier race when the engine expired in her Chevelle. However, they come here every year for a little racing fun from their Iowa home. Jeremy started racing in the late 1990's racing at dirt tracks such as West Liberty and Maquoketa, as well as on the pavement at Hawkeye Downs, which he still does. Malena started in 2002, and has also spent time on the dirt tracks, which is where she started racing. She has raced a B-Mod in the past, and now races at Hawkeye Downs. It is great to see a family racing operation such as this, and Jeremy said that they enjoy the brackets and have been racing here for ten years.

Sycamore Speedway racers were quite prevalent at the brackets. Super Late Model driver Danny Deutsch has been coming here for about three years, and always wows the fans with his LF corner in the air, dirt track racing style. Danny has fun here, which is what it is all about. "This year we got some asphalt tires to run, although they are old. We still have the dirt setup in the car, however. Next year we will work on a better setup, and I know we can compete."

Late model racer Joel Hernandez possibly had the worst racing year anyone could have, with just about

everything you could possibly have go wrong....go wrong. His bad luck continued at the brackets, as he was leading a qualifier when the driveshaft broke on his watermelon colored racer. Joel has noted that he may take a little time off from racing to recover from the bad luck and still keep it fun. Hope he returns as soon as he can.



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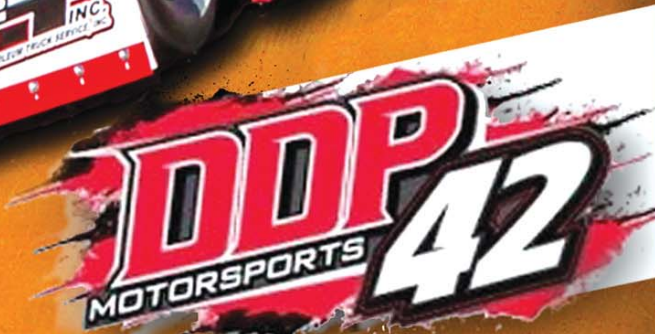
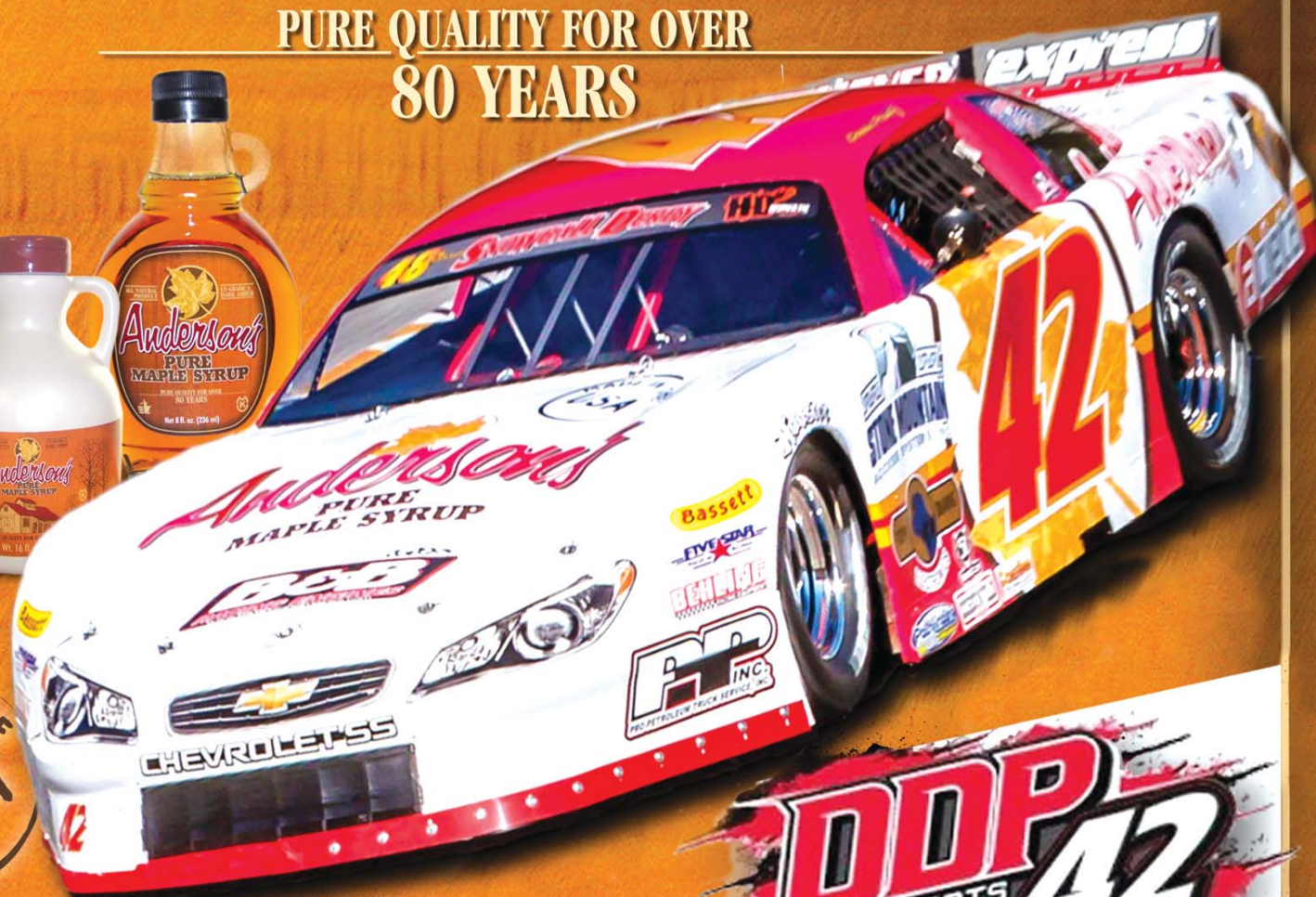
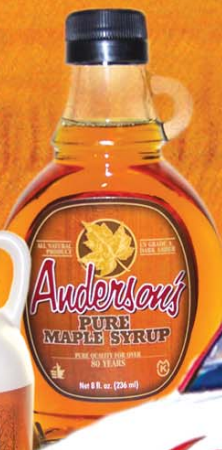
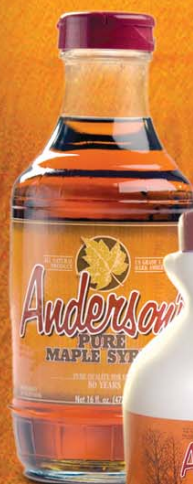
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Dean & Jason Talkin' Racin'



Jason Searcy

Jacob Goede from Carver (MN) won his third consecutive Super Late Model Championship at Elko Speedway in 2016. The Super Late Models raced double 30 lap features this year, and with the large car counts, winning was tougher than ever. Goede won ten features in 2015 and only three in 2016, Joey Miller won the most races this year with five. In 2015 nine drivers won a feature race, in 2016 fourteen different drivers went home with a trophy.

Dylan Moore from Northfield (MN) won his first ever Big 8 Championship after finishing second in points twice before. Jon Lemke actually tied for first in points but Moore had more wins (4) and won on a tie-breaker. The final race was one that we won't soon forget, Moore had a five point lead at the start of the final race but got caught up in a wreck and had to pit. Dozens of pit crew guys helped get the wounded car back on the track, the car was tattered and the steering wheel was a 1/4 turn off center but Moore finished on the lead lap scoring just enough points to take home the title.

Elko wrap up 2016

Twelve different drivers won Big 8 races in 2016 with Moore and Michael Ostdiek both winning four each. In 2015 only nine drivers won a race with Chris Marek dominating early and scoring twelve wins. The car counts in the Big 8 division was amazing and it is sure to grow even further next year. Tony Brewer was awarded the "Most Improved Driver" award at the Elko Champions banquet, Brewer scored his first and second career wins at the end of the 2016 season.

Jeremy Wolff from Chaska (MN) won his first Elko Thunder Car Championship after finishing second place the previous two years. Wolff had five wins and so did Ted Reuvers but Conrad Jorgenson had the most wins with six. Eight different drivers won in 2016, one more than the seven in 2015 when Brent Kane had 9 feature event wins.

scoring the most wins with five. In 2015 nine drivers won races and Grant Brown won the Elko title with six wins and the NASCAR Division IV Championship. Just think back a few years ago when the Power Stocks raced with about a dozen cars each week, now they race with double that amount weekly.

The Great North Legends and the Hornets were the only regular divisions not to run double features in 2016. Derek Lemke from Shakopee (MN) won his third consecutive Great North Legends title, he also took home the prestigious Elko "Driver of the Year" award. Lemke scored the most wins with seven, last year Brady Fox-Rhode had six wins to lead the field. Six different drivers won both in 2015 and 2016. The car counts continue to be 20+ weekly in the Legends division.



The Power Stocks Champion was Tom Doten from St Paul (MN). Doten has raced at Elko on a regular basis since 1995 and came very close to a title one other time, in 2013 he was just two points behind Jon Lebens going into the final race night, but it rained out and Doten had to settle for runner up. Doten only had one win in 2016 but he scored seventeen TOP 5 finishes in the twenty four events and that consistency is what propelled him to the title. Eleven different drivers won in the Power Stocks with Bryce Blohm



Justin Schelitzche from Lester Prairie (MN) won his second consecutive Hornets title at Elko. He and

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Brandon Olson both scored four wins to top the list in 2016, only six different drivers won and the car counts were down a little bit. In 2015 nine different drivers took home a trophy with Alex Vincent the most awarded with five victories.

Luke Allen from Shakopee (MN) was the Bandolero Champion with seven wins, he adds his name to Elko Bando Champions like; Grant Brown (2012), Jared Duda (2013), Brody Wulf (2014) and Owin Giles (2015).

2016 was a great year of racing for Elko Speedway's fifty-first season in operation and the Eve of Destruction events were bigger than ever and extremely well attended. Hats off to the drivers and crews for all of their hard work providing the entertainment that we all enjoy on Saturday nights at Elko.



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Earlier this year, Dan Wheeler had triple bypass surgery, forcing him to sit out the second half of the racing season. As the season was winding down, Dan and Teresa Duda reached out to Scott Splitstoesser about driving the famous Red One Midwest Modified at several season ending specials in the upper-Midwest. Needless to say, the combination was quite successful closing out their 2016 season. *The Midwest Racing Connection* caught up with Splitstoesser on day 2 of the Topless Nationals at Ogilvie Raceway. You could tell how happy and appreciative Scott was to have the opportunity to drive for Dan & Teresa by the way he immediately lit up when we talked about this opportunity.

Would you consider the last month or so a career resurgence driving the Red One?

It has. These guys here are making it the most fun I've had in racing the last 6-8 years.

How many shows have you run in the car?

The Topless Nationals (at Ogilvie Raceway) will be

the 8th race. We've won 2 features and a handful of heat races.

Are you going to be lucky enough to drive this car next year?

Oh, he (Dan) will be back. He wants back in there so bad right now, but still he's still healing up. A triple

bypass is nothing to mess with. Teresa keeps a really good eye on him. She just tells him no.

Do you still have you're A-Mod ready to go for 2017?

We're working on a couple of things. We cut our car up at the end of the year. It was only 15 shows old and I cut it up and put it back on the jig. I'm still trying to decide what I'm going to do whether it be an A-Mod or a B-Mod next year.

What's been the best part about the last month of the 2016 racing season?

It's been a lot of fun. The guys are just so fun to hang around with. They treat you well and Dan is by far the smartest guy I've seen in this business. This guy knows his stuff. I can come in and give him feedback, and he puts me right where I need to be with the car. I can say I'm loose here, tight there or a little free on exit or we're scrubbing too much speed, and he'll just go "we can fix that".



Dan Wheeler in action earlier in the season in the Red One
(Scott Swensen photo)

Dan Wheeler holding court at the back of the car, while Teresa does most of the work (left photo)
Scott Splitstoesser took over the Red 1 for the season ending specials in the area and is as happy as a kid in a candy store (right photo)



Ogilvie Topless Nationals

Vince Peterson photo

Ogilvie Raceway started their late-season Topless Nationals event seven years ago. The unique part of the topless race at Ogilvie is all of the divisions (with the exception of Hornets) run without a roof. Running topless gives the cars a unique look once per year, and allows the fans to see how much work goes into driving a dirt car. This year's version ended up with another stacked field of cars, pleasant weather, great racing and a spectacular wreck. The two drivers involved shown below (Elizabeth Toepper and Nick Ayotte) both walked away.



Scott Swensen photo



Scott Swensen photo



Scott Swensen photo



Scott Swensen photo



Scott Swensen photo



Scott Swensen photo

Auto Racing Facts, Observances and Opinions



Dale P. Danielski

Our race chasing season concluded here with Matt Rowe's Impact Survival Series "Creepy Classic" event at State Park Speedway of Wausau, WI. Of course with a name like that you already know this is not one of those races for the purists out there. And if you couldn't tell that by the name you might be a bit suspicious of a race that starts 80 cars like this one did.

There actually is some pretty darn competitive racing that goes on at these events but more importantly it's about the entertainment value. Certainly there is some money to be made if you can finish in one of the top spots, but it's more about having fun than anything else. And having fun these drivers do as you never know for sure what you might see them do throughout any given part of a race. That's a lot of opportunity by the way as this race was 300 laps long.



Doug Hornickel photo

When all the fires were out, when all the rubber was laid down, when all the pieces of plastic and metal from 80 racing machines was cleaned up, it was Zack Schelhaas being declared the winner. A first time winner, Zack was pretty pleased with his effort even though as per Series rules he had to give up his car to event promoter Rowe or forfeit his winnings. That kind of ruling may seem a bit harsh but it certainly makes for a level playing field. Actually, looking at the Schelhaas racer there was nothing fancy about the car, so I have to believe he came out on the long end of the deal. In this day an age of ultra expensive race cars these kind of events are definitely a refreshing departure from what you normally see, fun racing for competitors and great entertainment for fans. If you are thinking of attending an ISS event you'll have to wait until January 1st, 2017, yes you read that right as that's when the new season will kick off at 141 Speedway of Francis Creek, WI.

Of course we would certainly be remiss if we didn't mention attending the 47th Annual Oktoberfest Racing weekend at La Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway, West Salem, WI., here October 6-9. Most of the racing part of the weekend can be summed up in two words; Ty Majeski. Majeski was the champion of everything he competed in during the weekend with the exception of the Dick Trickle 99 event on Friday of 'Fest. He actually won that event on the track as well, except an infraction going through tech nullified the victory. The

200 lap finale, the ARCA Midwest Tour race on Sunday went to Majeski for his first win in the race which also clinched the 2016 Tour Championship for the NASCAR bound driver. The win was also the first ever after 36 years of trying for crew chief Brian "Toby" Nuttleman. Nuttleman has had too many to list here "shoes" pilot race cars he's wrenched on, but finally this year it all came together and he got his first win. For Majeski there really isn't anything left at this level to accomplish other than maybe winning the NASCAR Whelen All-American Series Tour National Championship, or one particular race at the Dells that got away and consequently he's doing some ARCA racing before moving into top tier NASCAR which ultimately is expected to get him into a Cup ride in the near future. A lot is different in NASCAR land and we can only hope he gets a fair shot at it at the top level of sport.

Here and there...Looking at final results of the Creepy Classic ISS race at State Park Speedway we see where two cars completed the full 300 laps. Eddie Muenster, a successful racer for a lot of years in a number of different race cars finished 2nd to Schelhaas also completing the full distance. Dan Van Pay who placed 7th in the event was declared the 2016 Champion of the Series...Ty Majeski captured all three 21 lap segments of the JMCK 63 on Sunday.

continued on page 14

Upcoming Events
Annual IMCA Racers Swap Meet
April 2017 - Shakopee, MN

www.IMCAoldtimers.com

Racing Observations from page 13

That has never been done before and I'd suspect it will be a long time if ever to happen again...After putting his car on it's roof and sliding into the infield at the Rockford National Short Track Championships, Dan Gilster figured out in a hurry that's not how you should go about winning a race. After righting the car and amazingly finishing the race there, Gilster checked things over finding little to nothing wrong with the race car before bringing it to 'Fest and walking off with the win in the 40 lap Mid-American Feature...Kyle Stark was a double winner on the weekend taking the Midwest Dash Series feature as well as the always crazy Double O race which utilizes both the big and small tracks. Stark likes to race whenever and wherever he can, (He also competed in the Creepy Classic at State Park where he finished 5th.) and being from a time when racers competed numerous times a week I can appreciate that. ...Brad Warthan can now call himself an Oktoberfest race winner as he won the biggest race of his career, the Sportsmen feature on day one of the 'Fest racing weekend...On a somber note, the 'Fest racing weekend brought the end of life for long time racer Joe Rinartz who died in his sleep at the track early Sunday morning. Joe ran many laps here and at other tracks in the area and was certainly taken away far too soon...And sad, is

the leaving the sport by a couple of popular drivers in the area. Two time NASCAR champion at Lax. Fairgrounds J. Herbst announced that the Sunday 'Fest events would be his last. It's also looking like the Sunday 'Fest event could have been the last for Skylar Holzhausen as Father Steve has put the race car up for sale. Of course if the car doesn't sell and offers come from elsewhere...Champions Reunion VIII was a big success in 2016 as part of 'Fest racing weekend as a turnout of over 60 strong were on hand for the event Sunday. Cool to see old and restored race cars bearing names from the past of Dick Trickle, Paul Tradup, Mert Williams, Cecil Henderson Mike Miller and the Mike Wall racing machine on hand for the show as well. If sponsorship can be obtained it looks like the event could again happen in 2017...After finally making a bit of forward progress in 2016, the Central Wisconsin Racing Association is looking to book dates for 2017. The Towel City Racing Tire provided excellent, side by side racing and proved very economical for racers to compete on this past season. Other cost saving measures will be looked at during the off season with the hopes of building car count at the various tracks it competes at in 2017. The hope is to have 8-10 such race events next year...

And in our looking back in the past feature for the column, on October 12th, 1980 it was Mark Martin

being declared the overall winner of Oktoberfest at the Fairgrounds of West Salem, WI. Martin and Joe Shear split the two 100 lap Feature events with Martin out qualifying Shear which served as the tie breaker...On September 26th, 1999 it was Steve Carlson winning the Remax Challenge Series NASCAR Touring event 400 lap feature as part of the Winston National Short Track Championships at Rockford, IL., Speedway. Following Carlson at the finish were Eddie Hoffman, Jason Schuler, Jimmy Mars, Larry Middleton, Jon Lemke, Brian Hoppe, Pete Moore, Mark Kraus and Keith Buskeros. Looking back at October 5th, 2003 it was Tim Schendel winning the 250 lap Oktoberfest feature finale...Looking back to Thursday night, September 10th, 1970 it was season championship night at State Park Speedway of Wausau, WI. Winning the 40 lap feature was Dick Trickle followed by Jim Back, Larry Detjens, Marlin Walbeck and Dick Schultz. Heat race winners were Schultz, Back and Detjens with the Dash winner Trickle. Fast time on the night also went to Trickle at 14:87 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

Dale's Pictures from the Past and Present



The #18 Camaro Mike Miller drove in 1981 restored to original by Dan Navrestad



2009 La Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway track Champion J. Herbst



Skylar Holzhausen #78 on the way to a feature win in 2009



Dave Marcis in a Larry Wehrs Chev sponsored Chevelle. Dave started his racing career at State Park Speedway

Racing Nuggets



Jacklyn Daniels-Nuttleman

When my father-in-law, Erv fell ill and it was revealed that he didn't have much time left on this earth, the family arranged to have a hospital bed delivered to the farm to allow him to be able to rest near the picture window that looked out over his fields and valleys.

Erv was a pig farmer; inducted into the Wisconsin State Fair Hall of Fame for his lifetime of achievements in 2012, almost one full year before he passed. Occasionally on the farm, there would be some piglets who didn't survive. Erv would take the remains, along with any afterbirth from the sows, and haul it out into the valley and dump it to feed the eagles. It was a tradition that he had done for many years, starting back when eagles were on the endangered species list.

The picture window where Erv's hospital bed was set up overlooked that drop area allowing him to enjoy watching the eagles soar and circle in his final days. It was fitting for him to be connected in some way to the land—and those eagles that he adored so much when his journey in this life had come to an end.

Erv was the strong, silent type, who was proud of each of his son's achievements. I imagine he felt the



pain and frustration equally over the years that his eldest son—my husband, Toby experienced each time he came up short on winning the big event on Sunday of Oktoberfest Race Weekend. As a parent, it can be painful to watch your children struggle and be helpless to fix the situation.

Toby emulates many of Erv's traits. He echoes the strong, silent approach to things. He rarely complains about anything, mostly because he is of the mindset, like his father that most anything can be remedied by putting in the time and effort through good, old-fashioned hard work. Anyone who knows Toby knows that his work ethic is second to none; thanks to the example set by his father.

Knowing that, it should go without saying that preparing for Oktoberfest Race Weekend each year has been an arduous task for Toby. He practically sleeps at the race shop, with the amount of time he puts in during the weeks leading up to the biggest race event of the season in the Midwest.

Yet, despite the tremendous preparation put forth each year, Toby still failed repeatedly at securing a big Sunday victory at Fest. It was a string of crazy, frustrating things that stymied the win each year.

Steve Holzhausen, who has been one of Toby's best friends (and Best Man at our wedding), was the first and likely longest streak of attempts at securing that elusive win. Back then, just making the race was the goal for those two young, innocent... er... innocent-appearing guys. But once they were finally in the main event, it was one heartbreak after another, year after year. From running out of gas, while leading the race, to having a sub-standard tire come apart under race conditions; there were a plethora of problems that plagued the duo.

One year, the throttle linkage came unhooked while on a tear to the front of the pack. You can't make this stuff up! There was even a time when Holzhausen got a piece of a major accident and the whole right side was torn off of his machine. Despite the fact that the car had broken the track record that year and was super-fast, the damage was just too much

of a hindrance, and the pair had to settle for third place.

Holzhausen would finally win the big event in 2006, but it wouldn't be with Toby. A bitter-sweet moment, as Toby was obviously happy for his good friend, but wishing they could've done it together after all of those years of failed attempts.

Toby would continue to chase that win with several other drivers. He collected many fast qualifying times with his cars, like he did with Charlie Menard, only to have the car get caught up in a first-lap melee. When he worked with Rebecca Kasten, they were bit by carnage as well. And sometimes, the set-up was just off, and that of course was the most frustrating of issues over the years for Toby, as he took those personally because they reflected on his abilities.

Once when he tried to win it with Steve Carlson, they missed the stagger and the car got too tight, so they had to settle for a top ten finish. Another year, the set-up was really off and they got wrecked. There was a year that it looked as if Carlson would be the one to deliver the win for Toby, but he ended up tangling with Travis Sauter coming off turn four and down the front stretch with a handful of laps to go, and they would have to be runner-up again.

Toby worked with Paige Decker in 2013. They weren't even able to make the race. That same year,

Racing Nuggets continued on page 16



Racing Nuggets from page 15

a 19-year-old by the name of Ty Majeski piloted a car for John Kastenschmidt, who also had Toby setting it up for him. Majeski made the race in his first attempt at Oktoberfest, bringing home a top ten finish.

The following year, a partnership had been struck with Majeski and Toby had built what he felt was a very capable rocket-ship ready for Fest. Majeski set fast time for the Midwest Tour, only to tangle in the Saturday night heat race with Tim Schendel and Nick Murgic, putting the team in a precarious position to snag their first championship—let alone the much sought-after Oktoberfest win.

The team had to ask Cardell Potter, to relinquish the back-up car they loaned to him and he had qualified into the main event. It was the only way for Majeski to win the championship. Obviously, Potter was not happy about the request to give back the car, but he and his team did oblige. Majeski had not sat in that back-up car once, prior to the start of Sunday’s race festivities. He brought home a 9th place finish, but secured both his first Midwest Tour Championship and Rookie of the Year honors.

However, in typical Toby fashion—he would silently dwell on the loss of the rocket-ship car, which had been his best shot at winning the title event of Oktoberfest, rather than fully enjoying the other accolades. Don’t get me wrong; he was thrilled to have been a part of the championship team—he was just mad that once again, the Oktoberfest title slipped through his fingers.

Probably 2015 was the most heart-breaking for Toby. Majeski set the fast time again for the Midwest Tour event, and was leading the field, seemingly on his way to grabbing that hard-to-pin-down win for Toby, when a late caution came out.

I remember feeling my heart sink in my chest and looking over to Toby, pacing as usual in the infield. I could only imagine what was going through his head after so many years of trying to win this damn race.

When Majeski led the field back to the green, the engine hiccupped due to vapor lock, allowing Dan Fredrickson and Jacob Goede to get by him, and once again—the victory would be lost, but the Midwest Tour Championship secured for a second time.

As the 2016 Oktoberfest Race Weekend approached, I saw less and less of Toby. He spent darn near every waking hour preparing for the event. He was loaded for bear.

They would miss setting fast time—that went to Fredrickson—and of course that started the hamster wheel in Toby’s brain to turn, pondering what he had missed, or what gremlin was going to bite them THIS

year. It was a restless night for him, more so than any other year before the big day at Fest.

Part of the pageantry to kick off Oktoberfest Sunday is the autograph session on the front stretch of the track. It was a gorgeous, crisp day, not that Toby noticed. He leaned against the retaining wall behind Majeski’s car, as his driver signed autographs and chatted with fans.

Toby’s three daughters and his grandchildren made their way to where we were standing to chat. It was exactly what he needed to unplug—if just for a moment. One of his grandsons was sportin’ a shirt that said, “My Grandpa’s the MAN.” Toby’s chest puffed out a bit when he spotted that. It gave us all a moment of levity to cut through the building tension of trying to win this race yet again.

The anxiety seemed to melt away again when Toby’s daughter Kristi spotted something overhead that stopped us all in our tracks. Every one of us was struck by the symbolism. Two eagles were circling above Majeski’s car in the clear, blue sky. It truly felt as if Erv was literally watching over his son. I’m fairly certain I saw Toby’s eyes get a little wet as he gazed up at those eagles soaring high overhead.

Could it be a sign of good things to come? Or was it just a fluke and gremlins were going to bite again for this man that I love so much?

The cars lined up for the start of the race. Toby was at the rear of Majeski’s car—a machine that he put countless hours into building and preparing for this career-defining jewel of a race. I should tell you that Toby treats all of his cars like they are his children. This was never more obvious than when I saw his mouth moving as he rubbed the trunk deck lid of Majeski’s car, prior to the engines firing. I asked him afterward what he said.

“Come on baby, don’t let us down.”

Majeski took the lead of



Bruce Nuttleman photo

the race, just past the halfway point from Johnny Sauter. Toby never stopped pacing in the infield. As a matter of fact, I think he started pacing harder, if that’s even possible. He knew leading the race was one thing; actually winning it was quite another, and there were plenty of laps left to go.

I pondered how many steps he had already taken on this day, and wished I had strapped a pedometer onto him to gauge them. He circled the infield, much like the eagles we had spotted earlier. Eagles which I like to believe were a sign from his dad that THIS was finally going to be the year he would win the big event.

As the laps wound down, the caution flag flew. Majeski was still leading and while the field paced around a few circuits, waiting for a wreck to be cleaned up from the racing surface, Majeski, who rarely—if ever—swears, came over the radio dropping a big bomb in more ways than one.

Racing Nuggets continued on page 17



Bruce Nuttleman photo

Racing Nuggets from page 16

“We just lost a ****expletive**** cylinder!”

There was a beat of silence, as everyone surely questioned if he was serious. My eyes darted down to the infield to see Toby’s big, right mitt reach up to key his radio.

“It’ll be fine. Just do what you do. You got this.”

That’s the thing about Ty and Toby. They are Yin and Yang. When one is worked up, the other is the picture of calm; it’s just one of the reasons why they gel so well together.

The field was realigned and ready to take the green to go again. Majeski and Fredrickson, who was in second were engaged in a cat-and-mouse game on the restart; neither aware of the other’s mechanical woes. Fredrickson had been dealing with a rear end issue that had him spewing fluid. It took a few attempts to satisfy officials with a steady restart, each time ratcheting up the tension for everyone.

Majeski reported that the cylinder seemed to be back running, but intermittently. It was likely a plug wire issue. Panic could be heard in his voice. He needed to deliver this win for his crew chief.

Toby, who wanted this win so badly, calmly keyed his mic again.

“Just do what you do. It’s going to be fine.”

Majeski gassed the car and as he and Fredrickson led the field out of turn four, the green flag flew. The car appeared to be running fine, and he was slightly pulling away from Fredrickson. The field circled back around to take the white flag.

I wasn’t breathing. I looked back down at Toby, pacing in the infield. He wasn’t even looking at the race track. I was sure his eyes were closed in prayer.

Caution. Again.

There was a mess off of turn four after Majeski and Fredrickson took the white flag, so since the entire field didn’t complete the lap, it would be a green-white-checked finish.

Majeski came back over the radio to report that the engine dropped a cylinder again.

Once more, Toby keyed his mic.

“You got this.”

And he did. Majeski soared to the checkers, giving Toby his first win in the Oktoberfest main event. I looked down to the infield, where he had been pacing the entire race. He was surrounded by the entire

team—everyone hugging and cheering.

I had tears filling my eyes as I dashed down the steps from the perch where I had been videotaping. Heading to the front stretch, I heard Toby come over the radio, telling Ty to “go ahead and burn ‘em down.”

My steps paused briefly, as I was shocked to hear him say this. Toby NEVER wants to have Ty do donuts or burnouts, because it’s hard on the engine.

“This ain’t Sprint Cup, where they rebuild these things all the time,” he said once, when I asked him why he never wanted Ty to do donuts after winning. Fair enough.

But he punched the permission slip on this one, so I had to motor down there and get it on tape. The bonus of doing that was I got to videotape Ty making a beeline to Toby after getting out of his car. It was a surreal moment.

As Ty moved to his parents to grab a celebratory hug, I could feel my heart swelling in my chest, and I couldn’t wait to throw my arms around Toby and plant a kiss on his lips. He was grinning ear-to-ear when I got to him, and gave me the biggest bear hug I’ve ever had.

It was a moment that I have burned into my memory. Toby won’t soon forget it either. As a matter of fact, he wore his pit pass band well beyond Fest. He never cut the thing off of his wrist. It only recently broke and fell off, but he continues to carry it in his pocket; that’s just how special this win was to him.
#FestIsBest

It’s easy to understand why the race meant so much to him. It’s etching your name in history among the greats who have come before you. After 30-some years of trying, he has finally knocked this one off of his bucket list.

But as you might guess with a guy like Toby, when you cross something off of that list, another item will take its place. It’s all about goal setting and working hard to achieve them, exactly as his father had taught him.

What’s at the top of the list now? The Snowball Derby in Pensacola, of course. He’s been heading down there to run that race with several different drivers over the years. I can’t say that I ever remember seeing any eagles soaring around Five Flags Speedway, but you can bet I’ll be keeping my eyes open for them this year.



NASCAR Insight



Shane Carlson

Jimmie Johnson has 78 career NASCAR Sprint Cup Series victories prior to the publication deadline to his Hall-of-Fame-worthy resume. At age 41, he is on the verge of completing his 16th full-time season behind the wheel of the No. 48 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet, six seasons of which he has emerged as the series champion.

Now considered one of the sport’s elder statesmen, and as he continues to win races and be competitive, triple digits in the win column is not out of the question. It’s just a matter of whether Johnson wants to hang around to reach the milestone.

In this day and age, it’s uncommon for drivers to race into their fifties, and I certainly do not envision Johnson bucking that trend. I can see him racing for another four or five years, tops. He has a family like so many of the other drivers and wants to be there for his kids, and enjoy time away from the racetrack eventually. He’s not driven by accolades, and he will not be racing if he fails to remain competitive enough for his liking.

The feat is possible, but he will need to average 7.3 wins per season for the next three seasons for it to happen when he’s 44, or average 5.5 wins over the next four seasons. Obviously, you can’t win a fraction of a race, so those numbers actually round up.

As is stands right now, Johnson is five wins shy of reaching Cale Yarborough’s mark of 83 wins and is six wins shy of tying Darrell Waltrip and Bobby Allison with 84 wins.

If Johnson is able to reach 84 wins, it will put him fourth on the all-time win list, tied with the aforementioned Waltrip and Allison, and he would then trail just Jeff Gordon (93), David Pearson (105), and Richard Petty (200).

The answer remains to be seen whether Johnson will reach 100 career wins, but even if he elects not to chase 100, he will go down as one of the best ever, if not the best, to ever climb behind the wheel.

Can Johnson Win 100?

One thing I have learned from studying Jimmie Johnson through the years is he and his team thrive on doubt. No one ever thought they would see Cale Yarborough’s then-record three consecutive titles record broken. Not only was it broken, it was destroyed by Johnson, who won five consecutive titles from 2006-2010 and added a sixth in 2013. They have overcome a lot of obstacles and doubt, so it really wouldn’t surprise me if he reached 100.

There is one thing for certain; Johnson’s sole focus right now is winning a seventh Sprint Cup Series title, which would put him in the hallowed territory of Earnhardt and Petty.



Bruce Nuttleman photo



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Random thoughts from the 2016 version of Oktberfest

By Dan Plan

After returning home from Oktoberfest this year, and realizing some of the amazing things I saw, I decided to write down a few of these items. The first item I noticed occurred on the first day of the event, as nearly 40 Sportsmen cars were on hand for this divisions final weekly event on Thursday. Competitors from numerous other race tracks in the region were on hand to help boost the number. This huge car count was then followed up by an astonishing 64 Super Late Models that took time on Friday night.

Despite what some might think, we do have it really good when it comes to asphalt tracks having similar rules in this area of the country

Kyle Stark took the Ultimate Challenge and started shotgun on the field for the Midwest Dash main event. Stark went on to pass the

entire field (20+ cars) and win the race. That's something you just don't see very much anymore.

Ty Majeski won every race he was in on Sunday; all three segments of the JMck63 and the Midwest Tour 200 lapper. Years ago, Dick Trickle won 5 features in 24 hours. Ty Majeski won 4 in less than 5 hours. That's a pretty big accomplishment.

One of the items that many may have overlooked in Sunday's main event was the charge through the field by Nick Murgic. Nick started almost a lap down due to an issue with his transponder, and still made his way into the top 10. One can only imagine where Nick would have finished if the transponder was working at the drop of the green flag.

And the favorite item I've notice over the last few years is drivers running special paint schemes (or wraps as the cool kids say today). It reminds me of the days when the local cars raced at the Minnesota State Fair and the guys would go the extra effort to make their cars look nice for the event. A few of the cool looking retro paint schemes this year belonged to; Bobby Wilberg with his tribute to Dick Trickle and "The FIB" Steve Rubek with his Ed Hoffman tribute ride.



Dan Plan photo



McClain Racing photo



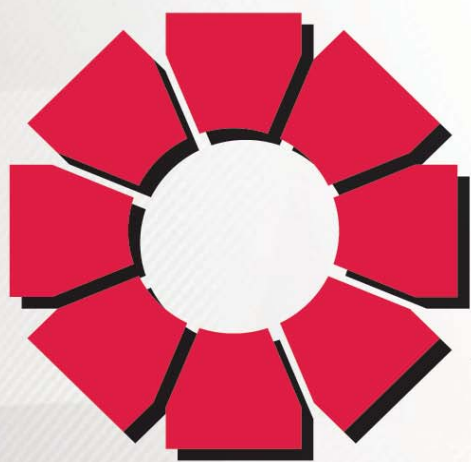
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