

THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

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THE MIDWEST'S SHORT TRACK AUTO RACING AUTHORITY

October 2018 Vol. 22, No. 6

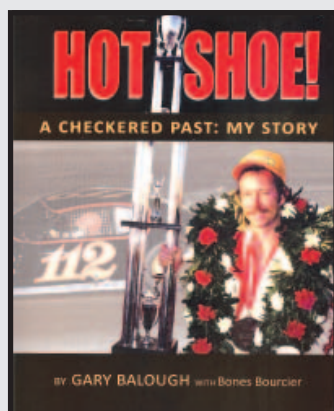


Oktoberfest Preview



The Month of Money

Inside...



Hot Shoe Balough



Room of Doom



Photo Gallery

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Publisher's Note

Racing According to Plan



Dan Plan

During Speedweeks this past winter, Gary Balough was on hand at Volusia County Speedway promoting his new book – “My Checkered Past”. I didn’t get a chance to stop and talk with Gary at the time but made a mental note that I definitely wanted to pick up a copy of the book when it became available. Thanks to our good friends at Coastal 181 Publishing (www.coastal181.com) I received a copy this summer.

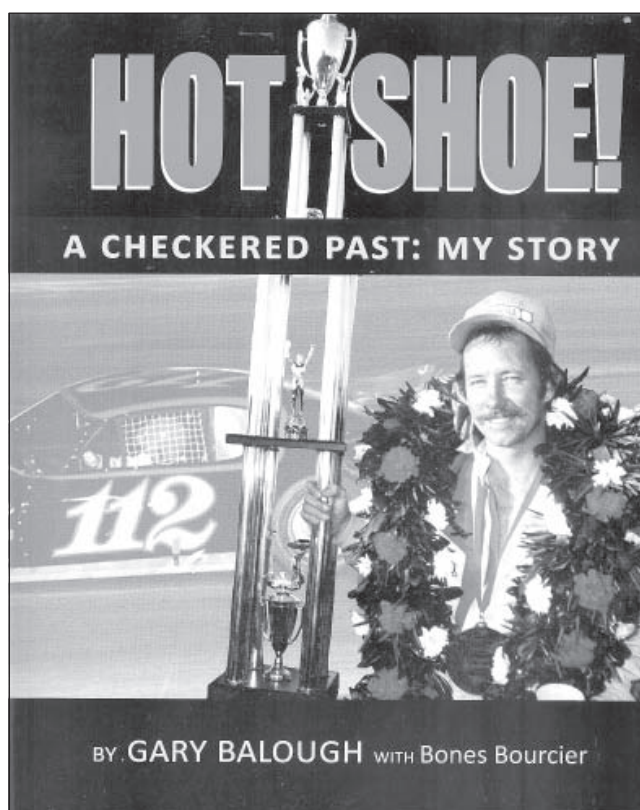
The reason I really wanted to get this book was due to my first trip to Speedweeks in 1980. This was before templates and ABC bodies had been developed for Late Models. Balough had the most radical looking car and everybody was scrambling to make aerodynamic changes to catch him.

While most kids at that age would have loved spending the day at Disney, I couldn’t wait to get back to New

Hot Shoe Balough

Smyrna each night to see what types of changes people had made to their cars to keep up with “Hot Shoe” Balough. If I recall correctly, the Late Models had an 8" spoiler rule, but no rule on how high the trunk could be. I remember walking into the pits one night, and the trunk on Jr. Hanley’s car had been reworked to be higher than the roof, and then had an 8" spoiler attached to it. It was an interesting time to say the least. I didn’t get to see every night at New Smyrna that year but the nights my dad took me are still fresh in my mind nearly 40 years later. I never found out how radical the cars ended up looking that year until about a month after we were home and the Checkered Flag Racing News came in the mail.

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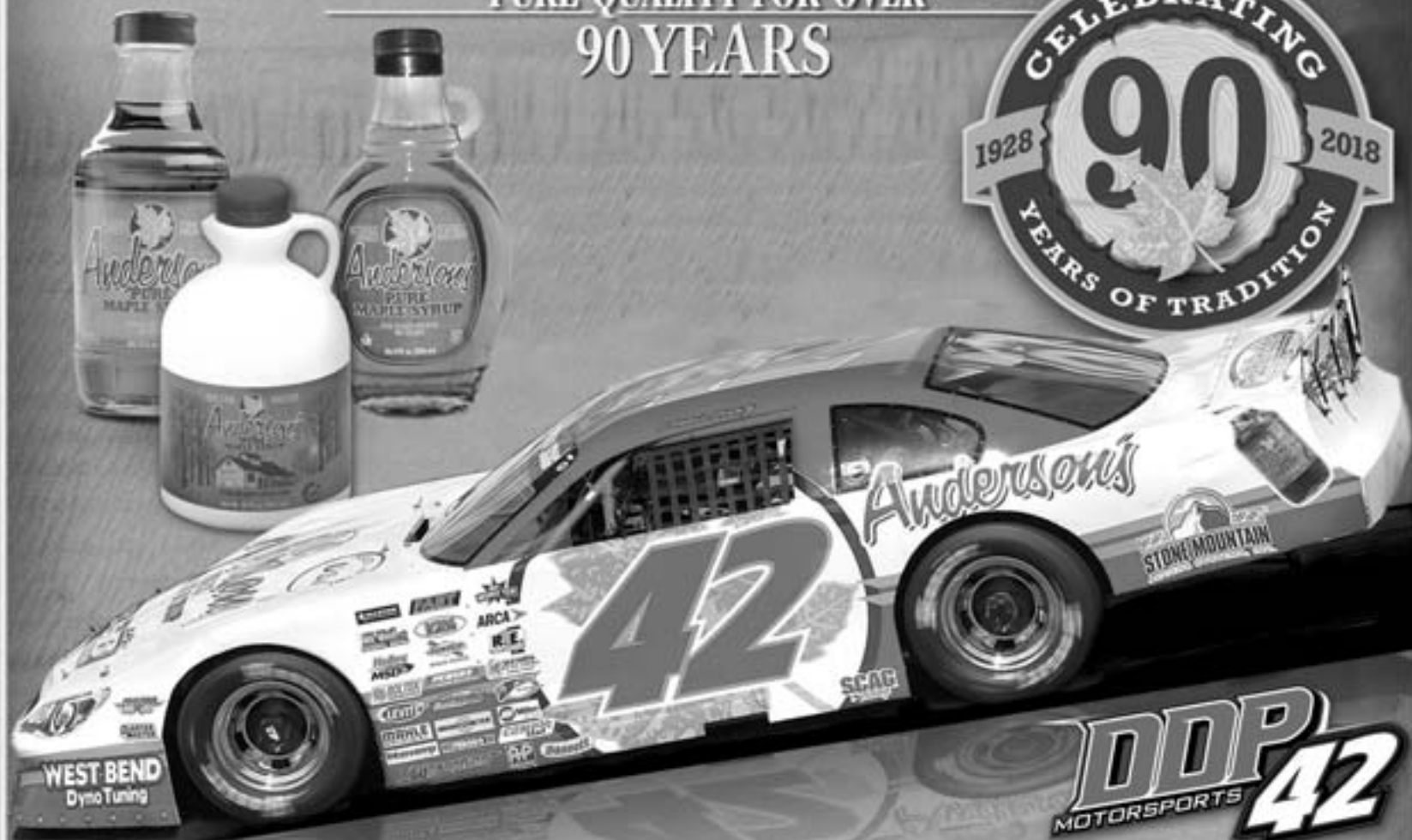
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Going in Circles



Charlie Spry

Early in September brings us the end of the regular season at most race tracks. All of the sweating out points chases comes to an end, with usually only one lucky team bringing home a championship per division. Driver skill, finances, team work, and plain old hard work pays off for the fortunate few.

At Madison International Speedway, Zack Riddle came home the winner in the NASCAR late model division. Zack came on very strong at the end of the season, winning his three feature wins late in the year, as well as setting fast time the final three nights, and winning two dash events. Zack also won the title here in 2015.

Jeremy Miller had a similar season, winning three features relatively late in the season and came up just a bit short. Jeremy had won titles here in 2006, 2009, 2010, and 2011, so was definitely no stranger to points battles late in the year.

Shaun Scheel had led the points early on, as did John Baumeister, but both dropped back late in the year. Scheel did grab the title at Slinger. Will Rece and Bobby Wilberg were in the thick of things as well.

Robert Hansberry Jr. took the sportsman track title in a year in which he started out not even running for points. He dominated once again early in the season, but the Hellenbrand brothers came on strong late in the season to make it interesting. I wrote about them in my last column, and they have really stepped it up. Ray won a feature at about mid-season, and finished second in points, but his brothers also got in on the act late in the season, as Bryan won one feature and Gary won two. Finishing third in points was Trevor Robinson, who did not record a single feature win, something that is rather surprising.

The Bandit division was controlled early on by the Schmidt brothers, as Dave won the opening night feature, then Nick showed his strength by winning seven down the stretch to take the title by a pretty good margin.

McKayla Adams ran real consistent all season long, having several top feature finishes, but not quite getting the win. Her consistency rewarded her with a strong second place point total.

At the Rockford Speedway, Jon Reynolds Jr. found himself leading the points from start to finish in the NASCAR late models. His competitors would close the gap up a bit from time to time, but this team always responded and stayed out front. If that wasn't enough, he also raced weekly at Madison, and some at slinger early in the season as well.

In the sportsman division, veteran Howie Ware finally scored that elusive championship. Finding himself right in the thick of things many other seasons, this was the year, as he avoided trouble that befell his competitors and had consistent top finishes all season long. Johnny Robinson II made it a battle but had some nights of bad luck which kept him from the title.

The American Short Tracker division saw Franc Beldowski serve notice on opening night when he dominated. Aaron Rude made a valiant effort, but a couple of DNF's were the difference. Many times in the season the feature would be won by which of the pair cleared traffic and gained the lead first. The two top competitors had a bunch of respect for each other, and it was fun watching everyone race in this division all the way through the pack. Beldowski had seven feature wins to Rude's five, with only Shannon Stoltz and Nick Cina breaking the stronghold of the pair in 2018.

*Going In Circles continued
on page 6*



Madison International Speedway wrapped up their 2018 season early in September. The three regular weekly division champions (from top to bottom) were; Zack Riddle - Late Model, Robert Hansberry Jr. - Sportsman and Nick Schmidt - Bandit.

All photos courtesy of Jess Riedner

Going In Circles continued from page 5

Kevin Memoli came home the champion in the Roadrunner class. The former dirt racer built an El Camino Roadrunner class car a few years ago and struggled, saying building that car was the “Biggest mistake of my life.” After some frustration, he and his team tried again, building his current Chevelle, and gaining much speed and confidence. He got the

championship over Robbie Robinson in a close one, as Robinson was no slouch either. Wednesday night champion Chad Lounsbury was also right in the mix.

The Original Sixer class raced on Wednesdays for the most part, with a few Saturdays added to the mix. Their season championship was not settled until the night of thrills on Sept. 15th. Throughout the season Thomas Andrus was pretty much the guy to beat, as

he won the majority of the feature events run. Sean Worman finished second in this division which saw incredible growth throughout the season and become a crowd favorite.

Next issue I will bring you some news from the big post-season shows, the National Short Track Championships at Rockford, some Oktoberfest tidbits, and the Bahama Bracket Nationals at Rockford.



Guy Adams/HotShot Photography



Guy Adams/HotShot Photography

"Driver X" Jon Reynolds Jr. and "Fearless Franc" Beldowski were two drivers to capture titles at Rockford Speedway this year.



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Racing Nuggets



PJ "Jacklyn" Nuttleman

There's a new sheriff in town for Oktoberfest and his reputation precedes him. Ricky Brooks, the famous (or infamous, depending upon who you talk to) tech director from the south is heading north to La Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway to lend a guiding hand to the 49th annual Oktoberfest Race Weekend.

In addition to freelancing for various special events and series across the country, Brooks has been the head tech at Five Flags Speedway in Pensacola, Florida. He's a southeastern boy from birth—and cut his teeth in racing. His father, Rex snagged a championship at Five Flags, and that's also where Ricky started racing. He piloted a car on and off between 1987 through 2000. When asked if he still had any interest in racing, he promptly replied “of course,” but added that it's just way too expensive nowadays.

I think anyone who races can agree with the statement that the sport IS getting extremely costly to compete. Brooks has begun to tackle the problem and has helped to drive the cost down through his involvement in the creation of a universal Super Late Model compliance system that is used across the country. It's still coming together without a whole lot of differences. Brooks will be at Oktoberfest Race Weekend this year, working with ARCA Midwest Tour promoter, Gregg McKarns to bring it one step closer.

“Just because we have a common set of rules doesn't mean they're being teched that way,” he said. That's still part of the equation and he and McKarns have already had that discussion.

Brooks “gets” auto racing. He understands the challenges and concerns of both the promoters and the racers, and is obviously a huge proponent of cost-saving measures for all parties. His no-nonsense

Room of Doom Comes to Fest



Bruce Nuttleman photo

approach to tech is pretty straight-forward and two-fold.

Tech officials need to be consistent in their teching of cars. He's a firm believer that all tech officials should have experience either driving a race car, working on a race car, or being on a pit crew. That hands-on knowledge is instrumental in understanding what a driver and team are bringing to the table.

Secondly, Brooks says racers must follow the rules or be disqualified. There is no grey area with Ricky Brooks, but the good news is he provides VERY thorough and frequent pre-tech opportunities for teams, so there really is no excuse for not passing tech. Even an honest mistake can be caught in pre-tech, before it bites you after qualifying or a big race.

Some perceive the “no grey area” mentality as Brooks being a total hard ass when it comes to tech. Others choose to look at it as you're better off bringing a car that is completely legal to a race where he's involved.

My husband, Toby Nuttleman has received a reputation over the years for being extremely adept at dancing in the grey areas of the rule book. I can assure you, he thoroughly enjoys having Brooks at the helm for tech duties at any race in which he has a car entered. According to Toby, he says that it puts his mind at ease knowing that everybody is, without a doubt, held to the same standard—regardless of relationship, financial status, or silver-tongue. Everyone is treated the same in the “Room of Doom,” which racers have dubbed Brooks' tech shed.

Some people roll their eyes at the idea of promoting the moniker “Room of Doom.” But as with anything,

good marketing is the key for a successful business. And if someone survives the “Room of Doom,” you know they're running a completely legal car. Brooks has built himself a nice little niche market of running top-notch tech departments at big races.

It's because of Brooks' relationship with McKarns that the Snowball Derby actually attempted controlled cautions two years ago at Five Flags Speedway. Controlled cautions DEFINITELY curb costs at big races, by preventing the need for pit crews capable of doing blazing-fast, live pit stops. It's no secret that there are MANY teams hiring top-notch pit crews for those live stop races, like the Derby.

I can remember the first year Toby went to the Snowball Derby with Ty Majeski. Their team was filled with a bunch of middle-aged, Midwestern, cheese-curd-eating, beer bellied boys and they were up against some top-flight NASCAR pit crews. They would come into the pits running in the top three or five, only to come out 12th or 15th. It was brutal, but God bless those boys for giving it their all. That's what short-track racing SHOULD be about—regular race teams competing against other regular race teams at the grassroots level.

That's one of the reasons why Brooks recognized that controlled cautions were a definite way to even the playing field for short track racers. He applauded what McKarns was doing and tried to implement it in the south.

Brooks says the Snowball Derby that year was one of the most frustrating he's ever experienced in his life.

Racing Nuggets continued on page 8

Racing Nuggets from page 7

Not just because of the incredible rain delays, (the race ended up being delayed by two days, because of it,) but because of the track's inability to execute the controlled cautions properly.

"It was an issue because race control and scoring were 100% against having controlled cautions, because they were lazy."

Brooks goes on to say that he had Gregg McKarns on the phone prior to the Derby that year to explain the mechanics of how controlled cautions work to the officials. The drivers did what they were supposed to do, but race control and scoring decided to throw red flags and basically constipate the entire race.

"I was so pissed, I could've choked somebody," Brooks fumed at the memory. "Instead of controlled cautions, we had controlled reds!"

It was ugly. I was at the Snowball Derby that year. All around me in the stands, the southern fans did NOT understand how it worked, and for good reason. We were seeing red flags, instead of controlled cautions. I tried to explain it to the best of my ability to those who were willing to listen. They did not like the idea of no "live" pit stops, a la NASCAR style. They were livid when race control at Five Flags was not implementing it properly—and they felt things were getting completely messed up with scoring. I have to admit, as someone who knew how the controlled cautions were supposed to work; it WAS frustrating to not see them executed properly.

From my perspective, it's not only a matter of convincing track promoters, officials, and race teams that controlled cautions are a vital component to ensure the future of short track racing, but it's also crucial that fans understand how they work and WHY they are so important. True fans should understand that it can be the life-blood to keep the heart of short track racing pumping. With casual fans, it may take

more effort to help them understand and appreciate the importance of them.

Either way, the learning curve for something new takes time to get down pat. Will they ever try to do controlled cautions again at the Snowball Derby?

"I see both sides," Brooks said. "I see Tim's side (Tim Bryant, promoter at Five Flags Speedway) that it's always been a hot pit stop race. If controlled cautions are done properly, it can be just as exciting of a race, as strategy still enters the picture. In today's world, that's a 5-8 thousand dollar cost that can be curbed" by not having to hire top-notch pit crews.

Brooks says controlled cautions are not going to be done this year, but eventually they will have to be done to reduce the cost of running the Snowball Derby.

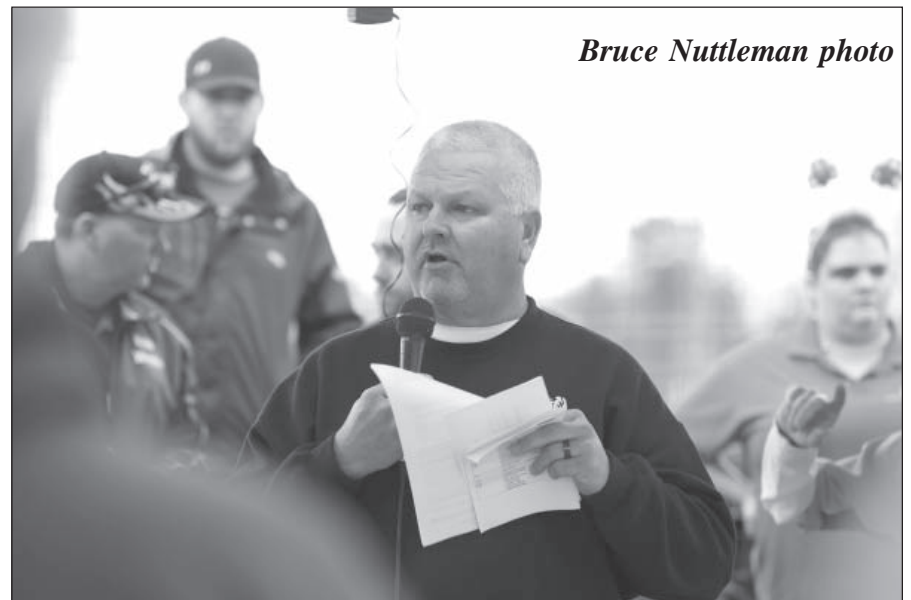
Controlled cautions are in play at Oktoberfest Race Weekend's big finale on Sunday. Brooks is looking forward to attending his first Fest this year.

"It's a new event for me. I know a bunch of the racers that are going to be there, but I'll be meeting a bunch of new people too. It's already a proven event," he said and added that he's looking forward to seeing what he might be able to contribute to make it even better.

Brooks wants short track racing to get back to thriving and growing. When asked what he feels the sport needs the most right now, he took some time to mull it over before responding.

This sport needs "people with a backbone that will stand up for what is right and not just what people want to hear with regard to rules." That could mean a promoter telling a part supplier (tires, bodies, engines) what they NEED to hear that will help the sport, and maybe not translate into a financial benefit for the promoter, series, or supplier.

"We don't have a lot of people knocking the door down to race these days," Brooks said. "We need them (racers) just as much as they need us (promoters/officials). If we're not all having fun, we won't be coming back." With such solid thoughts on



Bruce Nuttleman photo

short-track racing, I couldn't help but inquire what Brooks thought NASCAR could learn from this grassroots level.

"NASCAR needs to quit being assholes. They need to start treating people the way they want to be treated," he said. Specifically, Brooks feels that NASCAR needs to look at the rule book and make a decision AT THE TRACK and not the following week.

It would seem in NASCAR that "if you have more money than the next guy, you can cheat and get away with it," he says, "And that ain't right."

If you plan to try to push the envelope with regard to the rules at Oktoberfest after all of the pre-tech opportunities, be forewarned: You WILL get pinched. Brooks performs what is essentially a colonoscopy on cars.

Just ask Casey Roderick, who tried to put lead in the exhaust pipe, or Chase Elliott who had tungsten instead of lead for weight on his car, or Steven Wallace who tried to have a pocket full of sockets to help himself "make weight" after winning a race. Even my husband Toby has been pinched by Brooks on a rules infraction. (See Midwest Racing Connection, March 2017 issue, page 11.)

In short, having Ricky Brooks at Oktoberfest will help move the needle in the right direction for short-track racing. Given the fact that racers are constantly crying foul about other teams cheating, or officials having "favorites," having a guy like Brooks involved in the Fest program this year should shut those allegations down sharply.

Ricky Brooks' love of short-track racing cannot be tainted by the prospect of currying favor with any driver, promoter, or manufacturer. He cares more deeply about the future of short-track racing than my husband loves the Oktoberfest pork chop sandwiches, and believe me, Toby can pack away A LOT of those pork chop sandwiches.



Bruce Nuttleman photo

NSTC 2018



Doug Hornickel photos

The month of September closed out with the 53rd running of the National Short Track Championships at Rockford Speedway. Rain postponed the Big 8 Late Model main event to the Sunday show. Michael Bilderback picked up the win. The Super Late Model portion saw 2016 Kulwicki Driver Development champion Alex Prunty pick up back-to-back wins. Prunty joined the list of back-to-back winners that includes Jeremy Lepak, Eddie Hoffman, Steve Carlson, Joe Shear and Dick Trickle.

500 and Counting

Earlier this year, Kevin "Buzzy" Adams picked up his 500th career victory. Adams continued his winning ways through the month of September, picking the Modified portion of the Punky Manor Challenge of Champions at Red Cedar Speedway



Vance Birno photo



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Racin' Ryan Captures NASCAR Rookie Title



Martin DeFries photo



Bruce Nuttleman photo

With a solid season that included 6 top-5 finishes and 19 top-10's during 23 starts, Minnetonka resident "Racin'" Ryan Varner secured the 2018 Rookie of the Year title for the NASCAR Whelen All American Series. Out of the 24 feature events that took place at Elko Speedway, Varner only missed one over the course of the season. Varner also finished tenth in the Late Model standings at Elko to cap of his rookie Late Model season.

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Oktoberfest Preview



By Dan Plan

As we get ready for Oktoberfest to celebrate the 49th running of the event, I sat back and tried to recall my first visit to West Salem, Wisc. In looking through the past winners of the event, all the names were familiar, and my best guess would be my first visit was 1977. I can remember Larry Detjens running well at the Minnesota State Fair, reading about his win in the World Cup 400 at I-70 Speedway and then picking up the Oktoberfest win. I haven't missed one since.

Originally, as a kid in tow behind my parents, I was only able to attend the Sunday afternoon portion of the two-day show. Over the years, the event has grown to a four-day extravaganza, and it's a safe bet these days that I'm going to be there for all four days. This is one of the few events I pay no attention to the weather forecast. I'm going regardless of what the weatherman might say.

The list of previous winners is a "who's who" of Midwest racing. While most of the winners have come

from Wisconsin, travelers such as Butch Miller, Junior Hanley, Mark Martin and Jerry Markara dropped in to take the prize money out of state. Minnesota has been represented well by Dan Fredrickson taking the trophy back across the river 4 times in the past 10 years.

The 2017 version saw NASCAR Truck Champion Johnny Sauter pick up the win over defending 'Fest champion Ty Majeski and 4-time winner Fredrickson. Sauter lead most of the event, but a late race restart gave Majeski and Fredrickson a shot at the win. Sauter was able to pull away and pick up his first Oktoberfest title.

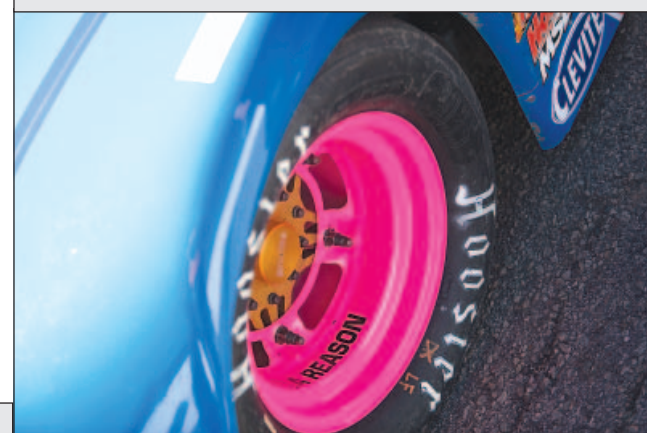
This year, things will wrap up on Sunday afternoon with the 200-lap championship for the ARCA Midwest Tour, the JMCK 63, Vintage Cars and the return Modifieds to Oktoberfest.

In addition to all the on-track action over the course of the weekend, there are tons of other activities that

continued on page 19

*Photos by Bruce Nuttleman
www.ultimatelapphoto.com*

The field takes the green at 'Fest in 2017 (top left), Johnny Sauter takes the checkered flag from Tom White (top right), the famous "Lumpy Pink" wheels on race winner Johnny Sauter's car at last year's event (below, top) Johny and "Marty on the Mic" in victory lane (below, bottom)



The one guy that grants permission to enter the track, all weekend long, "Stop and Go" Fred (left photo), The Reffner tribute Javelin of Johnny Gilbertson (right photo)





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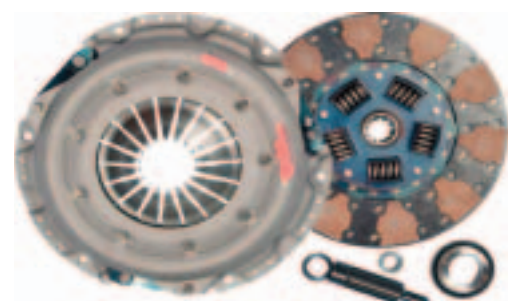
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Family Tradition

Bryce Blohm (left) and Taylor Goldman (right) both followed in the father's footsteps and picked up championships this year. Goldman's title was the first won by a female driver in the 53-year history of Elko Speedway



Martin DeFries photo



Martin DeFries photo

THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

Photo Gallery



Johnny Sauter holds back Jonathan Eilen in Midwest Tour action at the Dells
Jeff Blaser photo



A stout field of Bandolero's at Madison International Speedway
Jess Riedner photo



Joe and Lawrence Berthiaume prep the car prior to their first win of the season
Martin DeFries photo



Jeff Spacek and Ryan Wiome battle for the lead at Spring Lake Speedway
Tom Loos photo



AJ Diemel swept both nights of Late Models during the Legendary 100
Vince Peterson photo



Brandon Riedner reading a slightly weathered copy of MRC
Jess Riedner photo

The Legendary 100

In this part of the country, the second weekend following Labor Day is when all WISSOTA divisions gather for their big show. For the drivers that can't afford to take 3 or 4 days off work, there is another option; The Legendary 100. The event is a multiple day event, but each night is a complete show, with no requirements to race the previous evening.

One of the things unique things about the Legendary 100 at Cedar Lake Speedway is the opening night show on Thursday. The opening night includes divisions that are not typically the "premier" division on a regular race night. In addition, several divisions are on hand that only compete one night a year at Cedar Lake. The Thursday night event has been rained out the past several years but was able to take place this year.

Winners for the weekend included; AJ Diemel (Late Model sweep), Darrell Nelson and Josh Angst (Modifieds), Nick Oreskovich and Terran Spacek (Pro Stock), Les Duellman and Scott Splittstosser (Midwest Modified), Harry Hansen (Traditional Sprint), Lance Hoffer (Limited Late Model), Eric Olson (Street Stock), Michael Blevins (Pure Stock) and Jake Hatterman (Hornets).

Featured below are the podium finishers from the Thursday night show. Photos courtesy of Vince Peterson – Track Rat Photos.



NASCAR Home Track State Champions



In mid-September, the NASCAR Whelen All-American Series announced their state champions. Regional winners included; Left photo - Jon Reynolds Jr (Illinois), middle photo - Jacob Goede (Minnesota) and right photo - Steve Carlson (Wisconsin).



Kim Kemperman photo



Martin DeFries photo



Bruce Nuttleman photo

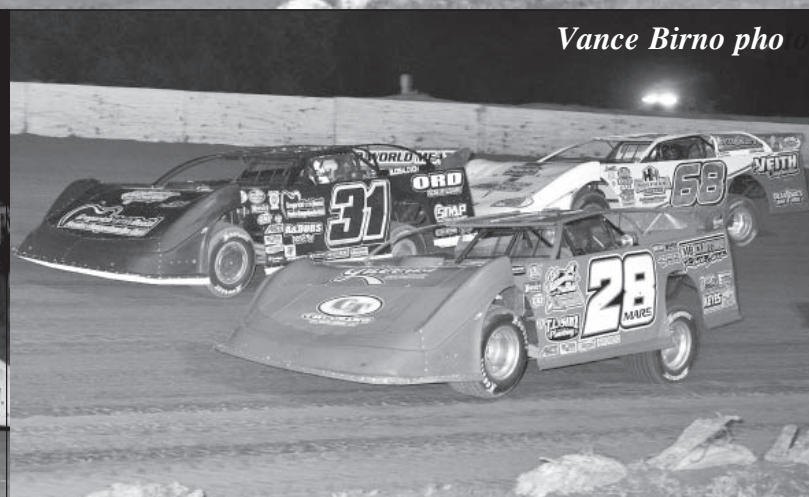
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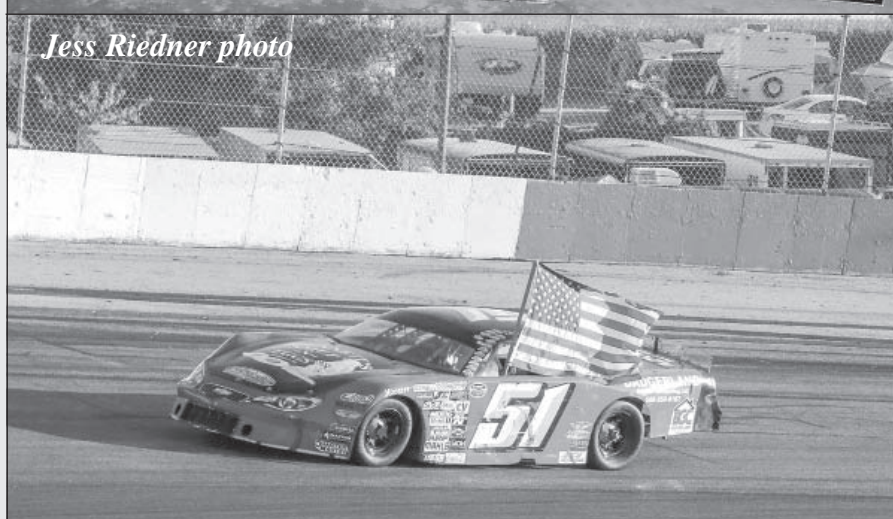
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Tom Krobs photo



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Races fans in the Upper-Midwest are fortunate to have numerous, season ending special events. The events are often referred to as "The month of money", as the shows often feature increased payouts for the racers in the region. These events usually begin around Labor Day. The Silver 1000 at Proctor Speedway is held the Thursday prior to Labor Day weekend each year and kicks things off for the dirt fans. Each weekend sees different tracks host travelling drivers taking on the home town heroes. Following the Silver 1000, it's the Labor Day Shootout, Legendary or WISSOTA 100, Punky Manor Challenge of Champions and the Red Clay Classic. On the pavement side of the house, fans have shows such as the Wisconsin State Championships at Jefferson, September Showdown at the Dells, National Short Track Championships at Rockford and Oktoberfest. These days the phrase may need to be changed to "The month's of money" as the special event season now spreads well into the month of October.

Auto Racing Facts, Observances and Opinions



Dale P. Danielski

Well we finally got to a dirt show here in 2018, spending a very entertaining evening at the Deer Creek Speedway of Racine, MN., August 25th for their season Championship event.

Too often at dirt shows, by feature time the track is pretty much sealed over producing about one and a half grooves of racing. Now of course you can do an hour of "farming" but to me dragging a show out that long with the hope it might improve main event racing, is not the thing to do. That wasn't the case here at Deer Creek. The track was in great shape from the

get go, and actually got more racy as the night went on! Multiple grooves for racing, with the fast way around inches from the outside wall. Now that was fun stuff to watch.

With it being championship night at the track and points ramifications with WISSOTA nationally, a number of drivers that maybe wouldn't have been there showed up for the event. With all that, a fair amount of drama was prevalent which certainly added to the excitement on the evening. I used to get to more dirt shows than I do now, and after catching this program and seeing what I've missed, I need to get back in that mode. All in all great stuff at Deer Creek Speedway.

It was off to the Greg Oliver promoted Tomah-Sparta Speedway, Tomah, WI., for some CWRA Stars to Legends Tour action, Sunday afternoon, September 16th., for the Dick Trickle Classic. The event featured the Super Late Model type race car for the first time in over 20 years and they put on a great afternoon of racing. The day was spent honoring Dick Trickle who raced and won at this track back in the 1960s. To honor Dick, race cars that represented eras of his racing were on display. A Doug Rogers, 1963 Ford, replica car of what Dick drove at this track back in 1966 was on hand and paced one of the 35 lap feature events. Talk about old time memories, fans were abuzz seeing that car on the track. A car Dick drove in the late 1980s and early '90s, restored to original Miller High Life Beer livery by John Gilbertson was on hand as well with Paul Gilbertson behind the wheel, pacing the second 35 lap main much to the delight of the enthusiastic crowd on hand. With all that going on it was time to do a little racing!

A number of folks were very concerned how things would go for the Super Late type car at Tomah as the track is very narrow and tough to pass on. With 21 and 22 cars starting the mains respectively on the 3/8 mile paved oval, no one needed to worry, as other than a few minor spins, great, competitive, side by side racing, featuring much passing on the outside was seen by all! Interesting to note that in the 1st main it was a Limited type race car driven by Jesse Bernhagen coming from deep in the field to win! The 2nd main was ultra competitive with Joey Pontbriand from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan making the 5 hour tow worthwhile winning the 35 lap event. All in all, a great day of racing honoring a true legend of short track racing, Dick Trickle.

Here and there...Winners at Deer Creek on their Championship night of racing included Josh Angst in Modifieds, Ryan Wiome in Super Stocks, Danny Richards in Street Stocks, Alex Williamson in Midwest Modifieds and JT Wasmund in B Mods. Kind of cool to see names like Stoa, Sorenson, Timm, Hillson, Richards, Duellman, Redetzke, Brauer, to name some. In some cases they were the Dads still racing, and in some instances the kids, In some cases it was both! Regardless, it definitely means I'm getting a bunch older! Regular CWRA Stars to Legends Tour driver, Mark Mackesy was having engine issues at Tomah and his racing in the event was in jeopardy. Mackesy still has a shot at the 2018 Tour Championship, but who should come to the rescue and help him get his race car ready? None other than Tour point leader, Jeff Weinfurter. Hard not to appreciate that kind of co-operation especially in today's high stress, hide everything on your car World of racing...Finishes on the day in the Dick Trickle Classic, in main one, Bernhagen, Hunter Stenson, Darek Gress, Darren Jackson, Mackesy, Weinfurter, Frank Nitzke, Putch Bentley, Derrick Van Dreel and Rachel Kallas. Main two found Pontbriand 1st, followed by Bernhagen, Weinfurter, Stenson, Jackson, Gress, Rob Christen, Mackesy, Kallas and Bentley...Jesse Bernhagen made a run at Joey Pontbriand in the 2nd main event but was forced to settle for 2nd. We figure with the burn-out he did after his win in main won, the rubber he didn't have left on his tires proved the difference!

Was really saddened by the news of "The Green Mamba" Doug Rose passing away in a crash. You know, every time he put on that burning up a car show I couldn't help but be impressed. It was pretty much the same each time, but it was just, the neatest thing. Sad we won't be able to witness that again.

It was season finale time for the CWRA Stars to Legends Tour as presented by Smiley's Old Time Diner, at Marshfield Motor Speedway, Marshfield, WI., 9/29/18. Although some drama took place, it was Jeff Weinfurter hanging on for the Championship with a come from behind win in the 2nd 30 lap feature



Jeff Weinfurter #3 celebrates his Feature win and 2018 CWRA Stars to Legends Tour Championship at Marshfield Motor Speedway, Saturday, September 29th.

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Racing Facts, Observances and Opinions from page 15

race. Weinfurter had broken a spindle in feature number one departing the race and losing points to 2nd place in the Championship hunt, Darren Jackson. The second 30 found Weinfurter passing 19 cars on the way to the win and Championship! Some great racing on the day which also found Jesse Bernhagen capturing "Rookie of the Year" honors over Brian Henry. Plans are underway for next year's Tour with a similar schedule of events. Finish in 30 lap feature one was Chad Butz winning his first Tour race followed by Neil Knoblock, Darek Gress, Dan Lindsley, Putch Bentley and Corey Manders. 30 lap feature #2 had Weinfurter 1st, followed by Lindsley, Butz, Jason Stark, Derrick Van Dreel and Knoblock.

Champions Reunion 10 set for Sunday, October 7th, from 11am-2pm, as part of Oktoberfest racing at La

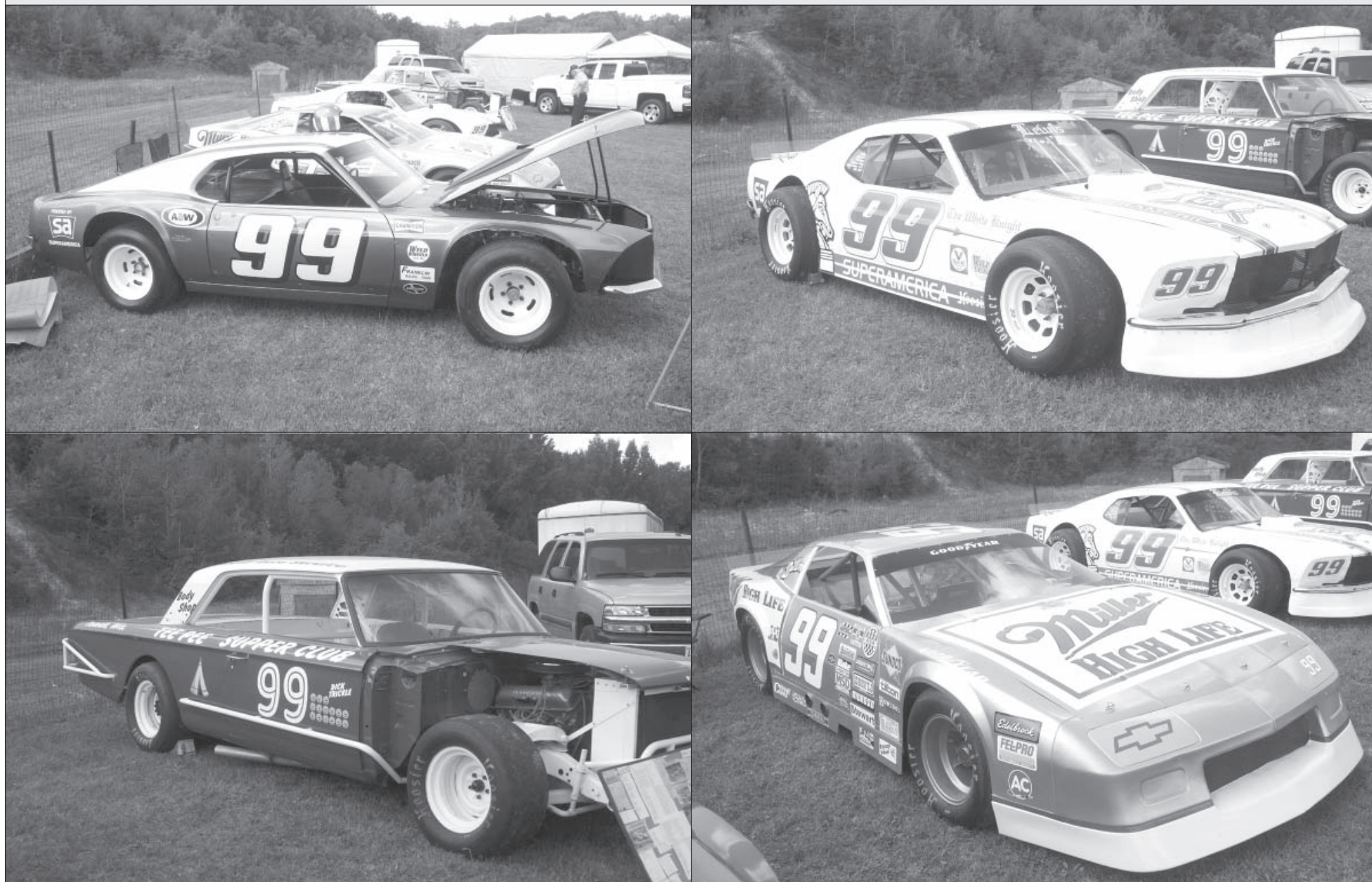
Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway, West Salem, WI., is drawing plenty of attention with racers from no less than 4 eras of racing planning to attend. Of course the Stars of the show will be Tom Reffner who will meet and greet fans and also be racing an AMC Javelin that looks exactly like the one he won 67 Features with in 1975 racing in the day's Vintage race, and Mike Miller who will be on hand along with the race car he drove in 1981. A fun day for all, open to all former Champions in any Division, any track or series, or an Oktoberfest main event winner eligible...as long as they haven't raced in the last three years.

And looking back in time on Friday, June 19th, 1964 at Tomah-Sparta Speedway, it was Everett Fox winning the feature race followed by Lyle Nabbefeldt, Marlin Walbeck, Dave Marcis and Marv Marzofka. The semi-feature went to Dick Trickle followed by John Mc Namara, Dave Larson and Larry Olson. The consolation race went to Loren Iverson, followed by,

Cecil Henderson and Wayne Kittleson. Heat race winners were Iverson, Larson, McNamara and Fox. Fast time went to Fox at 16:48 seconds around the 1/4 mile paved oval. Looking back on August 26, 1966, at Tomah-Sparta it was Marv Marzofka winning the 30 lap feature over Dick Trickle. Semi-main honors went to Gary Kneisley. Consolation race winner was Tom Jensen with heat wins going to Mike Finnigan, Homer Spink and Trickle. Fast timer was Marzofka. Looking back to October 7th, 1990 it was Scott Hansen winning the 100 lap ARTGO Oktoberfest feature over Steve Carlson, Joe Shear, Kevin Cywinski, Jim Weber and Steve Holzhausen.

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 Pics...1970 Ford Mustang driven by Dick Trickle in 1973. John "Rags" Reget had the car on display at the Dick Trickle Classic, Sunday afternoon, September 16th. Ken Lewis had the White Knight, Ford Mustang look alike car on display at the Trickle Classic. Trickle drove a car that looked like this back in the mid-1970s. The 1963 Ford look alike car that Dick Trickle drove to the 1966 Rockford National Short track Championship win in as well as victories at Tomah, restored to look original by Doug Rogers. The John Gilbertson Camaro driven by Dick Trickle back in the late 1980s and early '90s.



Thunderstruck 93

For the first time in the history of the event, the 2018 version of the Dan Ryan Memorial Thunderstruck race at Elko Speedway featured the Big 8 Late Model series as the headline division. Local competitors Jacob Goede and Owin Giles had this photo finish to the event. Giles picked up his first win in the Big 8 series by inches over Goede.



Martin DeFries photo



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Full Throttle



Shane Carlson

Jesse Iwuji has taken an unconventional approach to reaching his dream of becoming a NASCAR driver.

Iwuji's parents immigrated to America from Nigeria in the 1980s and Iwuji grew up in Carrollton, Texas playing high school football. Upon graduation he entered the United States Naval Academy, where he continued his football career as a free safety and also competed on the track and field team.

Iwuji, 31, graduated in 2010 and became a surface warfare officer, and has since deployed twice. In 2012 he deployed to Bahrain aboard the Exultant and later deployed as a member of the USS Comstock. In 2017, he transitioned from active duty into the Navy Reserve, and is now stationed in Ventura, California.

Most drivers these days climb into their first go-kart by age five and have a progression mapped out. Iwuji didn't get behind the wheel of a racecar until age 27. Since then, he has competed in the Whelen All-American Series, NAPA Big 5 Late Model Series, K&N Pro Series East and West, the ARCA Racing Series and most recently made his NASCAR Camping World Truck Series debut at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park in August, finishing 25th.

Iwuji credits the military and his football career for

helping shape his racing career. "Everyone has their part to do and if that doesn't happen, that can end your day and end it badly," he said.

Though finding the balance between a military life and a racing life has its challenges that most other people would never even think about, Iwuji has no plans to halt either one anytime soon. He plans to continue his Navy career for another 12 to 13 years until he can retire from the Navy while at the same time, aspiring to compete at the NASCAR premier series level.

"My goal is the Cup Series," Iwuji said.

In 2015, Iwuji's passion for racing was developed when he started to dabble with drag racing and road course racing while stationed to shore duty. From there, he had one goal in mind; to become a professional racecar driver.

He earned a license and focused on stock car racing, where he landed an opportunity to drive for Performance P1 Motorsports after a successful test session if he could fund the ride. He fronted the \$5,000 per-race fee for his first start at California's Irwindale Speedway.

The experience had Iwuji looking for more and he started to crowdfund his racing career to get him to the racetrack and behind the wheel.

Iwuji began competing full-time in 2016 with the NASCAR K&N Pro Series West in the No. 36 for Patriot Motorsports Group, where he finished 10th in points and 14th in points the following season.

This year, Iwuji has made six starts in the ARCA Racing Series but has been plagued by mechanical failures or crashes in five of those starts.

In his Truck Series debut in late August, Iwuji started 31st and finished in 25th, having run the race incident-free in outdated equipment for Reaume Brothers Racing. Owner Josh Reaume said Iwuji is slated for two more races in 2018, at ISM Raceway and the season finale at Homestead-Miami Speedway in November.

The plan for Iwuji is to get ready for Daytona in the offseason and focus on getting enough sponsorship to run the entire season in 2019.

Discount Taxi Driver of the Month Brent Kane



Hometown: Lonsdale, MN
Division: Thunder Car



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Oktoberfest prview continued from page 11

take place. Everything from pumpkin carving and pet costume parades to post race parties in the exhibition hall.

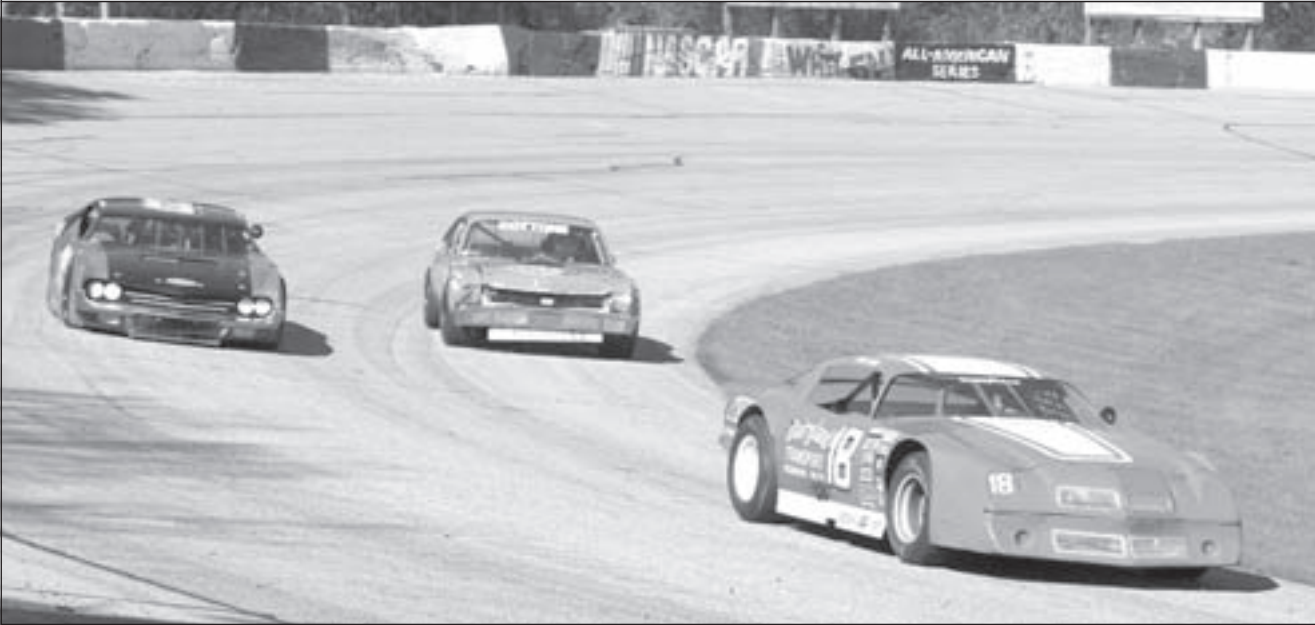
But the best part of the weekend is the amount of Late Model racing that takes place. At the big pavement Late Model shows in the South, they'll practice the Late Models for four days and race one day. At Oktoberfest, the Late Models get one full day of practice and race all four days. #FestIsBest

OKTOBERFEST Race Weekend Champions

- 2017 – Johnny Sauter
- 2016 – Ty Majeski
- 2015 – Dan Fredrickson
- 2014 – Travis Sauter
- 2013 – Nathan Haseleu
- 2012 – Travis Sauter
- 2011 – Travis Sauter
- 2010 – Dan Fredrickson
- 2009 – Travis Sauter
- 2008 – Dan Fredrickson
- 2007 – Dan Fredrickson
- 2006 – Steve Holzhausen
- 2005 – Tim Schendel
- 2004 – Brian Hoppe
- 2003 – Tim Schendel
- 2002 – Brian Hoppe
- 2001 – Eddie Hoffman
- 2000 – Steve Carlson
- 1999 – Eddie Hoffman
- 1998 – Eddie Hoffman
- 1997 – Terry Baldry
- 1996 – Joe Shear
- 1995 – Joe Shear
- 1994 – Joe Shear
- 1993 – Matt Kenseth
- 1992 – Tom Carlson
- 1991 – Tom Carlson
- 1990 – Scott Hansen
- 1989 – Joe Shear
- 1988 – Ted Musgrave
- 1987 – Dick Trickle
- 1986 – Rich Bickle, Jr.
- 1985 – John Ziegler
- 1984 – Bryan Reffner
- 1983 – Tom Reffner
- 1982 – Jim Back
- 1981 – Junior Hanley
- 1980 – Mark Martin
- 1979 – Butch Miller
- 1978 – Dave Watson
- 1977 – Larry Detjens
- 1976 – Larry Detjens
- 1975 – Tom Reffner
- 1974 – Jerry Makara
- 1973 – Marv Marzofka
- 1972 – Joe Shear
- 1971 – Dick Trickle
- 1970 – Tom Reffner

You're always greeted with a smile at the gate during Oktoberfest (top photo), Majeski and Fredrickson both tried to keep pace with Jahnnny Sauter last year (middle photo), Vintage cars are a fan favorite for many attendees (bottome photo)

Bruce Nuttleman photos



Publishers note from page 3

Later on that year, Stock Car Racing Magazine had a picture of the big-block Modified dubbed “The Batmobile”. Balough dominated Syracuse with this car at the end of the season. The car was lettered just like the black and gold #112 Late Model at New Smyrna. I



Dan Plan photo

immediately thought this guy was pretty darn cool. He kicked ass at the World Series in February in a pavement Late Model and then won at Syracuse in October in a big block Modified in the same year.

As the years went on (about 40 of them) I’ve watched Gary’s career from afar. He was making headlines in the trade papers for his short track wins, but also

made headlines in the mainstream media for the wrong reasons. This book gave me the opportunity to learn more about his past, gain insight into what it took to be successful in short track racing in his era, his foray into NASCAR racing, and his ultimate downfall due to federal charges relating to drug trafficking.

The book is like a combination of a racing movie, an episode of Miami Vice and a prison documentary. The only difference is, Balough lived through all of this. Gary made two big mistakes that lead to time behind bars. On the other

hand, he also helped a lot of people before and after serving his time and continues to be involved in the sport to this day. I would highly recommend picking up a copy for some good winter time reading.



Dan Plan photo

Limited Late Models And Larry Fitzsimmons

One of the growing divisions in the Upper-Midwest the last few seasons has been the USRA Limited Late Models. This division was created just a few years ago by Mississippi Thunder Speedway’s Bob Timm. The Limited Late Models race regularly at Cedar Lake Speedway and Mississippi Thunder Speedway, along with being part of the Punky Manor Challenge of Champions at Red Cedar Speedway. *The Midwest Racing Connection* recently caught up with veteran racer Larry Fitzsimmons to discuss his move to the USRA Limited Late Models.

When did you start racing, where at, what type of car?

A long time ago, back in my early 20’s. I started out in the Enduro’s at Raceway Park in Shakopee. Did a couple of years in that and then moved over to Elko. We ran a Street Stock for about 4 races and then

went to Rockford and totaled it. After that I built a Thunder Car.

What was your next move after the Thunder Car?

From there we moved up to Sportsman. From the Sportsman we moved to the Super Trucks and then the Late Models on the pavement.

Following your pavement racing, you moved over to dirt racing. What led you to switching from Super Stocks to the Limited Late Models?

Actually, I was ready to quit. I was tired of beating up a car and they started doing these (Limited Late Models). They seemed less expensive and it’s a type of a car that you can do more changes with.

These days there are now two types of Limited Late Models. What are the main differences between the Western MN Limited Late Models and the USRA Limited Late Models?

Yeah, I-94 and Viking run similar rules. They added one different motor option out West, a different left rear shock and use Hoosier tires instead of American Racers.

Do you see one set of rules being an advantage over the other?”

I don’t believe so. I go out and run the stuff in the



Dan Plan photo

West all the time and I’m just as competitive over there as I am over here.

Do you think it would be beneficial for the two groups to get together and make the rules identical for the Limited Late Models in the region?

Absolutely. A lot of the USRA guys want to go run over there, they just don’t want to have to buy the tires.

***Actually, I was ready to quit.
- Larry Fitzsimmons on why he switched to
Limited Late Models***



Vince Peterson photo

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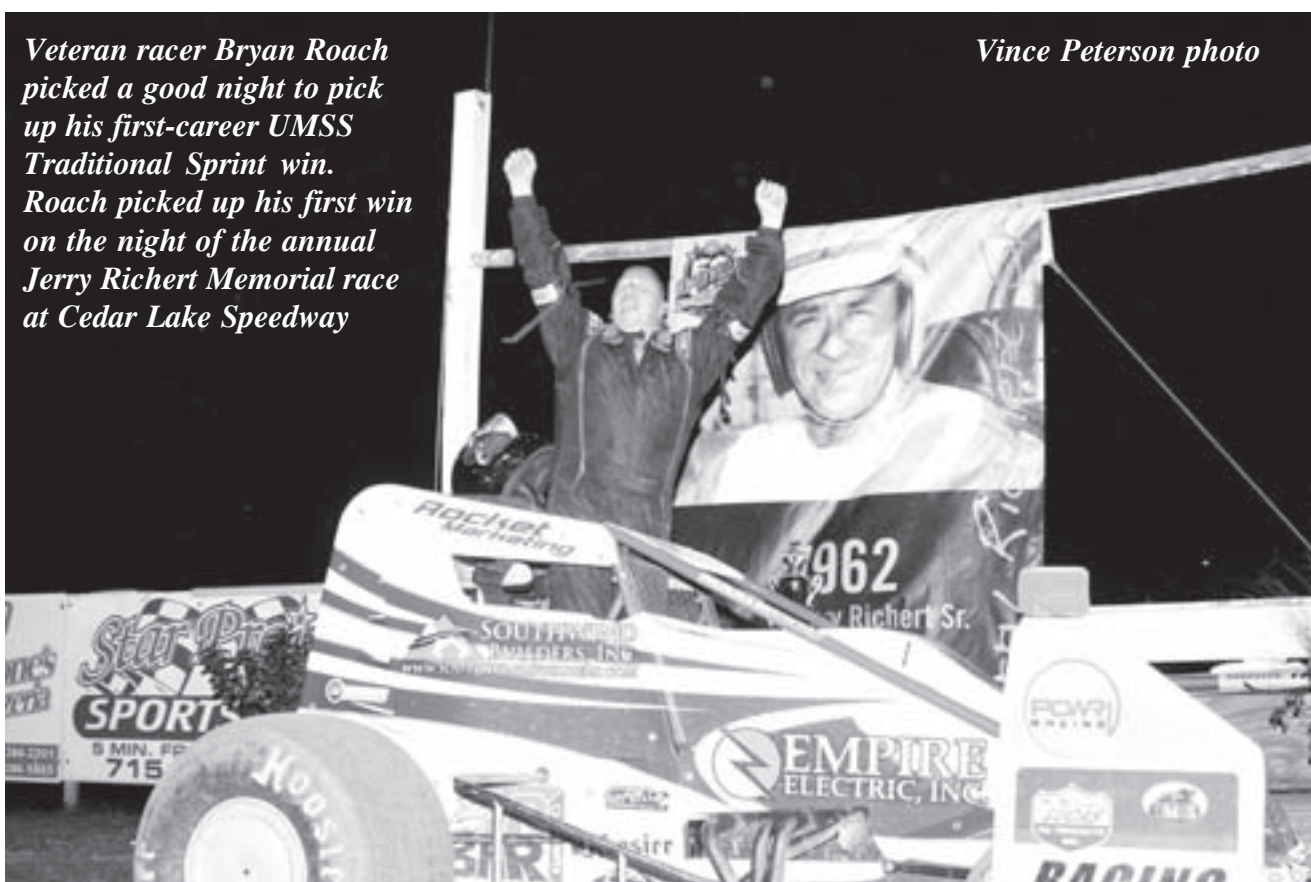
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Veteran racer Bryan Roach picked a good night to pick up his first-career UMSS Traditional Sprint win. Roach picked up his first win on the night of the annual Jerry Richert Memorial race at Cedar Lake Speedway

Vince Peterson photo



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