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Publisher's Note

Racing According to Plan



Dan Plan

It's been a busy month since our final print issue came out over Labor Day weekend. This column will focus on some of the highlights of what we've watched over the last month.

Raceway Park in Shakopee, MN held its final event over the Labor Day weekend, and it wasn't long before the heavy equipment came in to tear things down. All kinds of rumors (some of them quite humorous and unbelievable, yet people were claiming the stories to be true) never came to the forefront. The final weekend at Raceway was entertaining as



**It didn't take long for the heavy equipment to show up at Raceway Park
(Dan Plan photo)**

always; close racing, point battles, rollovers and everything else a race fan could expect on a night at the track. The final race of the weekend (and final race ever at Raceway) just happened to be the Great North Legends race won by Benny Van Cleve. The Legends look similar to the Modifieds that raced back in the 1950's and 1960' at Raceway Park, so it only seemed fitting a car with a Coupe style body would close out the weekend.

The joint is all but gone now, and it's not likely another facility will be built. I could be wrong, but personally, I don't see it happening. Fans came out in droves over the final weekend, but it was too little too late. As the great 80's Hair Band, Cinderella once sang; Don't Know What You Got (Till It's Gone).

Following the demolition of Raceway Park, our next show was the annual Jerry Richert Memorial at Cedar Lake Speedway. This is a show that Open Wheel fans should pack the place for. The event features the 410 and 360 Sprints along with Vintage cars. In my opinion, this is one of the best open wheel shows around, North of Knoxville. The Richert Memorial provides more cars, better racing and the ticket price is far less than other open wheel tours that come to town. The 410's are sanctioned by the IRA, and also have a few travelers from Knoxville and



**Jeremy Wolff went for a wild ride on the final night at Raceway Park.
(Martin DeFries photo)**

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Grand Forks make the trip. Grand Forks hot shoe Mark Dobmeier finally had luck go his way and ran away with the 410 portion of the show this year. The

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North Dakota's Mark Dobmeier picked up his first Richert Memorial trophy
(Dan Plan photo)

NVSR that were on hand and it's a pretty good night at the races.

Next up was the Legendary 100 at Cedar Lake. What started out as beautiful weather on Thursday and Friday evening for the weekend, quickly turned into a gloomy/dreary final day on Saturday. We pulled up stakes Saturday afternoon in hopes of catching season championship night at Elko, but the weather was just as lousy 60 miles away, causing a cancellation of Elko's final point night of action.

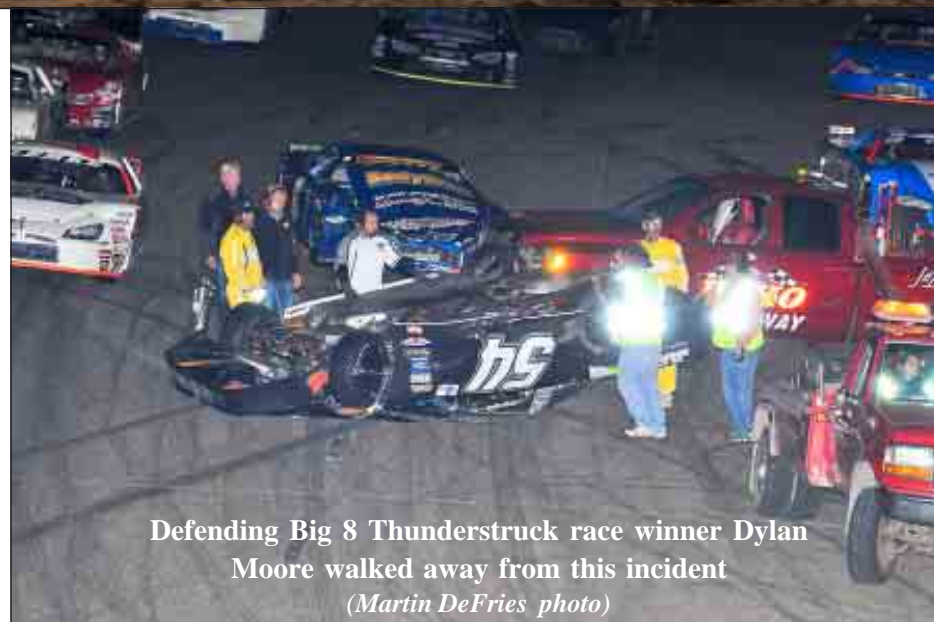
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360 Sprints are sanctioned by Ron Bernhagen's UMSS group for this event. I've often wondered if they planned on changing the name of the series to the UMTS for the Upper Midwest Tatnell Series, but Brooke wasn't able to win this show. Chris Graff captured the 360 portion of the show and walked away with the UMSS season championship trophy as well. Add in the 30 or so Vintage cars from the

We were able to use the Thursday and Friday night shows of the Legendary 100 to get our first dirt track footage with the kids GoPro camera. Thanks to Andrea Keeney, Jeff Keeney and Mike Spraguer for letting us hook up the camera in their cars for the weekend. Cedar Lake utilized their rain date



4-Wide Modified action at the Legendary 100
(Vince Peterson photo)



Defending Big 8 Thunderstruck race winner Dylan Moore walked away from this incident
(Martin DeFries photo)



The Late Model photo finish at The Legendary 100
(Vince Peterson photo)

of Sunday afternoon to complete the 3-day Legendary 100 event. While afternoon dirt track races typically aren't my cup of tea, things started out well with overcast skies to keep some of the moisture in the track. Unfortunately, the track didn't want to roll in properly after all of the rain, and many of the drivers didn't seem to want to cooperate

as well. For race fans that complain about lineups taking too long after cautions, I would highly recommend buying a scanner and listening to the track officials. It sure seems that 9 times out of 10, the lineup is being announced properly on the Raceceiver channel and the drivers simply aren't listening. What started out as an afternoon of racing, eventually turned into an evening of racing. I haven't been to the IMCA Super Nationals in Boone, but this was definitely the longest short track show I've ever attended. I'm not saying it was bad, just long, really long. The Late Model feature finish made up for the rest of the day, with a photo finish between Scott Gilberts and Jimmy Mars. Jimmy was actually being interviewed in victory lane, before the video replay showed Gilberts gained the win by just inches. Other

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winners during the final day of the Legendary 100 included; Darrell Nelson (Modifieds), Ben Hillman (Pro Stocks), Skeeter Estey (Midwest Mods), Sam Frankhauser (Street Stocks), George Richards (Pure Stocks) and Barrot Hammond (Hornets). In an effort to keep the racing surface up to par for the drivers, Butch Erickson and Bob Cook may have picked up the awards for most laps completed on Sunday afternoon. Crazy stuff, that's for sure.

Next up was the Thunderstruck event and Thunder Car Nationals. We've enjoyed this weekend at Elko since the inception of the Thunder Car Nationals many years ago, and the addition Late Models to the show the last several years is just the icing on the cake. The event has all of the ingredients to make a great weekend; free camping, great location and great racing.



Andrew Morrissey and Rich Bickle Jr. exchanged the lead numerous times during the final segment of the Thunderstruck event at Elko Speedway
(Martin DeFries photo)

Brent "The Freight Train" Kane picked up the win at the Thunder Car Nationals
(Martin DeFries photo)



The entire weekend was a great time and was action packed with side-by-side racing, spectacular wrecks and post race entertainment. Some of the post race entertainment almost lead to the loss of all fingers on my right hand, but that's a story for another day. The Thunder Car race is one that I look forward to each year. The Thunder Car main event had several Raceway Park regulars along with some new drivers show up to test the waters for 2014. The extra drivers boosted the car count for the Thunder Cars to the highest number of the year. This race also had its share of thrills & spills, leading up to Brent Kane and Ted Reuvers battling for the top spot, with Kane edging away for the win. The Big-8 drivers got off to a wild start, with defending race winner Dylan Moore ending up on his lid. Elko 2013 Big 8 track champion, Chris Marek, set fast time and held off the Big 8 travelers for the win. The highest car count of the

weekend for all divisions also went to the Big 8 cars, with 30 Late Models on hand; great support from the local drivers and the travelers in the Big 8's. The ARCA Midwest tour ran the majority of the race's first segment caution free, with Andrew Morrissey leading at the break. Veteran driver Rich Bickle made a show of it and exchanged the lead with Morrissey during several cautions following the break. Bickle would eventually fade to third in the final rundown, with Morrissey holding on for the win and Chris Wimmer taking second. Other event winners for the weekend included Dan Gilster in the Mid Am Stock Cars, Camden Murphy in the Trucks, Dirk Henry and Michael Ost diek in the Legends, and Michael Wachs Jr. and Brandon Plekkenpol in the Mini Stocks.

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My only wish is that maybe next year, we can get things started an hour or two earlier on Saturday night, and possibly reduce the number of divisions competing. This was another night that went on a little too long. Again, I'm not implying in any way that it was a bad show; there was simply too much on the schedule to get done in a reasonable amount of time. Sure, people will say the amount of cautions made it a late night, but that's just how things go at the end of the year. It's just something that happens when drivers realize they only have a few more weeks to play with their toys and the event schedule needs to take this into consideration. As I heard a wise man once say "you can always stall if your show is moving

along to fast. You can't make up time if you're running behind schedule."

Just a few minor tweaks to the event schedule for next year, and the 2014 version of Thunderstruck should be epic.

Miscellaneous news and notes;

With all of the drama/changes/fines/suspensions that recently took place on the NASCAR Sprint Cup side of things heading into The Chase, I'm that much more of a fan of short track racing.

We recently received a book from our friends at Coastal 181 Publishing



Chris "Cruiser" Marek set fast time and picked up the main event win for the Big 8 Late Models at Elko
(Mark Melchiori photo)

The Ryan family in victory lane with Andrew Morrissey at Elko Speedway
(Martin DeFries photo)



(www.coastal181.com). Look for a book review of Joyce Standridge's *Did You See That* in a coming issue of *The Midwest Racing Connection*.

While we poked fun at Brooke Tatnell earlier in this column, our well wishes go out to the Tatnell family. A few weeks after the Richert Memorial, the families RV burned to the ground in their driveway. The pictures of the aftermath were quite frightening to look at, but all family members were OK.

Our next on-line issue will be available early in November. In the meantime, check us out on our Facebook page or YouTube channel for items to keep you entertained for the next few weeks.



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Auto Racing Facts, Observances and Opinions



Dale P. Danielski

It was quite the trip down memory lane here August 31st as Amherst Speedway, Amherst, WI., hosted the Milwaukee area stock car group for some exhibition racing on the new 3/8 mile dirt speedway.

Amherst is a new track in Central Wisconsin having held a couple events in 2012. 2013 featured more racing but the season ended early as the search begins to find clay to lay down and make the track suitable for racing. Right now it is not but plans for 2014 are ambitious and hopefully a good clay surface can be created to bring some dirt racing to the area near my home stomping grounds.

Regardless of the track surface it was really cool to see the old time modified and sportsman type cars that raced in the Milwaukee area for so many years in the 1960s and '70s put their racing machines through their paces. We didn't get a chance to see this racing all that much back in the day but when we did it was a pleasure to watch. The Modified cars

were unique to say the least in their construction and the names of the drivers were catchy to where you definitely remembered who they were. Some were Miles (The Mouse) Melius who ruled the division for many years, Fuzzy Fassbender, Aaron Solsrud, Neil Sederberg, Billy Johnson, Johnny Reimer, Whitey Harris, Fred Zack, Don Schuppel, Roger Otto, Willie Goedon, Etchie Biertzer, Ken Marquardt, Dick Duston, just to name a few that come to mind.

Of course the Sportsman group that raced everywhere with the mods had a following of their own as Frank Smith, Jim Boehles, Jack Aschenbrenner, Mike Klecker, Bernie Binon, Jim Hendricks, Tom Klippel, Charlie Weddle, Jack Brewer and numerous others followed the circuit.

These guys much like the paved set in the '60s and '70s could race 5-6 nights a week! Just a crazy schedule but for those of us who were around then it was the greatest thing!

Some of the few times we could witness the Mod guys in action was when Sam Bartus who was promoting the Golden Sands Speedway, Plover, WI., and the Capital Speedway, Oregon, WI., would bring them in to compete against the Late Model guys on the pavement in challenge races. Track records were usually broken when these Late Model vs Mod races occurred and it was an exciting promotion to say the least. The Late Model group would go to great lengths to beat the mods even bringing in extremely wide soft, racing slicks like they did the one time at Golden Sands. The mods in



that case were no match as they had very narrow tires on the front of their cars with in most cases treaded, dirt tires on the back! The mod guys didn't always lose though as I remember Neil Sederberg, John Reimer and Dick St. John getting the best of the LM crew. And that was only fair as Trickle, Back

Reffner, etc., shouldn't always have had their way.

Anyway, it was great to see some of these cars back in action. It sure brought back some great memories.

Here and there...Caught the ARCA Midwest



#57 Chevy driven by well known racer John McNamara.

Tour action at Marshfield Motor Speedway here August 31st and witnessed some great feature action. In what looked like a Dan Fredrickson runaway in the 100 lap main turned into a nail biter of a finish as Steve Holzhausen came out of nowhere (As he has done actually for about 30 years now) to win the main event! Rich Bickle played possum most of the event making his move late and even leading briefly. It was too little too late however and he wound up 2nd at the finish. Skylar Holzhausen took a 6th place car in his words to a podium finish in 3rd, with Jeremy Miller and point leader Fredrickson following...A grand old time was had by all at the CWRA Racing Reunion September 21st in Wis. Rapids, WI., as in my estimation close to 70 drivers from past days of racing were on hand to have fun reminiscing of days gone by. A few track/event promoters were there as well including Sam Bartus, Ace Kasten, Phil Bickley,

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Cool CWRA Reunion photos the Famous Chicken Coupe #3 driven by Lyle Nabbefeldt

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Ralph Jacobson and Darrell Basseuner. Numerous displays of cars and drivers that competed from the 1950s all the way into the 2000s under the CWRA banner were on hand along with a number of race cars past and present. Old time racing footage was shown throughout the day to give the huge crowd of fans on hand a little taste of what once was. A fun day and with the turnout it looks like the group will have another Reunion in 2014. It's something you don't want to miss but if you did a DVD covering the days activities is available through this scribe to purchase... In addition if you missed this reunion you have a chance at another as Champions Reunion V will be held at the La Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway, West Salem, WI., Sunday October 6th beginning at 11am. This event is part of the Oktoberfest racing weekend October 3-6 at the track and will feature drivers that raced all though the years. Upwards of 50 should be on hand which will offer a great opportunity for fans to get an autograph or snap a photo. Plus while there you can't miss on all the racing action that will take place over four days...

With Wausau and Wis. Rapids, WI. well represented at the CWRA Reunion we'll take a look back at some results from tracks in those areas. Jere O'Day won the Feature race at Griffith Park Speedway April 9th, 1967 as the Wisconsin Rapids track opened its season. O'Day piloted a 1946 Chevy to the win over Marv Marzofka, Jim Back and Dick Trickle. The semi-feature went to Bob Hofschild with heat race wins going to Buck Linhart, Orv Buelow and Tom Reffner. Fast time honors went to Jim Back at 14:34 seconds around the 1/4 mile oval. 1,200 fans were reported on hand on a cold windy day. Marv Marzofka won the Feature race in the season opening race on Thursday May 6th, 1971 at State Park Speedway of Wausau, WI. Dick Trickle finished 2nd. Heat race winners were Bob Mackesy, Sonny Immerfall and Dick Trickle. Marv Marzofka took fast time honors at 14:81 around the 1/4 mile oval and 800 plus fans were on hand to witness the action. At Golden Sands Speedway, Plover, WI., April 25th, 1971 it was Dick Trickle winning the Feature over Marv Marzofka, Ron Beyer, Bill Wirtz and George



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Steve Holzhausen #97 picks up the win in ARCA MT action at Marshfield Motor Speedway.

Thornton. The semi-feature went to Tom Jensen over Denny Clark and Floyd Fairfield. Heat race winners were Bob Mackesy, Tom Jensen and Marv Marzofka. Fast time went to Dick Trickle at 13:24 around the 3/10ths Sands oval.

News, notes and comments welcome to Dale P. Danielski at dale@starmakermultimedia.com 967 10th Ave N Ste A, Onalaska, WI 54650

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When the news came out earlier in the year it was a date that many people circled on the calendar, September 1st, the last day of racing at Raceway Park. As the season went on, everyone talked about the end and then, suddenly the calendar turned over and it was September 1st, the Final Final was here.

The day started with a different vibe as I logged onto facebook. Nearly everyone had something to say about the race and the racetrack. Some posts were insightful, others emotional, but all set the stage that this would be no ordinary night at the races.

As I pulled into the parking lot there were many people with the same plan as me, Get There Early! Before I even got out of my car, a man exited the SUV parked next to me and a guy gets out dressed in white pants, a nice shirt and tie, then he grabbed a sports coat and headed for the pit gate. Once again it was evident that this wasn't a normal night at the races. Since it was Championship Night, there was a bit of tension in the air, but mostly it was a bit of friendly camaraderie as everyone wanted to put on a great race, one more time.

The Driver's Meeting was a bit different than normal. Track owner John Hellendrung thanked everyone and explained the situation with the track. Also present was Tom Ryan owner of Elko Speedway, who openly invited all the drivers to come try racing at Elko Speedway and to consider racing there next season. During the next few hours, two Twin Cities television stations would report on the final night of racing. Hence, explaining why someone was wearing white pants and a sports coat to the races. The racing program went relatively smooth. Dave Nogle used the last ever Figure 8 race to win his first feature of the season, making his final race at Raceway Park very memorable at a track that's been very special for him. "I've raced here since 2000 and it's the people, it's a whole different clan. They're really

Not An Ordinary Night At The Races, The Final Final At Raceway Park

Dave Nogle drove a Ford to the final Figure 8 race at Raceway Park in Shakopee, MN
(Martin DeFries photo)



cool, they help each other out too," said Nogle about the close knit group of racers in the pits.

Jeremy Wolff would add his name in the record books as he was the last driver to roll his car on the final lap of the intense Hobby Stock Feature. Brent Kane would take the Hobby Stock Feature win, but it wasn't enough to keep Conrad Jorgenson from winning the Championship. "It's pretty cool to win the last Championship ever," said a very happy Jorgenson following the race. "In 1996 I won my first championship here and it's pretty cool to end it up winning one again." The large crowd that packed the grandstands made their presence known and drivers like Jorgenson took note. "It's always fun to run in front of a huge crowd, but tonight it was incredible," Jorgenson remarked. At 10:19 PM, the Checkered Flag waved for the final time as Benny VanCleve won the Great North Legends Feature to become the last ever winner at Raceway Park, ending 57 years of racing at the historic track.

After the race, no one was in a big hurry to leave. Many drivers and fans alike walked around the track following the races taking pictures and reliving memories one more time. "I've been here a long time as a lot of us have been and it's a big family, so it kind of feels like we lost someone in the family," remarked Figure 8 driver Kari Miller as she walked around the facility one more time following the races. "I'm just trying to celebrate tonight, instead of being sad of the end of something; I'm trying to celebrate the memories that we have here."

Many drivers, crews and fans took their time leaving as some were saying goodbye to not only the track, but to their racing career as well. Slowly as the night and early morning progressed, the crowd finally dwindled and a new sound emerged over that tiny little quarter mile track, the sound of silence. Something that will now be heard on Sunday nights in the summer.



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Going in Circles



Charlie Spry

Just some little tidbits from various tracks that I've been to lately. Season championships night at many tracks brings out a little more intense racing, or so it seems.

Nice to see James Bell back out racing this year again, as he raced on the second-to-last points night at Jefferson Speedway. He took a job as an over-the-road truck driver, and being the new guy, he is on the road most of the time. He got away to race once, went out and was second fastest in the International division, then found water leaks in the car which could not be repaired quickly, so he didn't really get to race. He did get to help his Dad, Keith, on his car, as Keith placed second in the feature.

Nice to see veteran late model racer Roger Behlke back out at the end of the year. A victim of a crash early in the year, Roger was sidelined for quite some time, as both he and the car had to heal.

Took in the season championships at the State Park Speedway, with Mark Mackesy going for his fourth track title in the past six years in the super lates. Mark got the job done once again, in what he would admit was kind of a trying year. His Brother, Wayne, also went home with a championship in the limited lates, in a close battle with Clint Sillars. Mackesy noted that his car had been sitting around the shop collecting dust, until they decided to put some time into it and get it ready to run in the new limited late class here. It paid off.

Travis Volm got the job done once again in the pure stocks, his third in a row here. He said that it was probably time to move up in divisions, but wasn't sure what would shake out for next year, yet. Whatever he runs in, he will be a contender, you can be sure.

Brad Conant won the title in the Mini-Mod class, as he pretty much dominated most of the year, while Mariah Gajewski won the title in the mini-stocks, her second in a row. She also elaborated in how she would like to move up next year also, possibly to pure stock.

Derek Kraus was a dominant force in the new Bandolero division for the younger set, grabbing the

title with many feature wins to his credit.

Nice to see Columbus 151 Speedway racer John "The Real Deal" Beale make the long haul up to race. John had been racing a late model at Columbus, but motor issues sidelined him late in the year, so he brought out his old Bandit, and ran at many different tracks, both paved and dirt.

Speaking of the Columbus 151 Speedway, their championship had only a couple of close points battles, but they were very interesting. In the street stocks, Scott Lawver had been pulling away in the points, but a bad night allowed Steven Sauer to catch up. On this night, Sauer needed to finish a couple of spots ahead of Lawver to get the title, but Lawver wouldn't let him out of his sight. Sauer made an attempt to make some moves to pull away, but Lawver was actually able to gain on the inside groove and finish ahead of Sauer to gain the title. Sauer had set fast time on most occasions this year, forcing him to start at the back each week, which is difficult.

Veteran Ron Bishofberger had a great year, dominating the late model action, winning his fifth late model title here, and also becoming the all-time leading feature winner at the track in the records. A very modest individual, he just smiles and calmly accepts accolades. No brag, just fact.

Jimmy Robinson won the feature on the final night to put the icing on his championship cake in the hobby stocks. Jimmy had won the first three features of the season, then he actually tried to recruit more cars to come race, which made it more difficult for him to win. "It's more fun to race more, good cars," Said Jimmy. "I always want more competition, it makes you work harder." Cody Buchs had a great season to finish second.

Jamie Kohn won his second straight Bandit track

championship, and said he was relieved when it was all over. He pulled away from Nick Schmidt late in the year to take the crown.

The backup division started out the night with Andy Ward holding a slim point lead over Matt Wachuta. Ward got caught up in a crash, with cars scattering madly about the whole contest, making for scoring difficulties. What was initially reported as finishing order was later corrected, with Wachuta finishing high enough to overtake Ward in the points by a slim margin. Matt also won the title in 2009, while Ward was the defending champion.



2013 Rockford track champ - Alex Papini
(Jimmy Ambruoso photo)

At Rockford Speedway, Alex Papini had an absolutely dominating year in the late model division. To prove how much Alex is a pure racer, on championship night he raced just as hard in a heat race as any feature, proving that he always runs full throttle. Alex made a

real nice tribute to his late father, Al, by driving up to

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the place where his father lost his life when Alex was a child, just as he did that tribute every night that he won a feature. Alex noted, "This is all that I ever dreamed of, just didn't think it would become a reality." Rookie-Of-The-Year was Joel Clossey, who got back into racing full time this year for the first time since 1997.

Nick Cina Jr. took the title in the American Short Tracker division, and had to run the final night of the year behind the wheel of the car normally raced by Scott Hoeft, as his own car had issues.

Doug Bennett took home the title in the sportsman division, his third championship here, coming back strong after an early season that was plagued with bad luck. Fourteen year old Deanna Chandler took the ROY honors, as she made great progress throughout the season, winning a couple of heat races along the way in a very competitive division.

Arlyn Roush was a steady performer all year in the Roadrunner division, as he took home the title. The Roadrunner drivers race more than any other division, and it really takes a tremendous effort to get a car ready for each night. Just because it is a lower budget division, doesn't mean they put any less effort into their racing.

Jason Van Hise won the Roadrunner Challenge championship, his third title. These events offer a variety of different things for the drivers to do each week, from Hare-N-Hound races to holding plywood onto the roofs of their cars while racing, it is always something fun and different, and this is just what Jason said he likes to do. Something different. He seems to excel in just about any challenge.

It was nice to see American Short Tracker racer Aaron Rude on hand tonight for the first time in almost a year. "We blew the engine up last year in the short track championships," said Aaron's Dad, Mike. "We slowly pieced together another engine and with Aaron having a three year old Daughter, family time comes first. We are kind of testing it out so that we are ready for the NSTC in a couple of weeks." Aaron ran real strong, finishing fourth in the feature.

Had a nice chat with late model racer Dave Edwards, who told me that he began racing in 1997 at the old Lake Geneva Raceway in the street stock division, in a car that was the exact same color and number as his current late model. "I ran only one race that first year, then came out full bore the next year. We really enjoy going to all sorts of different places to race, chasing the Big 8 tour, and we usually try to race at each track that the tour goes to at least once prior to get a feel for it."

At the Madison International Speedway, veteran Rich Bickle Jr. was running his final race at what many would consider his home track. After laying back early in the feature, he came on strong and looked unbeatable in winning. Afterward, and emotional Bickle stated "The crew worked their tails off on this car, I think Ray Charles could have driven it. I kind of laid back early and saved my stuff, and when we got to the break with twenty-five laps to go, I thought that if I don't win this thing, something is wrong."

Young Casey Johnson won the late model title here, as he is not only fast at MIS, but really everywhere he goes. He looks to have a very strong future ahead of him.

Natalie Decker kind of made everyone sit up and take notice, as she snuck up behind leader Chester Ace and made a last lap pass for the win in the truck series race. She was fresh off her first ever limited late model feature win on the previous Thursday at State Park Speedway, and now with her first truck

*(Doug Hornickel photo)*

weekly anywhere, trying to spend time with family, although it is hard to take the racer from the track, as he said, "I don't know how well that worked, really. It seems like I was still at a race track somewhere watching if I wasn't racing." The car had only been out a few times this year, but appeared to be fast right out of the box. Anyway, Dobie is always a contender wherever he races.

Nice to see Dave Edwards have a nice run going in Friday's preview feature, only to get involved in a crash late in the event while running near the front. Dale Nottestad also had a subpar night, as his car suffered from issues early in the evening, and he had to race himself into the feature via a last chance race. To prove his mettle, he went out and won both features on Saturday night as well, in what really turned out to be a dominating weekend for him after it started out so badly.

Forty-five Big 8 late models took to the track during qualifying on Friday night, a strong field to be sure. Several Jefferson regulars ran the show, with it being no surprise that most of them did pretty well at their home track.

Enjoyed talking with the Storkson Brothers, Mike "Spike," and Kenny "The tack." These guys just really love to race and to be involved in the sport, and it is contagious to feel the same whenever you are around them. It seems like both always have a big old smile on their faces wherever. Both were racing cars in the tracks "Road Warrior" division, which is comprised of FWD V-6 powered machines.

Saturday we took the trip up to the Marshfield Motor Speedway for day two of their Fall Shootout. Announcers tonight were Steve Parsons and Brandon Aschenbrenner, filling in for the regular announcers who happened to be down at Jefferson. Steve and Brandon did a fine job during the show.

continued on page 13*(Doug Hornickel photo)***Young Natalie Decker picked up a Truck win at MIS**

victory, really had a great weekend. Another talented, young driver to watch. Jerry Wood didn't let a little skirmish early in the feature stop him from winning the track title in the truck division here.

Cory Talaska took home the title in the Legends division, seemingly knowing just what he had to do in order to gain the title over Aaron Moyer, as these two seem to run wheel to wheel with each other wherever they go.

Specials season was upon us in a flash, and I took in the first night of the annual "Wisconsin State Championships" at the Jefferson Speedway.

Had an enjoyable talk with Big 8 late model regular Steve Dobbratz. "Dobie" is racing with a car owned by long-time crew member Aaron Larsen. He has cut back his racing efforts a bit this year, not running

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Thirty-two super lates were on hand, which is an outstanding field for these cars anywhere. It was nice to see a contingent of cars from the Norway, Michigan track, as well as several from Kaukauna and others.

Travis Volm wheeled his pure stock to the feature in that division on Friday night, then wheeled the 7-11 Redline Speedsports entry in the super lates, winning another heat race. He was ready to move up in divisions, and this just proves it. Brian Goodwin was behind the wheel of the other entry for this team.

Talked with Brent Strelka, who had both a limited late and a super late on hand to race during the two day show. A veteran racer of many seasons, it didn't start out to be that way according to Brent. "When I started out, it was going to be something like race for two or three years and then get out of it, but you know how that goes. You get addicted to it." Brent is racing his own limited late model, and racing the super late for another owner. He noted that Kaukauna and here at Marshfield are his favorite tracks, saying, "Both tracks have a lot of character, there are so many different grooves you can try."

Tim Schendel took the win in the feature for the supers, as he was leading when rain began falling. Not sure if anyone would have had anything for him or not had Mother Nature not rained on everyone's parade, but he was looking very strong.

Adam Kryzkowski took the win in the Extreme four cylinder feature, looking very stout in the process. He has run real strong in late season events.

This past weekend I made it back to Rockford for "One Great Racing Weekend," otherwise known as the National Short Track Championships.

Starting off on Friday night, the late models ran the "weekly warrior" feature event, with a good field of cars present. To the surprise of no one, the Rockford regulars dominated, with 2013 track champion Alex Papini continuing with his remarkable season, winning the main event.

You see so many different things at a post season show like this. Emotions can range the full gamut, with the full range of emotions present. Bobby Frisch seemingly had the figure-eight finale in the bag, until he suddenly dropped out of the event under caution while leading. Didn't seem like anyone had anything for him, but you just never know. Veteran Josh Thiering took the win. He is quite experienced at these events, and it showed.

Former Roadrunner champion Terrance Robinson took the win in that divisions main event, after Terry Van Hise had led most of the way. The Robinson family had some ups and downs, but crew chief Travis Robinson won over \$1,000 for correctly picking the top five feature finishers in the late model feature, as part of the Gilley's Cool Five promotion. Not sure how many offers he received throughout the rest of the weekend on ways to spend the money.

Austin Nason was a busy guy, as he ran in the sportsman and late model divisions, while Kyle Lapier ran in the American short trackers and sportsman divisions.

Several lady drivers did quite well in the Hornets/Bandits, as the first qualifier heat saw the top three all of the female persuasion, and the second qualifier saw the top two lay claim to the race.

Saturday brought more racers to the track, with the Big 8 late models being showcased along with the Great Northern Sportsman Series, Illini Midgets, vintage cars, and hobby stox. The super lates also

qualified and were to run some last chance races, as eyes were skyward waiting and wondering when the forecasted rain would fall. Of course, this coincided with the start of racing, as a light rain began falling after the first Big 8 qualifier, which was won by Dave Edwards, who has had more than his share of rotten luck this year. Nice to see him get the win.

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After a two and half hour rain delay, track drying began in earnest, with racing continuing, with Eric Connell winning the second qualifier. Jefferson racer Terry Wangsness won the GNSS qualifier, with dashes going to hometrack racers Johnny Robinson and Justin Sellers, both sporting the number 99 on their cars. Jerry Gille won one of the Big 8 dashes, with the rain falling again before the start of the next one. After waiting for the rain to subside, it was decided to throw in the towel (literally) and try to run the rest of the Saturday night show on Sunday morning.

Sunday morning dawned with bright blue skies and no rain in sight. At any race show, some folks have good days, some have bad. Sportsman racer Daryl Gerke was one who had a good day on Sunday. His season has been fraught with plenty of bad luck, but things worked out for him today, as he took advantage of situations when he needed to, getting the win in the GNSS feature. Daryl has said that he plans on racing closer to his Whitelaw, WI. home next year, in lieu of the long drive down to race at Rockford most weeks, so it was good to see him go out on a high note. He has always raced clean and hard, and is one of the guys you just want to see do well. No complaining or irrational behavior when things go bad, just comes back and tries again. Well done.

The Big 8 series feature had many twists of fate for those involved, with “Driver X” John Reynolds Jr. taking the win, therefore starting his day off on the right foot. 2013 track champion Alex Papini and Dale Nottestad fought hard, with Papini dropping out of the event and Nottestad eventually taking second. There were more possibilities for finishes here than you could believe, with the outcome totally up in the air throughout. Top contender Casey Johnson had an absolutely rotten day, as his car began overheating while in contention for the feature win, then, while racing in the super late model main event, also was forced from that event with mechanical difficulties.

The Illini midget series ran a feature race in which it appeared that no driver wanted to win. One by one, the leaders were beset with various troubles, including the point leader of the series, who had gained enough points by merely starting the feature to assure the title. Mike Anderson got the win.

Jimmy Robinson won the feature in the hobby stox division. He won the 2013 track title at the Columbus 151 Speedway, but began his career here at Rockford many years ago, and knows his way around the track. He had to pass fast qualifier Kyle Stark to get the win, which is never easy. Robby Robinson placed third, while Jason Van Hise had the highest finish of any of the Rockford Roadrunner drivers who attempted to run in this class, finishing fourth.

Tom Knippenberg won the vintage car feature in a tribute car to the late Joe Shear, with his traditional red, white and blue paint scheme, which went over

big with the fans. The vintage racers here definitely race their cars hard.

The super late model main event began with Eddie Hoffman Jr. taking the lead at the start, and keeping that lead throughout the event. While this may sound like an uninspiring race, it was anything but, as Rich Bickle was on his bumper for most of the race. As a credit to Rich, he ran Mr. Hoffman incredibly clean, never moving him out of the groove as some might have. Rich started racing here as a weekly driver back in 1980 with a red and white Nova bodied late model. As for Eddie, he began racing here many years ago in enduro races. It is nice to see two veteran drivers race hard and respect one another. Jon Reynolds Jr. also got up to Hoffman’s bumper, and ran him clean as well. Many drivers seemed to run out of tires late in the race, as Slinger driver Steve Apel took third from Bickle at the end. Lots of jockeying for position and excitement in the race. Good day for Hoffman, great day for Reynolds, as he finished first and second in the two big races he ran. Pretty decent day for the others such as Apel and Bickle as well.

James Swan seems to “own” the Mid-American series whenever he gets behind the wheel of these cars, and he did just that today, as he just plain old dominated.

It was still daylight when all of the racing was completed, and the events were hurried along in fine fashion to get folks on their way early, especially in light of the rain on Saturday and the necessary cramming of so much racing into so few hours on Sunday. Great job by all.



Photos top to bottom; Driver X (Jon Reynolds Jr.) won the Big 8 main event at Rockford (top), James Swan with another Mid Am win (middle) and Fast Eddie Hoffman battles with Rich Bickle Jr. during the 2013 version of The National Short Track Championships (Mark Melchiori photos)

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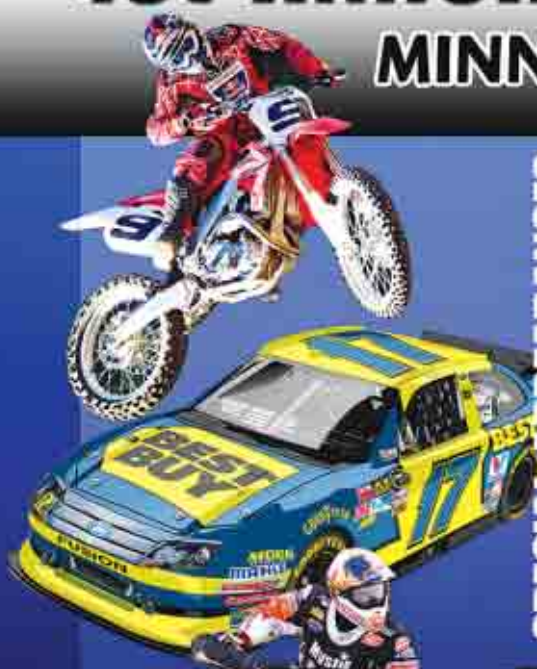
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