

# THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

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THE MIDWEST'S SHORT TRACK AUTO RACING AUTHORITY

March 2019

## Inside...



Talkin' Racin'



Racing Nuggets



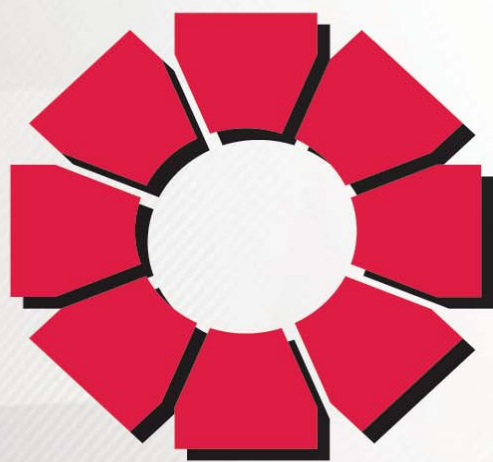
Pictures from the past



## Speedweeks!







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## Publisher's Note

### Racing According to Plan



**Dan Plan**

This year was my tenth trip to Florida for Speedweeks, and 7<sup>th</sup> in a row. Even though I typically go to the same places, each trip has been entirely unique. This column will consist of random observations during the course of the week.

Race fans often complain about the inaccessibility of NASCAR drivers. A simple solution for these fans is to go to Volusia or New Smyrna. Current and former NASCAR guys are plentiful at the short tracks; Irvan, Skinner, Reutimann, Schrader, Wallace, Stremme, Allgaier, Crafton, Larson, Bell and many more were all at the short tracks at one point or another.

## Speedweeks 2019



*Dan Plan photo*

*Jeremy Miller started off Speedweeks with fast time and a feature win in the Pro Late Models*

Jeremy Miller really needs to re-evaluate his retirement from Short Track racing. He had phenomenal results during Speedweeks. If the nose on his car would have had another 3/8 of an inch, he would have went home with a championship along with a couple of wins.

You gotta like when a guy like Ryan Preece gets a shot in a decent Cup car, but still shows up at the short track and wins a Tour Mod feature.

Same goes for Stewart Freisen. He's in a top of line Truck ride, and still ventured over to Volusia and picked up a win in the Big Block Mods.

*continued on page 4*

*Ryan Preece (left) picked up a win at New Smyrna and a top-ten in the Daytona 500. Stewart Friesen (right) won at Volusia and had a top-ten in the Daytona Truck race.*



*Dan Plan photo*

*Bruce Nuttleman photo*



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RACING CONNECTION

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*Racing According to Plan from page 3*

The World of Outlaws are just plain old fast. Thankfully the staff at Volusia realized rain was on the way and adjusted the schedule to get the main event in. When the rain started falling during the pace laps, I thought there was going to be a riot as the fans started chanting “Let them race!” Fortunately, the rain let up enough for the green flag to come out. At the mid-point of the race, the rain was actually coming down pretty good, but they kept the green out and ran the entire race caution free. Watching Sprint cars work lapped traffic is one of the most exciting things out there for short track fans.



I think the last time I ventured into the old Daytona USA outside turn 4 was about 7 years ago. They’ve rebranded the building and now include all forms of motorsports. Everything from an old AJ Foyt USAC Camaro to a Big Daddy Don Garlits Top Fuel car can now be seen. Another must see during Speedweeks.



This year was the first time I attended the K&N race at New Smyrna. I was absolutely amazed at the crowd. I don’t think this crowd realizes what they are missing the other



eight nights at this facility. Derek Kraus made quite the move for the lead in the K&N race at New Smyrna. Kraus was running third late in the race. In typical K&N race fashion, first and second place ran into each other in turns 3 & 4. As they slid up the track, Kraus shot underneath both of them. It was pretty impressive to see.

I finally had the chance to watch Joey Miller race on dirt. I would say Joey has transitioned into a certified dirt-racer. I personally saw him narrowly avoid a wreck in front and pass Kenny Wallace not once, but twice.



Brandon Sheppard had it going on in the World of Outlaws Late Models at Volusia. Winning one of the WoOLM races down there is hard enough. B-Shep ended up winning all 4 races to wrap up the 2-weeks of racing at Volusia.

Skip Pollak had given me the schedule for the Living Legends group in Daytona, but unfortunately, I only made it to one of their events. It was pretty darn cool to see Bobby Allison and the rest of the Alabama Gang at the Streamline Hotel.



Bubba Pollard ran the entire World Series at New Smyrna Speedway for the first time in his career. It was not much of a surprise to see him come away with the championship. My only thought was how the points would have panned out if Batman would have run all of the nights.



One of the iconic images in the short track racing is Sammy Swindwell in black TMC sponsored ride. Young Sammy Smith taking the TMC colors to victory lane on two occasions at New Smyrna and captured the Pro Late Model championship.



As you can tell, most of my time is spent at the short tracks. You have a good mix of veteran racers and young, up and coming racers. Just last year Harrison Burton picked up the World Series championship at New Smyrna. Seeing a kid win against some of the toughest short trackers one year and then on the big stage at Daytona the very next year is something I won’t forget anytime soon.





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## Dean & Jason Talkin' Racin'



**Jason Searcy**

A local racer is making a name for himself in motorsports, but maybe not the way that he originally planned, he is one of the hottest names in Monster



## Murphy making a name in motorsports

Jam and was named the 2017 Rookie of the Year.

You might remember Camden Murphy (22) from Itasca (IL), he started his career by racing locally in Karts and Legends Cars before stepping up to the UARA Late Models and the Midwest Truck series. He won the Midwest Truck feature at the famed Thunderstruck93 event at Elko Speedway (MN) in 2013, it was his first ever Truck win. "I always loved ELKO, I remember that day being all about survival, we were having some bad luck and then everything just turned our way, it's a day I will never forget," said Murphy "especially being in that unique victory lane." He edged out Jacob Van Wazer, Natalie Decker and Jerry Wood on that day.

Murphy had numerous wins in the Midwest Truck series and narrowly lost the title to Derek Kraus in 2015. Since then Murphy has been searching for the right opportunity and financial support to make a living in motorsports. Murphy has had 21 total NASCAR starts driving for small underfunded teams like: Rick Ware Racing, Copp Motorsports, JJC Racing and Beaver Motorsports in the NASCAR Truck series and 1 start in the NASCAR Xfinity series, he has never scored a Top 10 finish.

"With the struggles of finding funding I looked for as many different avenues in Motorsports that I could, knowing that driving is all I wanted to do," said Murphy "I found myself with the opportunity to go to Monster Jam University." Murphy made the most of that opportunity working directly with 11-time World Finals Champion Tom Meents, he impressed the right people and got a job driving a 12,000 lb Monster Truck. Now funding is not an issue, he has equal equipment to the best drivers in Monster Jam and he has excelled.

Murphy has quickly become one of the hottest new stars on the premier Stadium Tour of Monster Jam. After driving a new truck named Pirate's Curse last year, he is currently

behind the wheel of Bakugan Dragonoid, a wild looking truck designed from the Japanese animated cartoon and video game.

Every Monster Jam event now is divided into three competitions (Racing, Two-Wheel Skills and Freestyle) with the fourteen trucks taking part in each competition, fourteen points for first on down to 1 point for last. The points are tallied at the end of the night to determine the Overall Champion.

US Bank Stadium in Minneapolis (MN) hosted Monster Jam on Feb 16th and Cameron Murphy won the Racing competition beating John Gordon in Bad Company in the finals and earlier defeating monster truck royalty Ryan Anderson (son of pioneer Dennis Anderson) in Son-uva Digger, it was the fourth racing win for Murphy. He then thrilled the 30,000+ in attendance with an incredible show of driving skill balancing his monster truck nose down with a stoppie on its front wheels and walking it across half the stadium, he scored a 9.4 besting rising star Morgan Kane who was driving Grave Digger, it was the second two-wheel skills win of the season for Murphy.

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*Bruce Nuttleman photo*



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*continued from page 6*

He then performed a backflip and finished 6th on his freestyle behind his mentor Tom Meents driving Max-D. With his two wins Murphy scored enough points to take his second overall event Championship with Ryan Anderson finishing runner up. Camden Murphy was the star of the show on this night.

Even with all of his success in Monster Jam, Murphy has not forgotten about his NASCAR dream. "As of right now, I am fortunate enough to have many opportunities on all 3 levels (of NASCAR). However, I am limited due to lack of funding, as many drivers can relate" said Murphy. "All I can say is that you will find me in a seat almost every weekend, be it racing or start-and-parking, you'll find me somewhere." Murphy hopes to make his 2019 NASCAR season debut either in California or Texas.

There is no doubt that he has now proven that in equal equipment, Camden Murphy can win behind the wheel of a Monster Truck and has become one of the best drivers in the series. Hopefully someday that local racer will be given the very same opportunity in NASCAR. Somebody please tell that Japanese company that NASCAR fans like Dragons too.



*Bruce Nuttleman photo*

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## Racing Nuggets



### PJ "Jacklyn" Nuttleman

"It never rains in southern California;" at least that's the way that old song by Albert Hammond goes. I'm here to tell you that statement is hogwash. Having made the trip to Bakersfield, CA for the fifth running of the SPEARS "Winter Showdown," the richest super late model race in the country—I can assure you it DOES INDEED rain in southern California. It rained three out of four days that we were in Bakersfield.

Storms also ended up knocking power out at the track mid-afternoon on the big money race day, but the staff continued to soldier on, doing the best they could in the face of incredible challenges. It was truly a series of unfortunate events that plagued Kern County Raceway at this year's event—with rain being

## Have a Glass of Lemonade, Mother Nature



the most trying—having stymied practice, qualifying, and racing over the course of the weekend. The staff from both the track and the SPEARS SRL Southwest Tour Series did an incredible job of getting the racing program in with Mother Nature not cooperating one bit.

Steve Hughes, who handles marketing and track announcing duties at Kern County Raceway didn't allow the power outage to hold him back from communicating with the crowd in the stands. He pulled out a bullhorn and proceeded to make announcements from the flag stand. That's dedication.

Team effort seemed to be the theme for our weekend.

I made the trip out west with my husband, Toby and the team, which included driver, Ty Majeski. In addition to many of the regulars who help with the team—they had Rob Braun along to help. Braun can regularly be seen running the highbanks at Slinger Super Speedway. This weekend, in addition to helping make some connections for sponsorship at this west coast event, he also jumped right in with the crew and Toby.

It was pretty incredible to see him gel with the team fairly seamlessly. And let me tell you, it's not always easy to do that, because that team will put your skills to the test. These guys will make on average, about a dozen different runs—trying things to dial the car in to their liking during a practice day.

What makes that even more astounding is the fact that it's almost a silent orchestra of motion when the car

comes back into the pits for adjustments. Every guy on the crew knows their assignment and does it. There are definitely advantages to having a team that has worked together this long, but even Braun—the "rookie" on this particular crew was fluid motion and up to speed quite quickly.

Teamwork even means helping track officials with drying the track. Braun and some of the guys on the crew for Derek Kraus took turns wheeling the 12-passenger van on the track to help dry it at one point. There were several street vehicles that jumped at the chance to turn some laps at Kern County Raceway—all of course in the name of helping dry the track—but still pretty cool to drive on the racing surface.

Probably one of my favorite things to observe when I go to a race with Toby is the back-and-forth banter between Ty and Toby as they decide what to do to make the car better. Both have ideas and both poke holes in the ideas until they come to a mutual decision on what would be best.

The two are crazy focused. Thoughts are always turning in their minds; assessing and reassessing what the car did with one change, and what it might do with a combination change.

Toby's usually pretty good about not making too many changes at one time, as it's easy to lose track of what impacted what when that happens. I say usually, because I think every racer (or crew chief) has a time when nothing is working, so you throw everything you have at it in the hopes of making something happen.

The funny thing is, these guys will wrestle with a set-up for the better part of the day, mostly just to gain knowledge on how the car is responding to things—but they ALWAYS make sure they have a good baseline for race trim.

They will plan, and plan, and plan to the point of exhaustion some days. How does that saying go? By failing to plan, you are planning to fail.

In the end—they had a solid piece for the race and led quite a bit—even pulling out to a commanding lead before a caution flag flew and the sun set, causing a pause for the race, due to no electricity and poor lighting. Officials set a one-hour time limit to see

*The famous S.S. Kassow floating through the pits at Kern County Raceway*



*Racing Nuggets continued on page 9*



*Racing Nuggets from page 8*

if power could be restored to the track, or they would call the race complete with 172 laps in the books. Sixty-minutes later—still under a blanket of darkness, Majeski was declared the winner.

I just can't say enough about how the staff at Kern County Raceway and the SPEARS SRL Southwest Tour worked tirelessly. They really stepped up to make lemonade out of the lemons that Mother Nature handed them for the SPEARS Winter Showdown. Despite the race being shortened due to the sun setting and no power for lights—they still did what they could to illuminate Victory Lane with headlights from safety trucks. They were working until the end to attempt to bring the best show possible to everyone.

Turning lemons into lemonade; that's what makes the difference in life—and racing.

High fives to the entire behind-the-scenes crew putting on the show at Kern County Raceway; they proved that a solid team effort can muster up success in the face of adversity. Racing is a total team sport—even from the promoter and facility side of things.



*Patricia Nuttleman photo*



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## Auto Racing Facts, Observances and Opinions



**Dale P. Danielski**

Well, another Speedweeks is over and it doesn't seem like anything really extraordinary took place. Of course, I wasn't there, but seeing things from a distance didn't make me want to be any closer to the action.

One thing of note is the supposed coming of a resurgence, by Jimmy Johnson now with a new crew chief, in the beginning of the post Chad Knaus era. If a resurgence is wrecking nearly the entire field in a race Jimmy is well on his way! I think in general, when racers, for sure at NASCAR's top level, reach a certain point, as in 40 something the competitive edge goes away. They can be in great shape, talk up a



*The Deppe Nova turned into a Buick. This car won at Milwaukee in USAC competition with Dave Watson driving.*

storm about how this is going to be a great year, but something is missing. Living the family life is a big factor as there become more important things than just racing, imagine that! There is plenty of youth in the sport right now, but nobody has emerged as the next dominating, superstar. Joey Logano winning the Cup Championship is a feather in the younger groups cap, but let's see what he follows it up with.

And death reared it's angry head here again as

long time racing supporter, Dave Deppe passed away. I was first exposed to Dave when he backed the Dave Marcis effort in a 1972 USAC stock car race in Kaukauna, WI. Deppe had a "Pony" car Chevy Nova put together for the event, something new to the big car USAC set. Although underpowered with its 350ci engine, the car handled so well that with Marcis behind the wheel they beat all the best USAC had to offer. And they were the best, as you had the Unser brothers, Foyt, Nelson, Mc Cluskey, Eaker, Hartman, Stott, Blankenship and others to beat at just about every race. Of course that contingent wasn't too happy with the Deppe/Marcis combo coming in and stealing their money so they had the engine torn down after the race, off in the gravel somewhere, only to find the car was legal. That was definitely one of my favorite memories involving Dave Deppe. That car ended up doing really well with Dave Watson driving it also. It ran extremely well at Milwaukee where they won a number of races. Others drove it too through the years.

Dave was also a part of my Racer Reunions and we had the car, Deppe and Watson at a couple when held at the La Crosse Fairgrounds track. That was a fun time and it was great being able to honor those guys. Dave in recent years had really taken to the dirt racing set, getting behind the efforts of Jimmy Mars. They scored some big wins together and Dave was still involved with that up until his passing. He actually

## Dale's Pictures from the Past

*A fans view through the fence of Dave Marcis, #37 ready to race in Kaukauna, lined up next to #8 Sal Tovella. Al "A.J. Moldenhauer in that same Dave Deppe Nova, vintage 1973.*



*Racing Observances continued  
on page 11*



### Racing Observances from page 10

backed a lot of racers through the years. John Mc Namara was one and Johnny Sauter when racing up in Wisconsin usually carried the Deppe name. I had the pleasure of talking to him this past year at a track, and sadly that was the last conversation we had. Dave Deppe was good for the sport and he will be missed. Speaking of Reunions, with the Central Wisconsin Racing Association Stars to Legends Tour all but complete a number of racers will be honored at events. Marv Marzofka, Lyle Nabbefeldt, Tom Reffner, Dick Trickle, Marlin Walbeck, Albert Getzloff, and Mike Miller will all be honored at events this year. Tracks hosting Tour events include Golden Sands Speedway, Plover, WI., Marshfield Motor Speedway, Marshfield, WI., Dells Raceway Park, Wis. Dells, WI., and State Park Speedway, Wausau, WI. We're thinking there will be a Jim Back race as well so great representation of Legends for events on the Tour in 2019.

Here and there... Father Dale Grubba who was having a book signing at the July 18th, CWRA State Park Speedway event, which will feature Dick Trickle and Tom Reffner racing, recently suffered a heart attack. Last word he was recovering and hopefully that event will still happen as planned...

Looking Back in time, on May 21st, 1972, it was Dave Marcis scoring the first Pony car win in the 200 lap USAC sanctioned race at Wisconsin International Raceway, Kaukauna, WI. Following Marcis at the stripe was Verlin Eaker, Sal Tovella, Ed Hoffman, Terry Ryan, Bay Darnell, Paul Feldner, Paul Sizemore, Lem Blankenship, and Butch Hartman. Marcis took home \$2,108.00 in winnings on the day in the Dave Deppe owned Chevy Nova.

And sadly, as I'm writing this I have learned of the death of my dear Mother. She passed here Monday night, February 25th. She was 95 and it was time, as fighting congestive heart failure is a losing battle. That doesn't make it any easier to take as you only get one set of parents. With both my parents gone we'll have to count on many great memories to carry us. Having lost race fan Dad at a very young age, Mom, now a single Mother, carried the load throughout her three boys' formative years. The youngest, me, picked up rather quickly on Dad's all too brief racing interest, and Mom made sure if that was the deal we'd be accessible to it. I'm still following it today thanks to her. She became quite the fan as well and was never short of encouragement for me when things weren't going well. She provided that right to the end of her life. Mom, I'm really going to miss you. The World will never be the same place without you, but hopefully your great spirit can shine down and be our guide for the rest of our years here on earth. Thank you for being here Beatrice M. Danielski, my Mom, the best a son could have.

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

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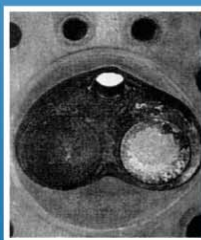
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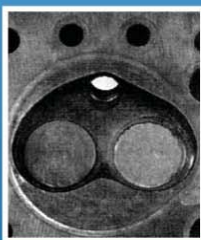
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## The Polar Bear's Kid

*For the second time in three years, Travis Eddy picked up the Florida Modified Championship in the World Series of Asphalt Racing at New Smyrna Speedway. For those that did not know, Travis is the son of multi-time ASA champion Mike Eddy.*

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**Full Throttle****Shane Carlson**

Race fans are often some of the most loyal, passionate, hardcore fan bases in all of sport. While racing and motorsports in general may not be the largest or the most polished, fans' dedication and colorful displays of allegiance to a team are second to none.

Many fans are of the diehard variety; they have one driver or one manufacturer they pull for every weekend at their local track, or favorite racing series. These fans have been through thick and thin. They live or die with the results at the end of the weekend and they pack the stands as often as they can.

On the flip side of that coin, some race fans are nearly impossible to please. These are the people who call themselves hardcore fans, but snicker at every new change, driver commentary or media personality.

Most fans I've talked to and observe on social media platforms are in agreement that personalities, whether driver, team member, media or otherwise are good for the sport. But when it comes time a someone such as anyone on the aforementioned list says something that's not quite vanilla, it unleashes a backlash of criticism.

As I was writing this column, Kyle Larson had recently joked around about his hypothesis as to why Hendrick Motorsports has had a tendency to struggle at the early portion of the season over the course of the last few years. He was asked about the Chevrolet teams at the Cup level and said, "I feel like Hendrick just plays games in a way with NASCAR and I feel like they always start the year kind of bad to show NASCAR that they're being nice and cooperating and

following the rules and stuff and then it gets a couple months in and they start cheating and finding some speed." He later issued a letter of apology, stating he never meant to slander the other Chevrolet powerhouse at the Cup level (who provide engines to Larson's team in Chip Ganassi Racing).

Maybe it's the out-of-control realm that social media has become, where everyone thinks they're an expert with inside knowledge and can never possibly be wrong, but forgive me for saying I'm tired of the complainers.

You know, the ones who go on their social media profiles and put racetracks, drivers, series, products and whatever else that comes to mind that doesn't suit their preferences and put them on blast for anyone willing to listen (not me). If they truly care about making a change to improve the quality of the racing, perhaps having a private, civil conversation about what they're seeing from their perspective and what a possible solution is. Bottom line: if you're going to criticize, you better have a solution or at least an idea of how to about fixing something that probably isn't even broken in the first place.

In the spirit of brevity, I'll provide two groups of people that I find the most irritating.

The first group is the group of people who believe their favorite form of motorsports is superior to all other forms. Personally, I'm a race fan first, and everything else including what series I follow closest come after that. I believe fans who love dirt racing

**Dichotomy of a race fan***Dan Plan photo*

can also love asphalt racing. I believe open-wheel fans can also be stock car fans (gasp). It's 2019, people. Wake up and appreciate good racing, racers and drivers (Looking at you Jimmie Johnson haters).

The second group of people I'll mention is are the ones who claim to have been race fans for decades and claim the racing product was better in the "good-old days." Newsflash: I'd argue the racing product is pretty good wherever and whatever your preferred choice of motorsports is. I was born in 1993 and though I wasn't able to witness the quality of the racing firsthand from the decades prior, I'm pretty sure I wouldn't enjoy seeing Richard Petty lap the field and win a race by multiple laps ahead of the second-place finisher as much as I do seeing more than a handful of teams and drivers capable of winning a race on a given weekend, but that's just me.

Personally, I find no joy in watching a race or talking about a race with these folks. I've seemingly never won a debate with these folks, not that I was looking for a debate in the first place. I equate it to beating your head against a wall; you can say as much factual data as you can possibly provide but no matter what, there's always going to be someone out there who is impossible to please.

Thank you for allowing me to complain about the complainers. I'll shut up now. I just know I'll be sure



## Speedweeks Dominators

*Brandon Sheppard (top photo) won all 4 World of Outlaws Late Model main events contested at Volusia Speedway Park during the 2019 running of the DirtCar Nationals during Speedweeks. Bubba Pollard (bottom photo) made his first appearance at the World Series of Asphalt Stock Car Racing at New Smyrna Speedway.*

*Pollard would use 3 wins and consistent finishes to capture the Super Late Model point championship.*

(Bruce Nuttleman photos)







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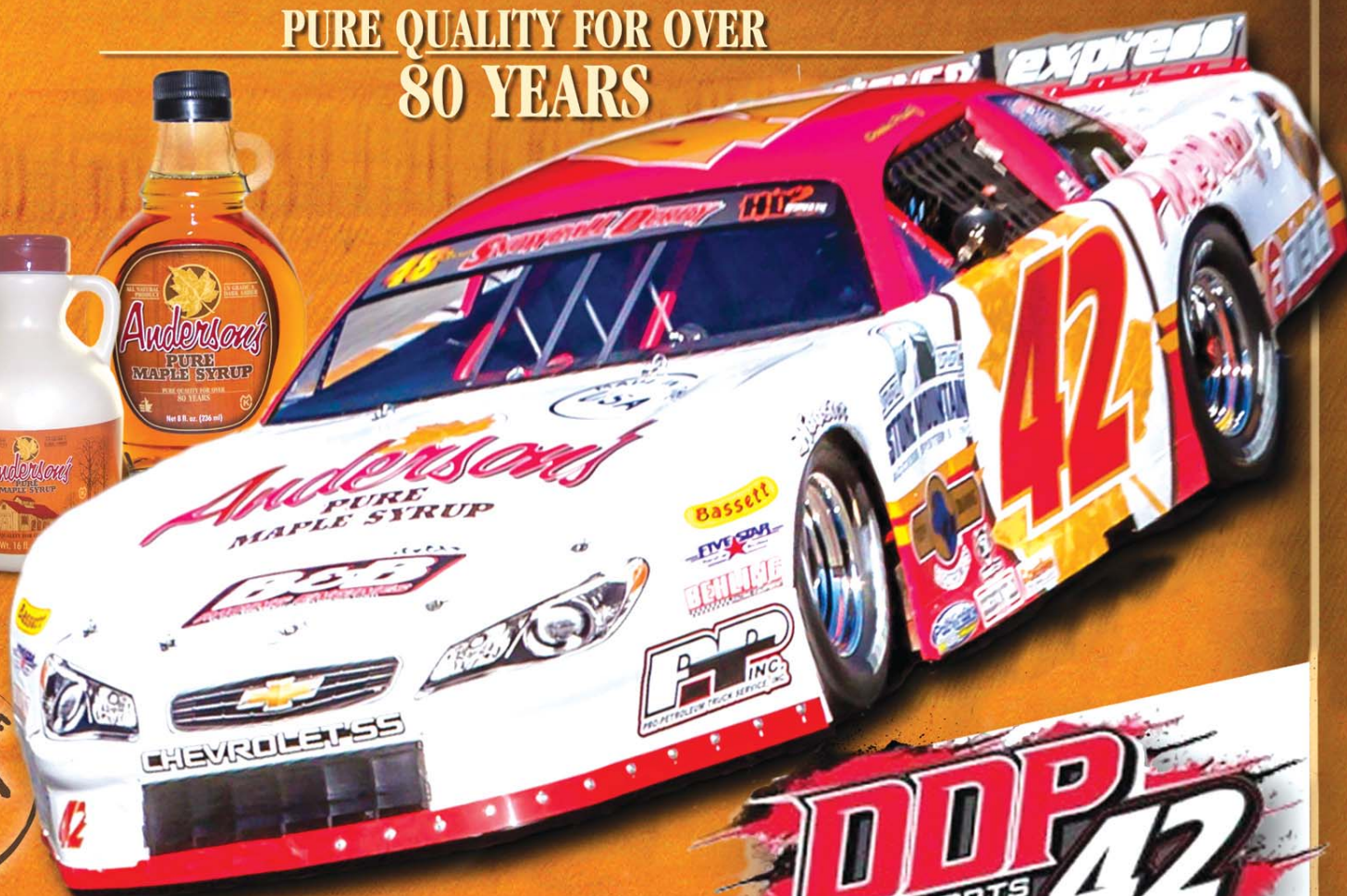
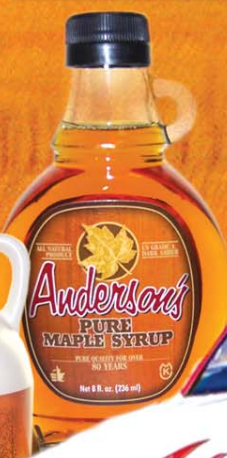
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