

# THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

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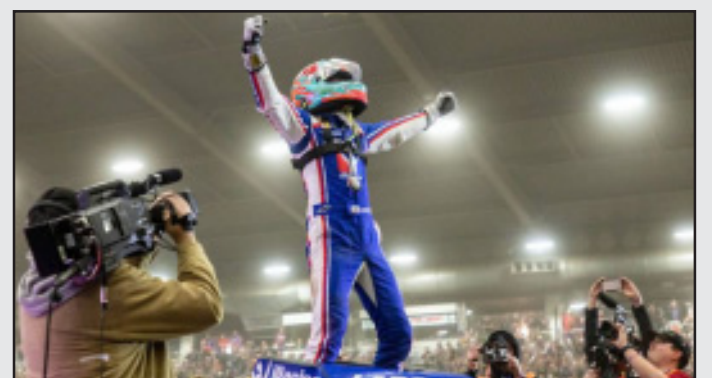
*Nostalgia is a lie & Back to the Future*

February 2020

Inside...



Talkin' Racin'



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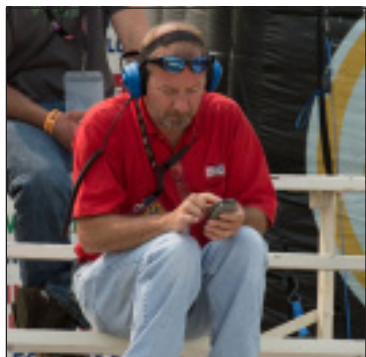
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## Publisher's Note

### Racing According to Plan



**Dan Plan**

This is the time of year when we all start to think about the upcoming racing season, but at the same time it can become a bit of a challenge to come up with an idea for something to write about.

After watching several streamed races this winter (both old and new races), I am amazed at how many dirt tracks still use Yuke tires. The Yuke tires are the big huge tires you see lining the inside corners of some dirt tracks. Honestly, I had never heard the

## Yuke Tires

term Yuke tire up until a few years. I simply knew of them as Tractor tires.

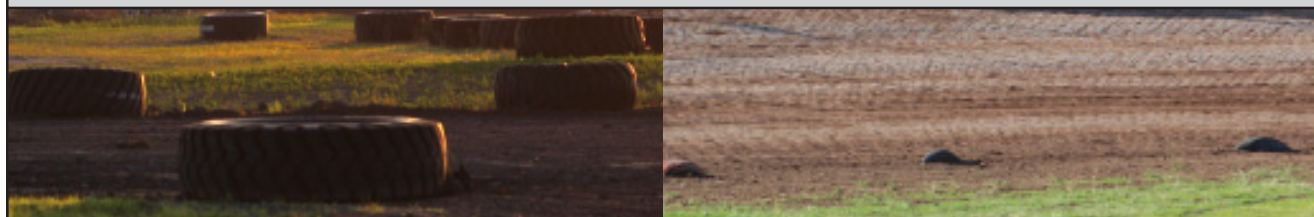
The Yuke tires are put there to prevent drivers from taking short cuts through the infield. I get that, as I can remember seeing people running through the grass when the track dried out. On the other hand, Yuke tires have also been known to cause significant damage to race cars, or they can get tossed into the racing groove causing an unnecessary caution.

I've been to several tracks over the years such as Cedar Lake Speedway, Proctor Speedway, Red Cedar Speedway and Superior Speedway that have a much better solution (in my opinion) than Yuke tires. Buried passenger car tires seem every bit as effective in preventing a short cut through the infield grass, and don't seem to cause anywhere near the amount of damage or unnecessary delays.

I honestly don't know why more tracks haven't gone to the approach of burying passenger car tires (or 8" race tires.) It surely can't be due to the expense? I'm going with they are just plain lazy.

I'm almost positive a track could get a couple dozen used tires from support divisions donated for free. I'm willing to bet many of these same drivers and crews would dedicate their time to dig the holes to bury the tires in the ground. It seems like a pretty simple solution to a widespread problem.

*The left-side picture is bad for racers, the right-side picture is a much better option*



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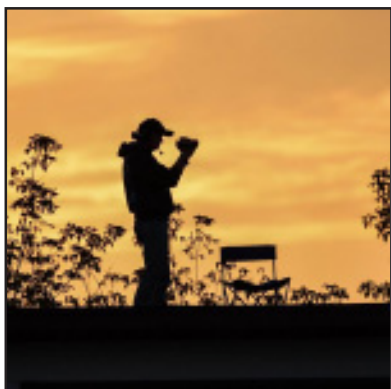
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**Dangerous Dan****Dan Margetta**

When Kyle Larson won the Chili Bowl a few weeks ago and proclaimed from victory lane that to him, finally obtaining the Golden Driller was a bigger win than the Daytona 500, it touched off the usual crazy reactions on social media. While some of those in the NASCAR circles took offense to the remark, much like they did when Larson stated similar beliefs two years ago, I feel many of us die-hard racers appreciated his sincerity and actually understood where he was coming from.

Larson grew up on the dirt tracks and winning events like the Chili Bowl represented the pinnacle of his universe which had not yet expanded to even consider competing at the NASCAR level. As he used his driving talents to progress up the racing ladder, the opportunities provided in NASCAR didn't replace the desires acquired at the grass roots level. While "big time" racing provides great financial success, often times the riches come at a cost as the fun aspects of racing get chipped away by corporate responsibilities and I would be willing to bet Larson hangs on to many of those grass roots desires to tolerate those menial duties. Plus, it's pretty damn hard to win the Chili Bowl as only 24 of the nearly 350 entries make the feature event. Also, there are no guaranteed starting spots going in and a driver has to race hard and accumulate passing points to earn a spot in each qualifying night A-Main just to have a chance to finish in the top two to lock into the Chili Bowl. A driver has to perform no matter what his or her name is or where they came from, which ironically is how the Daytona 500 used to be when drivers raced their way into the field through the Twin Qualifiers without the luxury of a guaranteed starting position. All that along with comprehending just how long and hard Larson and his family strived to achieve that Golden Driller trophy are more than enough reasons not to scorn him when he showed honest and genuine emotion from victory lane.

Instead of complaining, those in NASCAR Nation ought to appreciate the talent they have in Kyle Larson, whose statement never implied the Chili Bowl event was bigger than the Daytona 500 in the overall

**First Golden Driller for Larson***Yahoo Sports photo*

*Kyle Larson won the Golden Driller at the Chili Bowl this year and some fans took offense to his victory lane comments*

racing world. He can win in whatever type of race car he gets in from midgets to sprint cars to NASCAR stock cars. There aren't many drivers who can do that with regularity and historically those accomplishments conjure up names like Andretti, Foyt, and Stewart. There are some NASCAR fans who feel Larson doesn't share the same passion about his NASCAR racing as he does with the sprint cars and midgets and they point to his only having six Cup wins as proof. Those fans couldn't be more wrong, and they need to widen their tunnel vision and understand what makes die-hard racers like Larson tick. A little appreciation and understanding toward the context of Larson's dirt track escapades may bring out his racing passion more

on the NASCAR side. It also may even help close the unnecessary gap that seems to have grown between the grass roots and NASCAR crowds.

NASCAR's popularity grew with drivers who raced all over and connected with the fans and Larson along with Kyle Busch and Christopher Bell are three of today's drivers with similar qualities. Future generations of race fans will benefit from their talents and criticizing any of them for honest and genuine comments isn't a desirable strategy. Rather they should be celebrated for their racing passion and appreciated for providing all of us with accomplishments we'll be talking about for years to come.

*YouTube photo*



*Super Late Model Series*

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## Racing Nuggets



### PJ "Jacklyn" Nuttleman

Ah, the good ol' days. I think we've all had wistful daydreams, longing for pieces of the past to materialize again.

Except for those metal slides on backyard swing sets in the 70s; those were brutal contraptions and can stay in the past. I burned my bum sliding down one after it baked in the hot summer sun. And I witnessed neighborhood kid lose his middle finger on the sharp, exposed edges of it.

I think about him every so often, pondering if he struggles as an adult to expressing himself during bouts of road rage... but I digress.

Yeah, kids these days get all kinds of cool things that we never had when we were young. I guess that statement officially makes me old.

But in all seriousness, it sure would be awesome to be a teenager now, with the "High School Racing Association" (HSRA) being born between La Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway and Madison International Speedway this year.

According to the press release, the organization is designed to provide teenagers an affordable entry into stock car racing, and give them a chance to compete on the race track starting this summer.

Chuck Deery and Gregg McKarns are the promoters of the association and say that it came about after seeing bubbling interest the Street Stock and 6-Shooter divisions. That, combined with a tremendous amount of teenagers taking part in i-Racing, it seemed to make sense to try to tap into that audience and offer them a "playground" to test their skills in a real race setting.

Deery and McKarns hope to get more tracks across the country involved in the program that will focus on students between 14 and 19 to pilot six-cylinder sedans with safety enhancements.

I can't help but wonder what this would've looked like when I was in high school in Kirkland, IL prior to our family moving to Texas. Back then, the only kids in my class that were into racing were me and Steve Rubeck: The Flyin' FIB.

I think he and I would've made a great team. I'm sure I would've sold a ton of sponsorships and he

would be driving a bad ass race car that he would be working on during every spare minute.

I'm also fairly confident he would've destroyed at least one before we got into Victory Lane. Rubeck is, and always has been, a wild one.

He was driving when we were in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, not that he had permission to do it. He damn near ran me over after a Little League game when he fired up his dad's old Datsun truck and proceeded to throw it in gear and take off.

I'm hopeful that this HSRA will take off in a big way to help usher in a new generation into racing. It may need to include a mentorship component to really help the success rate for everyone involved. Not all parents have the know-how to nurture that motorsports interest in their kids.

Based on how the racing community seems to operate as a family for the most part, I'm hopeful that there will be teams and individuals that take some of these teenagers under their wings and help them learn and develop.

And then I have visions of my husband Toby getting involved with this (in his spare time... LOL!), as I know how much he really enjoys working with young drivers to help them develop their skills.

If you'd like to get involved or want to learn more about the High School Racing Association, visit their website: [highschoolracing.org](http://highschoolracing.org).

*High-school students in Wisconsin will have the opportunity to compete as part of the regular race program at LaCrosse Fairgrounds Speedway and Madison International Speedway during the 2020 racing season*



Jess Riedner photo





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## Dean & Jason Talkin' Racin'



**Jason Searcy**

For NASCAR fans the Daytona 500 on Sunday February 16th is the start of the race season. For our local drivers and crews, the preparation for the 2020 season is well underway, or is it? Up here in the North you need more than just desire to spend time with your race car in the Winter, you also need a heated shop or maybe a snowblower.

Growing up our race team with my Brother Scott as the driver, was fortunate to be able to borrow space in my Uncle Donny's Body Shop to work on the race car... the rules were as follows: 1- Don't LOSE any tools, broken tools are covered, missing tools are not. 2- The shop has to be back to normal by morning. That meant that the work was done mostly late at night (no problem considering we were in our teens and 20's) and the car had to be able to move OUT of the shop before the actual workday started. Not as easy in the middle of Winter and having to dig the

racecar out of the snowbank is not a task volunteer crew members usually wanted to volunteer for.

I asked my Facebook friends this week what their timing was on preparing for the upcoming season and I got the full gamut of responses. Former ELKO Thunder Car Champ Jeremy Wolff said his team usually starts prepping the car about this time of year, that way they don't get too burnt out, same story from Willy Miller and the Wrolstad Late Model team. Thunder Car driver Dillon Sellner said if he isn't working on the car in the offseason, he is thinking about his next plan to get the car faster and that you won't know if it works until opening night. Former ELKO Power stock champ Grant Brown, who is now racing in the Big 8 Late Model series says they start prepping for 2020 the day after Oktoberfest. While #21 Late Model Adam Bendzick said the last two seasons, they started working on the car just a couple weeks before the season, this year they got an earlier start. The six-time ELKO Late Model Champ Jacob Goede race team spends their winter racing vintage sleds. Great North Legends owner and driver Tim Brockhouse seems to spend his offseason travelling to as many races down South as possible to score those INEX National points and it sounds like that is the plan for the Ziemiecki tribe as well. Former Figure 8 driver Kari Miller said she couldn't work on her car until Spring because her stuff was actually stored at Raceway Park and Robert Svec joked, he didn't start working on his car until the day of the race.

Former Power Stock Champion Taylor Goldman tells a story that sounds familiar to me, their gas station doubles as a race shop after hours so, they spend the Winter thinking about how to go faster and freshening up the motor while prepping the hauler. They start

## Upcoming Season

hitting it hard in March and April to get ready for the Elko Speedway opener which this year is on Memorial Day weekend, the 2020 season will go through October 3rd this year. The new ELKO schedule will be announced very soon but here are a few tidbits. Wisconsin Midwest Modifieds are added to the NASCAR Late Models, Thunder Cars, Power Stocks and INEX Great North Legends as weekly divisions. INEX Bandoleros will race a limited schedule just like the previous years. Elko was included in the prestigious ARCA Showdown Series which features races at Phoenix, Watkins Glen, Bristol, Iowa Speedway, Mid-Ohio among others, the Race will be Saturday July 11th and broadcast on MavTV. The 12th annual Thunderstruck93 event will again be highlighted by the Big 8 Late Model series. ELKO staff members are furiously booking acts for the many Eve of Destruction events in 2020, fans can expect lots of Monster Trucks, the ATV Big Air show, Drifters, the Globe of Death and many other entertainment acts to coincide with the racing. This year the Spring Elko Speedway Driver Sign-up will be taking place at a fun new venue, ProKART indoors in Burnsville (MN) on Saturday March 7th, more details released soon. That should be a good place to hone a few racing skills and get the racing rivalries started early for the 2020 season.

Watching the Daytona 500 gets the general race audience and sponsors excited about motorsports again, and that is a good thing. Many of us local race fans get pumped up too, but we know the real race season is still about three months and a couple snow storms away. Hopefully our favorite drivers and crew won't have to fire up the snowblower and dig the Race Car out of the snowbank this year to work on it, but if so, I know a few guys with experience.

*Elko competitors Dillon Sellner (left) and Adam Bendzick (right) share their offseason preparation theories*





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Auto Racing Facts,  
Observances and  
Opinions



Dale P. Danielski

We certainly, again, hate opening our columns with a death notice, but unfortunately that is exactly what we must do.

The name Holzhausen is certainly a familiar one in Wisconsin racing annals, and patriarch of the racing family, W. W. (Bud) Holzhausen passed away here recently. Bud started the family affair in sport by himself racing, and then becoming a part of the push behind the new La Crosse Interstate Speedway being paved, which helped bring that kind of short track racing to Western Wisconsin. Bud whom had a business in the area and was a stock car owner, had nothing but good to say about the new speedway. “It’s a real beaut. “I’ve been around racing for over 20 years, and I’ve never seen a better track”. Those were the words spoken by Holzhausen as the newly paved, 5/8 mile speedway located at the Fairgrounds in West Salem, WI., was set to open in July of 1970.

Bud remained in stock car racing as an owner and sponsor for many years and of course with that involvement was bound to spur interest in it from his sons. Most are familiar with the family of racers, but just to refresh your memory, Steve, Greg and Brian all became racers. All chose the pavement to show their

wares, and at a time when you could race 4 times or better a week became very good at their trade. Steve, who got the ball rolling first, probably fared the best of the group, as he moved through the ranks of CWRA, ARTGO and ASA racing winning races and Championships while moving up the ladder. Greg and Brian (Barney) meanwhile kept the flame burning racing for years on the short track level in Wisconsin and bordering states. It wasn’t uncommon to see all three at race meets together in their familiar purple race cars. Mostly Ford products as that was Bud’s favorite, owning a dealership featuring that brand.

Time marches on and eventually the group stepped aside from racing with Steve hanging in the longest. That was mostly to nurture his son Skylar in the racing biz, who has gone on to a fine career in racing as well. Bud was certainly proud of the entire group, right to the end.

Here and there. CWRA continuing its upward trend in holding race events has announced their

Racing Observances continued  
on page 13

Dale's pictures from the past

#78 Skylar Holzhausen driving thru the rumble strips at Marshfield (top left), #787 Brian (Barney) Holzhausen, at speed, 1984 State Park Speedway (top right), Steve Holzhausen, #78 races his Bud Holzhausen, Coulee Ford at Wisconsin International Raceway in 1985 (bottom left), We think he is making the pass here of Mark Martin on the outside. Greg Holzhausen, #87, 1986 (bottom right)





### *Racing Observances from page 12*

schedule for 2020. May 9th, Marshfield Motor Speedway, May 30th, Dells Raceway Park, June 4th, State Park Speedway, June 12th, Tomah-Sparta Speedway, June 19th, Golden Sands Speedway, June 20th, Marshfield Motor Speedway, June 25th, State Park Speedway, July 11th, Marshfield Motor Speedway, August 1st, Dells Raceway Park, August 22nd, Marshfield Motor Speedway, September 11th, Marshfield Motor Speedway. Jeff Weinfurter has captured the last two CWRA Crowns and he looks to see clearly going for a 3rd in 2020.

Looking back in time to Tuesday, July 14th, 1970, it was Jim Sauter winning the first ever feature at the new La Crosse Interstate Speedway, West Salem, WI., in front of over 4,000 fans. Average speeds at the event were 93.5mph with 110 mph reached on the back straightaway. Bud Holzhausen could be seen smiling the entire night...On Wednesday night, August 26th, 1987 it was Steve Holzhausen winning the 40 lap CWRA feature at La Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway. Following Holzhausen at the line were Kevin Cywinski, Mike Belling, Chuck Green and Steve Carlson...Looking back to 2003, it was Steve Holzhausen winning the Late Model Season Championship at La Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway. Holzhausen out-pointed Kevin Nuttleman, Charlie Menard, Tony Bagstad, and J. Herbst in the final standings...

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](mailto:dale@starmakermultimedia.com)

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## New Dirt



### Jacy Norgaard

How many times have you encountered a situation in life where you are faced with adverse changes and you are quick to recall the by gone days? Whether at work or at the track we have all been there. We see something new and we think to ourselves or admit out loud, "It was better back then." or "It was easier when we did it this way." This of course is a natural reaction to new circumstances. Humans don't always like when the status quo changes and their old routine becomes a thing of the past. Changes in racing are no different. Several recent social media posts ranging from track management changes, rule changes, and event changes brought out the nostalgia craving comments. There isn't a press release out there that you won't find littered with people complaining how things aren't like they use to be or how they will no longer be a fan because of this change or that change.

I don't mean to belittle these points that many fans make. They make valid arguments rooted in strong beliefs and their heart is in the right place. But the entire argument is historically and humanly wrong.



Jacy Norgaard photo



Jacy Norgaard photo

Things change, times move on, and sports adapt. Racing is no different by any means. Technological and engineering advances drive the sport into the future. I'm reminded of an interview I did 4 years ago with modified stand out Jody Bellefeuille while filming the documentary, *Dirt Track Confidential*. Jody was speaking on his career and talked about when he got started in racing. In his early days of piloting a race car, him and his brother use to build their cars and motors in their garage. They were competitive and able to keep up with the competition. Jody now drives a MB custom chassis with a Vic Hill power plant. This change didn't happen because Jody decided one day that he wanted to invest tens of thousands of dollars into his racing program. It happened because the moment demanded it to happen. As he admitted in that interview, "Those days of building a car and motor in your garage and being competitive are gone." Jody understands keeping up with the times but that doesn't stop him from reminiscing on the good old days. And there isn't anything wrong with that. It's the protest in response to changes that creates the problem.

Now you may say, "Who cares if I want things the way they use to be." or "I'm entitled to my opinion." And those are both valid statements I don't wish to challenge. My point is that there is a time and place for everything, and sport change announcements is not that place to reminisce on the past. We need to embrace and support organizational changes, not tear them down. If all a promoter or company is met with is resistance to change, what incentive do they have to make changes? Especially changes you

all want. Because let's be honest that same mouth that wished things were the way they once were, was just complaining five minutes earlier about how you wish things would change. And some things do need to change in our sport. Especially as we face an ever changing, technologically advanced driven world. The sport of auto racing needs to adapt and be supported in the necessary changes required to keep our sport thriving.

The funniest thing about the entire nostalgic craving argument is that it's the one thing that hasn't changed. I recall a conversation I had with Tammy Lofdahl this past summer after a rain out at Proctor Speedway. Tammy's father, Don Roseen was instrumental in the founding of the WISSOTA Promoters Association. Around the time of the organization's founding racing in the northern region was made difficult by inconsistent rules at various tracks. Each track had their own tire, engine, and body rules. This made running more than one track limited to those who could afford it. The founding of WISSOTA proved to solve that crisis by providing uniform rules for competitors. Our sport was made better off by this type of change. Weeks later, I was back in the area talking in the pits with a few drivers and they were reminiscing about how racing was so much better when they were kids and how sanctioning bodies had fundamentally changed the sport. This made me realize that regardless of how good things are, there will always be those that want to live in a different time. Racing was hard before the sanctioning body, yet these drivers wished those days would return. No matter what advances we make in our sport, no matter how much better things get, there will always be a longing for the good old days.

I'll admit I have been there as well with that line of thinking. I've looked at photos I have taken on some nights and wished I could go back in time to when I had my camera setup dialed in. But then I powered through and shot better and created better images. The lesson in that for me is that there is a better place than where we are at now. It's not where we have been, it's where we are going.



Mastell Brothers Swap Meet



Mastell Brothers Trucking hosted their annual racers swap meeting to start off the year. Swap meets are a great opportunity to pick up some great deals on parts and also provide an opportunity for everyone to get together and tell tall stories during the off-season. This year’s event appeared to be a huge success, with cars lined up and down both sides of the road outside the event.

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# IMCA Oldtimers Annual Meeting



*A large and enthusiastic crowd showed up in January for the annual IMCA Oldtimers club meeting at the Legion Post in Savage, Minnesota*



*Award winners for the afternoon were Rich Crear recipient of the Sportsman Award, presented by Skip Pollak (left photo), and Harley Timmerman won the Honorary Membership award, presented by Paul Dolphy and Skip Pollak (right photo)*



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