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THE MIDWEST'S SHORT TRACK AUTO RACING AUTHORITY

February, 2012



MRC Crystal Ball for 2012



Inside...

NASCAR Minnesota State
Champion interview

A Shot at the Big Time with
a local racer



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Publisher's Note

Racing According to Plan



Dan Plan

As we get ready to start the 2012 racing season, I thought we might take a look back at one of our issues from five years ago. Back in 2007, a young Austin Dillon was going from track to track, racing a black #3 Dirt Late Model. Here is an excerpt from our interview published in the August 9, 2007 issue of MRC;

So there you have it. A nice kid, who has good connections and has learned how to drive a Dirt Late Model fairly well in a short period of time. The sad part is he won't be on the short tracks for too long. The way I see it, NASCAR is getting concerned about their TV ratings. In 5 years or so, Austin will have run the Busch East, a few Craftsman Truck races and a full Grand National season. NASCAR will plead with RCR to put Austin into the black number 3. This addition to the team and ensuing press

conference will cause the TV ratings to skyrocket. All of this really doesn't sound too far fetched, does it?

Looks like our predictions were not too far off as we head into the 2012 season. Austin picked up the 2011 Camping World Truck Series championship, and is scheduled to go full-time in a Nationwide ride in 2012, running the famous black 3 of course. With this in mind, let's see what our crystal ball has to say for the next five years.

With Jimmy Johnson missing out on six-in-a row, the empire is about to crumble. The 2012 season will be even more of a challenge, leading to the departure of Chad Knaus at the end of the season. After running a season without Knaus, Johnson's fall from stardom will continue, leading to sponsorship woes, and his eventual departure from Hendrick Motorsports. Jimmy will announce at the end of the 2014 racing season, he is leaving Hendrick for "an exciting opportunity" with Michael Waltrip Racing. Johnson will end up closing out his career running a limited schedule as a team mate to David Gilliland and Travis Kvapil at Front Row Motorsports, only to be booted for the final two races of the 2017 racing season by Mark Martin, who comes out of retirement once again.

After having several successful seasons with crew chief Bob Osborne, Carl Edwards will win his first Cup championship when he is paired up with Jimmy Fenning in 2013.

Kurt Busch will spend a season in the James Finch



Rick Blewett photo

MRC Crystal Ball

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ride, have a tantrum after a couple of minor pit road miscues, and then fade into the past of oval track racing. Kurt will focus on NHRA Pro Stock racing, run out of financing and replace Dale Jarrett on NASCAR TV broadcasts in 2016. Kyle Busch will learn from his older brothers mistakes and win the Cup championship in 2015 driving for Richard Petty Motorsports.

How do you think these prediction will hold up?

Miscellaneous news and notes:

At times, we enjoy the break from our summer

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weekly racing exploits here during the Minnesota winters. At other times, we are trying to find some sort of motorsports action to keep us entertained. Since our last on-line issue, we've been to a couple of very entertaining events; Monster Jam at the Metrodome and the ISOC SnoCross at Canterbury Park. I typically attend these events with the sole intent of watching a good show. Often times, I come away wondering why the crowds are so big, and what could short track racing use from these events. Here is what I think these shows have as an advantage of most short track shows.

Starting on time – Start time in my book is when racing starts. Not time trials, not hot-laps, but racing. If you say you're starting at 6:00pm, the National Anthem best be wrapped up, and the first race on the track and taking the green flag.

Minimal "downtime" – The ISOC SnoCross race had this down to a "T". At dirt track racing, we are


Bruce Nuttleman photo

Dan Plan photo

Every short track promoter should take the opportunity to witness a well-run Monster Jam show, or one of the ISOC Sno Cross events. Above, "Iron Outlaw" performs during the Monster Jam event at the Minneapolis Metrodome. Left photo shows vintage Sno Cross racing the day following the big show at Canterbury Park in Shakopee.

all used to some farm equipment working the track back into shape at some point during the evening. Even while the trail groomers were working the track during the SnoCross event, the announcer was making some noise, prizes were being given away and the crowd was being entertained. No awkward moments of silence or extended intermissions.

Short Races – Both Monster Jam and the ISOC Sno Cross have short races. Let the Cup guys have 4 or 5 hour events. I just want to see guys drive as hard as they can for each race.



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Going in Circles



By Charlie Spry

The sport of auto racing is very addictive, and oftentimes, carried on from one generation to the next. Many children grow up around the track watching their fathers and even grandfathers race, and this exposure to the sport leads them to do the same when they are older.

One driver carrying on the family tradition is central Wisconsin racer Scott Ciesielski (pronounced as Sa-Shell-Ski). The nineteen year old driver from Plover, Wisconsin, has the Golden Sands Speedway right in his area, and has grown up around the track. His father, Mark, raced a purple fastback Mustang in the 1970's, in the era of Trickle, Reffner, Back, and others. Scott's cousins are the Rossier's, another family that raced during the same era. Also, Scott's brother, Matt, currently races in the super stock division at 'Sands and Marshfield. So, you can see, Scott has grown up around the sport, and has plenty of mentors to help him gain insight.

Scott currently races both a two-man cruiser, and a stock four cylinder at tracks such as 'Sands, Marshfield, State Park Speedway, and also competes on occasion in enduro events. He has also raced at Slinger, Jefferson, LaCrosse, Rockford, Farley, and Columbus.

Although only nineteen, he already has completed his fourth year of racing. His career began back in 2008, when he was asked to fill in for another driver in a cruiser event. "They never took down the name change, as it was kind of a last minute thing, but we won the race. It was pretty neat to win on the first time out, even though I didn't get official credit for it."

The cruisers are a pretty wild and fun class to watch, as these cars have two people in each car, one operating the gas pedal, and one steering and braking. Scott noted that even though you would think there may be conversations going on between the two during an event, communication must be gained through understanding the other person's tendencies, rather than verbally. "It is way too loud in there during a race to talk or yell to each other, you just have to know what the other guy is going to do and when, so you can coordinate with one another."

Scott is traditionally the "gas man" during the events, with long-time partner Tyler Rodriguez handling the

steering/braking part of it. However, during the middle of the summer of 2011, Tyler was involved in a serious motorcycle accident, and although he will recover completely, he was out of racing for half of the year. During this time, Scott recruited different drivers to fill the vacancy, including his brother, Matt, and also friend and top four cylinder racer Phil Malouf to fill the void. Even with all the changes, the team still managed a very close second place points finish at Golden Sands. The team of Ciesielski/Rodriguez also snagged the 2010 cruiser championship at Marshfield. The car is a Buick Lesabre sporting an Oldsmobile 455 engine.

As for four cylinder racing, Scott has just started doing more of that recently. Starting in enduros, he has been racing in most events at Golden Sands and others in the stock four cylinder division. Early in the season Scott told me that he still preferred the cruisers to the four cylinders, but as the season progressed, he began doing better and better in the four cylinder cars, and began enjoying that just as much, saying, "It was hard to get used to the four cylinder at first, there is more competitiveness there, but I started getting the hang of it and doing better at the end of the year." Scott did very well at the Marshfield Fall Spectacular, running in both the stock and mod classes, gaining much more seat time and confidence. With Phil Malouf giving him help and advice, you can expect him to get to the front in the future.

As for his racing highlights so far, winning his very first race would be a definite highlight, as would be winning the championship at Marshfield in 2010, with two clean sweeps. The worst racing luck he had was just recently, late in the 2011 season, as he noted, "We were real close in the season point standings for cruisers at 'Sands, and it was late in the year, we were moving up through the pack and ready to take the lead in the race, when the positive battery cable came off. We had to just let it coast into the infield and watch our championship hopes pretty much vanish. Afterwards, we put the cable back on and it fired right up."

When not racing, Scott also works as a cashier/meat clerk at Copps Food Center, and is also a full time student at Mid-State Technical College in Stevens Point, studying business management. Scott has the right idea here, as with this kind of education, he will be putting himself in a position to know how to handle his racing ventures in a positive and professional way, which comes in handy when trying to gain sponsorship or



Jeff Blaser photo

impress those in the upper positions of the sport. He handles himself well, knows how to talk to people, and carries a professional attitude. He seems amazingly calm for a guy his age, and is lots of fun to talk with at anytime. Scott knows what he wants to do and is in a position to make things happen.

What does the future hold for this young driver? Scott noted that in the immediate future, he hopes to get more four cylinder racing accomplished, and also hopes to move up to pure stocks and super stocks, eventually to late models and possibly beyond. He is getting the needed seat time, the business acumen, and his name out there to sponsors, and we may be seeing his name around for a long time. I have personally raced with him, and he is a fun person to race with, and hard to beat!

Scott has many sponsors helping him out on his racing efforts, including D&D Automotive Services, Bob Ciesielski concrete & masonry, Malouf's Mobile Mechanics, KP trucking, Club Forest bar, Bonnie Ciesielski American Family Insurance, Precision glass & door, and RPM Graphics. He would also like to thank his parents and grandparents for their help and support, as well as his brother, Matt, and also Phil Malouf for his help.

Keep an eye out in the future for this young racer as he moves up the ranks!



Scott Ciesielski in Cruiser Car action at Golden Sands
Jeff Blaser photo

Still Wide Open Book Review

Since we took over ownership of The Midwest Racing Connection, we have spent the last several winters doing book reviews. Our friends at Coastal 181 Publishing have been kind enough to send us a book to read on the long nights here in Minnesota during the off-season. This year we received a copy of the second release of the book – Still Wide Open. This book was originally published in 1999, and we truly wish we would have picked up a copy back then, as this is the best book we have read.

Even though Brad Doty is a TV broadcaster these days, many fans may not realize that he was a top Sprint Car racer before his racing career was cut far too short. I'm the type of person that still feels a bit intimidated to approach the stars of the sport. After reading this book, I've realized that Brad Doty is just like the rest of us. He's a racer and a humble person that just happened to become a celebrity of sorts.

What made this book such a good read for me, was realizing the Brad did many of the same things most of us that are interested in motorsports did during our younger years. Wild stunts on motorcycles, pressing your luck on the road with local law enforcement and the other crazy things many of us did when we didn't know any better.

The book covers the exploits of living life on the road when you're a race car driver for a living. While it may look like a great time from those of us that work a regular day time job, there are a lot of trying times when you're on the road for weeks on end. I've been lucky enough in my career to take some vacations during the summer that included week-long

racing extravaganzas. While a week on the road is a lot of fun, Doty speaks first hand of how tough it can be to do this for a living. Believe me, I know what it is like to go eating nothing but race track food and running out of clean clothes in the span of a week. Life on the road as an Outlaw was pretty tough back in the 1980's.

This book is one of those

that I file in my memory bank when I'm having a bad day. When I think I'm having a bad day, I just have to think about everything that Brad has been through, and succeeded, and I realize that I'm not really having a bad day.

My favorite quote from the book is something we can all relate to. Whether you're a race car driver, car owner or just a race fan, we've all spent a lot of money on the sport we all enjoy. Brad states in the book, "Money comes and goes. It's the memories that stay with you." Yeah, I can relate to that.

If you're interested in a copy of this book, I would highly recommend this as a good read. Copies are available at www.coastal181.com and www.daveargabright.com



Stan Meissner photo

One of Stan Meissner's early attempts at action photography. Sammy Swindell in the #1 Old Milwaukee car on the inside, Brad Doty in the Stanton #75 outside. 1985 photo from the stands, lens through the fence, on the backstretch at CLS.



Brad Doty
with Dave Argabright
Foreword by Steve Kinser

Minnesota NASCAR State Champion

Adam Royle

Adam Royle successfully defended his Minnesota NASCAR State Championship, topping Donny Reuvers by a margin of 75 points. Royle, along with Rick "Rowdy" Burns were the only two drivers to complete all 33 events contested at Elko Speedway and Raceway Park in 2011. We recently had a chance to discuss with Adam his 2011 season and his plans for 2012.

Have you noticed there seems to be some correlation between short track racing and hockey in our area of the country?

I played hockey all of the way from kindergarten to high-school varsity. Elko announcer Jim Burns even announced at a couple of games I played at in Northfield, which was kind of a neat deal.

How is hockey going for your kids this year?

Good. My oldest son Davis is a squirt this year, and Allan and Henry are in the mites. That keeps us pretty busy throughout the winter here.

With recent unfortunate incident with Jack Jablonski here in Minnesota, did this impact your family and playing hockey?

No it hasn't. You're going to get that injury or that kind of stuff in any sport. It's no different than us strapping in a race car on Saturday night. You never know what's going to happen. You just have to take it one day at a time.

You were able to win the state championship with NASCAR, but came up just a few points short for the titles at each track. Did winning the state championship make up for not winning the track titles?



Martin DeFries photo

Nope, not at all. I wanted that Elko championship really bad this year. A couple of things didn't go our way this year.

How tough is it racing two nights a week, all summer long?

It's tougher than everyone thinks it is. Just the man hours our team has to put in. We have one car that we race with at both tracks. To get ready to race at Raceway Park, we start at 7:00am Sunday morning. It's just a lot of time away from the family.

What is the hardest part about racing both nights on the weekend?

Probably time away from the family. You might as well double the time you work on your race car during the week if you're just running one night.

When the ASA Midwest Tour made its stop at Raceway Park, you were poised to have a good run, and possibly a win. How long did it take to

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get over the disappointment of falling out of the race while leading?

I'm still not over it, and probably never will get over it. I'll probably remember every lap of that race until the day I die. I never had a race car work as good as it did that day.

Was it an issue with the carburetor that caused you to drop out?

Yeah, the needle and seat stuck. First time ever in my racing career that I had that happen. My sponsor, Pirtek, paid the bill to have all of our fuel line replaced with gasoline approved stuff after that happened.

What do you think could be done to help bring more local competitors out when the tour comes to town?

I don't know what it would take. I think a lot of people get scared that "the big-bad tour" is coming to town to go race at Elko or go race at Raceway. To tell you the truth, the guys that would probably do the

best are the guys that run locally. It takes a lot to get around Elko and Raceway. I think we have the toughest competition weekly in the Midwest.

On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your 2011 season?

I would give it a six.

What are your plans for the 2012 season?

Well, I'm not sure if we'll be racing at both places again this season. I do know we'll be racing around Minnesota again.



Martin DeFries photo

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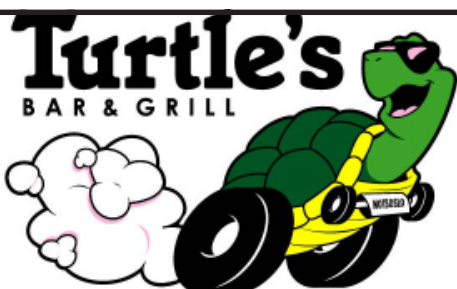
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Andy Jones capped off his first full season in a Sprint Car by capturing second place in the season long UMSS standings. We recently caught up with Andy to discuss his ARCA test at Daytona International Speedway near the end of 2011, and how he used social media to get the test.

How did your test with Brian Kesolwski come about?

I was actually on Facebook right before it all came out. The guy who paints Brian's helmets mentioned that they were looking for some drivers. I emailed him and he got back to me with the PR ladies email address. We went back and forth a little bit and the next thing you know, I got a phone call from Brian. We talked for a while about 2 weeks before the test. We got everything put together and started making our plans. We booked our plane tickets on Tuesday and had to fly out on Thursday. It was short notice, and a lot of stuff happened in a short amount of time. Then we went down there and tested. We had some problems with the car, but it all came together and we had fun. I've touched base with him here and there to try and make something out of it. It's a hard deal. It's one of those things where money's a factor I guess. It comes down to who has money can get a ride.

Your dad has been around the sport for a number of years. Was he able to pull some strings with some of his connections to get the ball rolling?
Actually he didn't at all. When I called my dad after talking with Brian, he didn't believe me. When he came home from work, I showed him the emails, and then he believed. He's such a big supporter. I definitely couldn't have done it without him.

Have you ever been to Daytona before?

I had never been down to Daytona or down that way before. The farthest away from I had gone before was North Carolina. We had a great time down there. The track is cool, and just to be in the infield, and then racing around that track. I've played a lot of video games, and I can tell you it's nothing like a video game.



Stan Meissner photo

What was it like the first time you drove out onto the track?

The first time out, they basically said you have to hold it wide open. I talked to my dad, and he said it's like a job interview. You have to do your best and hold it wide open. I held her wide open, and ran around the top for a few laps. Then we went to the bottom and couldn't believe the G-forces. Even from going from the top to the bottom, the G-forces on your body are just amazing. It's one of things I've never felt, and a lot of people never will. It's unbelievable, you can't focus. It's just amazing.

Was this your first time on a pavement track?

That was the first time I had been on pavement.

There are probably not a lot of people that can say their first time on pavement was at Daytona.

That's right. I talked to Brian beforehand, and he said you can just hold it wide open and the banking will hold you in there. It's amazing how little you turn and how much the car moves. At times it would stick, and others times it would dart all over if you turned too much.

Do you think your test will lead to an opportunity to run any ARCA races this season?

I feel it will. I talked to Brian, and the ARCA series is coming up this way a couple of times this year. I loved to do it, and I would love for something to happen. We'll just keep our fingers crossed and hope

we can land some big sponsors.

There are two races close to home this year (Madison, WI and Elko, MN). What would it take for you to secure a ride for these two races?

When I talked to Brian, it was a minimum of \$50,000.00. That's pocket change to some people but I ain't got that kind of money laying around, that's for sure.

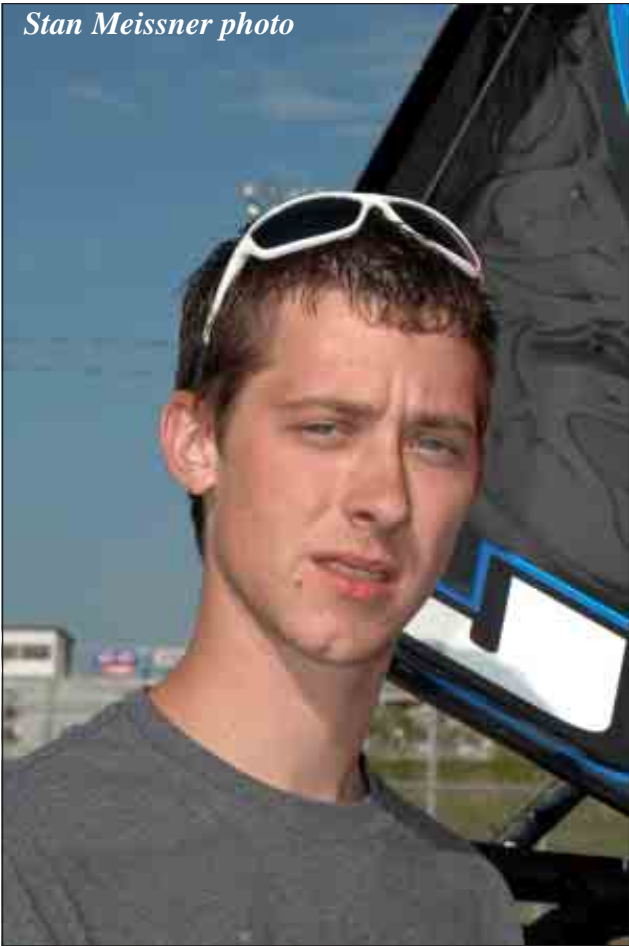
It used to be you could get a ride based on talent. Then it evolved to talent and connections. Now it seems to take talent, connections and a whole lot of money. Would you agree?

That's exactly how it is nowadays. I don't

know if you even need talent these days. As long as you have money. We had to put together \$5,000.00 to

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Stan Meissner photo



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test and another \$5,000.00 for a crash deposit. Somehow we managed to make it happen in two short weeks. I can't even imagine trying to come up with 50-grand. You could get wadded up in one turn, and there goes all of your money. I wish it was based talent. I might not be the best racer around, I might know a lot of things, or win a lot of races, but I feel I would have more of a shot if it was based on talent.

If nothing comes of the test, would you do it all over again if you had the chance?

Yeah, I would definitely do it again. It was once in a lifetime opportunity. It's one of those things I'll cherish forever. We had a blast down there. Not a lot of people can say they've been around Daytona. I've run B-Mods, Modifieds, Sprint Cars and now I've run an ARCA car at Daytona. How cool is that?

If things don't pan out for an ARCA ride, what are your plans for 2012?

Currently we have two Sprint Cars. One is a 2008 and the other one is a 2010. The 2010 is one of Craig Dollansky's cars that I ran last year. We are racing for Mastel Brothers Racing, the same people I've raced for the last two years in Sprint Cars. Hopefully

we'll have a third car together by the time the season comes around. We're going to do some traveling this year and run some of the ASCS races once in a while. We'll run Knoxville quite a bit and some of the bigger shows. We ran with the UMSS last year, and finished second in points. That was basically our first full year in a Sprint Car. I guess we'll just hit it hard this year and see what it brings us.

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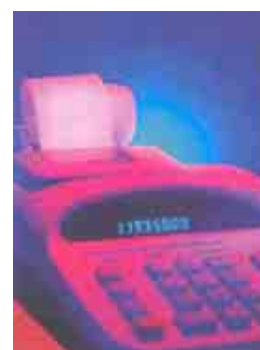
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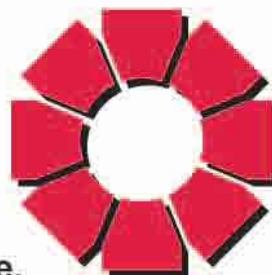
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The Inside Dirt



Stan Meissner

In my previous MRC column I was uncertain how much I would be able to follow racing during the 2012 season. As a result of my indecision I found myself waking up in the middle of the night in a cold sweat contemplating life without a full slate of racing. I guess that's what they mean when they say that racing gets in your blood. Sometimes I swear it's more like a sticky booger that won't shake off a fingertip but for the purposes of this column we'll stick with the blood component analogy.

I'm not much into philosophy but I found myself inspired by the words of eighteenth century Irish statesman Edmund Burke. Burke once said "Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little." The knowledge that my contributions have been appreciated will serve as my motivation and inspire this leap of faith. It is my goal for the Inside Dirt column to appear in every issue of MRC during the 2012 season. To borrow a phrase from the racer's lexicon "we put together a decent schedule of eighteen to twenty events close to home and will add more if funding becomes available."

The Chili Bowl in Tulsa, Oklahoma, has become a favorite mid January destination for the open wheel set. To be sure, the racing is said to be next to none, but a four day vacation spent in a Tulsa oil rig exhibition arena sniffing exhaust fumes admittedly appeals to the more rabid segment of the racing fan base. I like racing a lot, in some respects you could say I love it, but I'm not ashamed to admit that other winter vacation destinations are more attractive. Some would level the accusation that I'm not a real racing fan but they haven't tried to sell my wife on a January trip to Oklahoma. Nevertheless, I do follow Chili Bowl results throughout the week and have



Stan Meissner photo

2011 UMSS Champion Jerry Richert Jr. (63) races alongside Joe Kouba (55) at the 2005 Mighty Axe Nationals.

watched the action in high definition on YouTube.

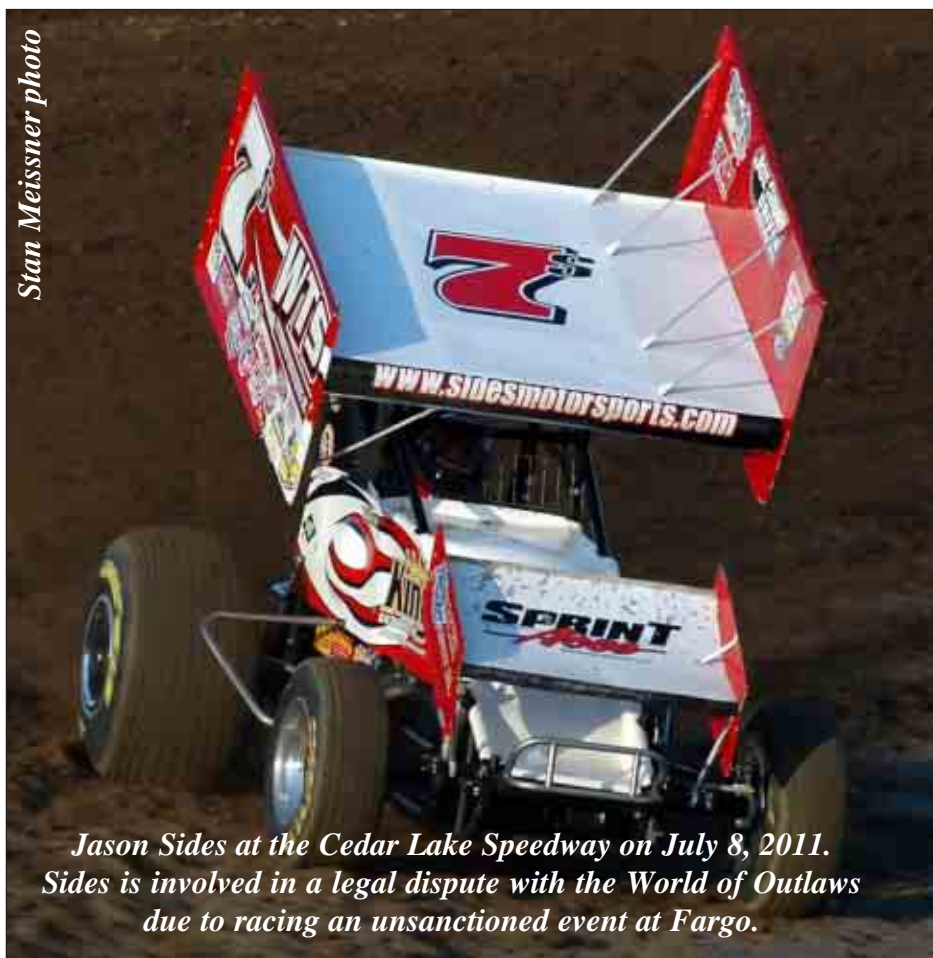
By my count drivers out of the upper Midwest included Davey Heskin, Jody Rosenboom, Ryan York, Tony Norem, Donovan Peterson and Bill Balog. Nebraskan Don Droud Jr., a former winner of Cedar Lake's Jerry Richert Sr. Memorial, was also

on hand and had a good showing. From my list of familiar drivers the final Saturday results are as follows. Don Droud Jr. 11th in C #2, Jody Rosenboom 12th in D #2, Bill Balog 13th D #1 (NASCAR's JJ Yeley finished 6th in this race), Davey Heskin 9th in E #1, Donovan Peterson 6th in F #2, Ryan York 14th in H #1 and Tony Norem 8th in J#2. Norem also took second in the K Main. There were two Features for each letter of the alphabet with the exception of the K and A Mains which were both one race affairs. A quick fingers and toes calculation comes up with something like 20 Feature races on Saturday alone. Entries for the event totaled 267 with one day boasting an ungodly number of flips that approached 40. Search Chili Bowl 2012 Thrills and Spills on YouTube if you don't think race cars can built up a head of steam indoors.

Kevin Swindell won his third consecutive Chili Bowl with Sammy finishing second. The Swindell family definitely has this race figured out. Sammy's car owner hails out of Windom, Minnesota, so I guess we can count him as a driver with local connections. The Posse fans back adopt everyone who races there as their own, so I guess it wouldn't be too much of a stretch for us to do that here in Minnesota with Sammy. Teenage sensation Kyle Larson finished in third place and subsequently signed on to drive a Stock Car for Rev Racing in NASCAR's K&N Pro Series. There has

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Stan Meissner photo



Jason Sides at the Cedar Lake Speedway on July 8, 2011. Sides is involved in a legal dispute with the World of Outlaws due to racing an unsanctioned event at Fargo.

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been a lot of hype surrounding this young California driver who has already bested Tony Stewart and Jeff Gordon's pre-NASCAR achievements. This latest development has probably reduced our chances of ever seeing him in a Sprint Car here in the upper Midwest before he moves up the ladder. Speaking of Tony Stewart the former two-time winner came home tenth which illustrates how tough the competition is.

Jason Sides has caused quite a stir in the Sprint Car world with his lawsuit against the World Racing Group/World of Outlaws. Sides attempted to get clearance to race in an unsanctioned event last summer at Fargo but his calls were not returned by Outlaw officials. Donny Schatz raced in that event at the track promoted by his father but Schatz had obtained permission in advance. Sides' attempts to get confirmation were reportedly not acknowledged but he made the decision to go ahead and race anyways. At this point so as not to give an inaccurate report based on rumors I'll defer you to an internet search. I'm sure you can find all the sordid details and speculation about the resulting legal actions by both parties.

I'm not going to take sides (no pun intended) in this dispute but I can understand the interests of both parties. The Outlaw's selling point with promoters is their guarantee that their top drivers will participate in every event as advertised. On the other hand, career race car drivers have to race in order to make a living. A good portion of the first half of the 2011 WoO schedule was plagued by rainouts and that had a financial impact on some of the teams. I don't know what the result of these legal actions will be but it's not good publicity for anyone involved. On the other hand I beg to differ with fans that think this will have a negative effect on Outlaw attendance. Many of the fans that pack the house at World of Outlaws

races come out to see them once or twice a year for the spectacle and aren't necessarily hard core Sprint Car fans. This is an unfortunate situation but in my opinion the end result will not have an impact on the sport. Jason's desire to continue to race with the Outlaws while legal action is pending is an odd twist as people usually sever all ties with the subject of their lawsuit. This in my opinion is an unusual and unfortunate situation that will soon be forgotten by the majority of fans once the 2012 season is underway. I'm afraid that the biggest loser may end up being Mr. Sides.

The Saint Croix Valley Raceway recently announced their schedule which will include a couple of interesting events that local racing fans want to be sure to attend. An event called the Traditional 40 will take place on June 8 and will include a 40 lap Traditional (non-wing) Sprint Car Feature. The word on the street is that non-wing numbers have increased so that up to twenty entries could grace some of their bigger shows. On June 29 the first annual Kouba Memorial/Open Wheel Nationals will be contested at the newly revamped facility. Five open wheel classes will be on hand including UMSS 360 Sprints, UMSS Traditional Sprints, UMSS Micro Sprints, WISSOTA Midwest Modifieds and WISSOTA Modifieds. The powerful 410 Sprints will take to the quarter mile bullring on Friday July 27 when the Interstate Racing Association (IRA) making their first appearance on the quarter mile. The big cubers will be a sight to



Stan Meissner photo

Austin Johnson lives in Shakopee, Minnesota, and will be driving the familiar #81 for his father Marty Johnson.

Nationals and track championships at Jackson and Husets. Jerry raced weekly at the Knoxville Raceway for many years but made the decision in 2002 to field his own car locally. Jerry has won a lot of races since becoming a car owner but championships had alluded him until 2011. Richert was crowned the 2011 UMSS Champion at the UMSS banquet held at the Mermaid Entertainment Center on January 28.

Kevin Bradwell proved that extensive Sprint Car experience was not a prerequisite by winning the UMSS Traditional Sprint Car title in his rookie season. Bradwell impressed a lot of people by besting drivers such as Johnny Parsons III and Tommy Kamrath who both had extensive non-wing experience. In addition to Kevin's skills behind the wheel he has been a big supporter of the Saint Croix Valley Raceway and a great ambassador of the sport. Congratulations to Jerry, Kevin and all the drivers who supported the UMSS during the 2011 season.

Sprint Car driver Austin Johnson hails from Shakopee, Minnesota, and is driving his father Marty Johnson's familiar blue #81 car. The Johnson #81 has seen the likes of drivers such as T.J. "The Jedi" Giddings, Jerry Richert Jr. and Mike Reinke behind the wheel over the years. Austin will be running for the rookie of the year title at Knoxville in the 410 division and the team hopes for a strong showing in the Knoxville Nationals. They also plan on running some 360 events with the UMSS and JSTS during the 2012 season as well. The team will be utilizing Eagle Chassis and Ostrich engines in the 410 division and a J&J Chassis in 360 competition. The 360 will be sporting a paint scheme modeled after the Gambler house cars of yesteryear. Sponsors include ButlerBuilt Seats, Anderson Suspension Development and Rockstar Helmet Paint. Visit austinjohnson.com for more information.

In the next installment of The Inside Dirt we will cover the results of Brooke Tanell's annual trip to Australia along with news and notes from Florida Speedweeks and other items of interest. Thanks for reading and we'll see you at the races soon.



Stan Meissner photo

Kevin Bradwell was crowned the 2011 UMSS Traditional Sprint Car Champion in his first year of driving Sprints. Bradwell came to the Sprints from the unlikely background of Pure Stocks and Hornets.

behold with wheel stands and slide jobs more than a possibility. This event will tie in with an appearance of the UMSS winged cars at Cedar Lake on the following night. My schedule puts the emphasis on the Saint Croix Valley Raceway and the Cedar Lake Speedway. More on the Cedar Lake schedule in coming issues of MRC.

Jerry Richert Jr. has a lengthy racing resume' that includes ten Knoxville Raceway feature wins, four appearances in the A Main of the Knoxville

Auto Racing Facts, Observances and Opinions



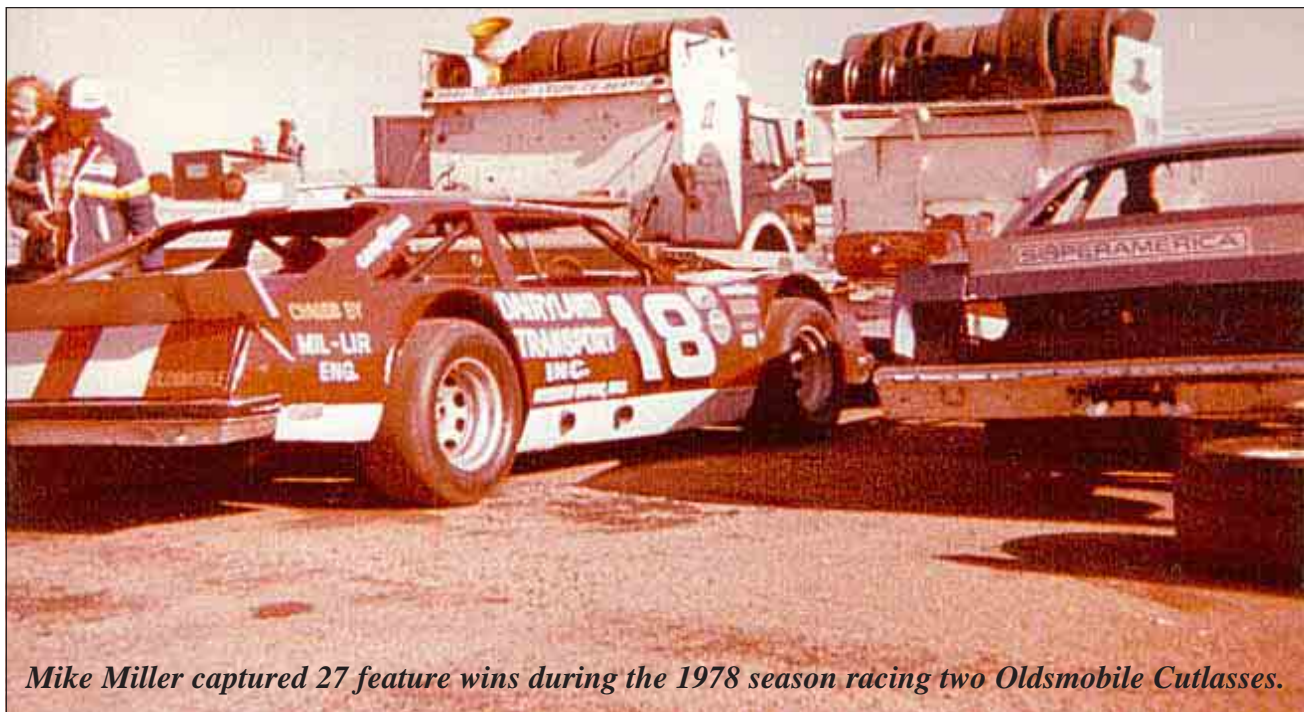
By Dale P. Danielski

It's not too difficult to understand why folks who followed closely and witnessed much of the time racing in the Midwest, tried to keep track of feature event wins for drivers from this part of the Country. These racers had so many opportunities to compete that it was a countdown of sorts every year to see who won the most. It was just phenomenal how many wins were being racked up and more times than not at least in the paved late model ranks it was a road to a town in Wisconsin that found a driver near or on top the list. In 1978 it was again Wis. Rapids, WI., racer Dick Trickle leading the way.

The hot Bemco Engineering, Pontiac Firebird combination Trickle had going in 1977 continued in 1978 as Dick got off to a quick start winning the ASA event at Queen City Speedway of West Chester, OH. Mark Martin gave pursuit, yes the same Mark Martin racing in NASCAR today but had to settle for 2nd at the end of 100 laps. 3rd spot went to Illinois hot shoe Ed Hoffman with Florida traveler Dick Anderson in 4th and Michigan driver John Anderson 5th. Looking further down the rundown, Mark Malcuit was 6th, Mike Eddy 7th, Joe Shear 8th, Ray Young 9th and Don Gregory 10th. In looking at that list it's conceivable that combined they won over 3,000 Feature races. Is that possible? It's not only possible it's very likely before their careers, except for Martin of course, he's still adding to the total, all ended.

Trickle followed up his Ohio win with another ASA conquest this time at the Hartford Michigan Speedway. In order behind Trickle it was Denny Nyari, Bob Senneker, Ray Young and Dick Anderson. Big news pertaining to ASA was their sanctioning an event at the famed Milwaukee Mile in West Allis, WI. Normally competing on short tracks, the Super Speedway "Mile" was going to be a great challenge for the short trackers. Everyone wanted to be a part of the prestigious happening and an astounding 80 race teams entered the event to be held

More Retro Highlights



Mike Miller captured 27 feature wins during the 1978 season racing two Oldsmobile Cutlasses.

May 7th. One driver hoping to win the 150 mile race was Minnesota transplant to Wisconsin Mike Miller. Miller had been a Ford product racer for his entire career but decided to switch to an Oldsmobile Cutlass for the 1978 season. With Chevrolet power, the combination was a good one and Miller proved it by winning a couple early season main events at Capital Speedway of Oregon, WI.

Miller didn't win the Milwaukee event but did place a respectable 9th as Bob Senneker posted one of the biggest wins of his career. Senneker's win earned him \$3,950 in prize money and was witnessed by over 16,000 fans. Mark Martin paced the 70 car field in time trials setting a track record of 31:454 seconds around the flat mile track. Placing 2nd after 150 laps was Larry Phillips with Dick Trickle, Larry Detjens and Dave Watson following. Most drivers chose a softer compound tire for the race which showed more wear than the harder compound available and it made a difference in the end. One driver was very pleased with his choice of the harder tire. It was none other than the "Sneaker" himself, race winner Bob Senneker.

The usual suspects were again winning during the year, but drivers like Steve Burgess, Rich Somers, John Speer, Tony Strupp and Larry Nipple also picked up wins at paved tracks in the region. Drivers that were destined for bigger things down the road were also winning as the names Rusty Wallace and Alan Kulwicki appeared in the newspaper headlines. Although becoming more and more infrequent, Fox Valley Wisconsin driver Pete Parker was racing and winning on both pavement and dirt tracks. His pavement win at Wisconsin International Raceway of Kaukauna, WI., early in the season was his first ever on black top. He picked up an additional pavement win later in the year there as well. Very common in the 1960s, the practice was occurring less and less as equipment was changing and cars and set ups just didn't work for both types of race surfaces.

The Art Frigo/John McKarns ARTGO Tour was going strong and something very rare occurred in an event held June 3rd at the Grundy County Speedway of Morris, IL. Dick Trickle and Tom Reffner crossed the start finish line side by side and without a clear advantage to be seen were declared co-victors of the race. A dead heat after 50 laps of racing. In all my travels I can't say I've ever witnessed a finish like that.

Meanwhile, the Mike Miller train was really heating up as Mike was winning throughout Wisconsin. Golden Sands Speedway of Plover, WI., State Park Speedway of Wausau, La Crosse Interstate Speedway of West Salem and Dells Motor Speedway, Wis. Dells, WI., were some of his latest conquests. It's interesting to note that when Miller moved to Wisconsin mechanical engineering genius Bob Uhlir came with him. Uhlir had a hand in nearly all of Miller's racing creations and their latest effort was really paying off. MIL-LIR Chassis, a combination of Miller and Uhlir would be a team to beat throughout the 1978 season.

Another driver that was destined for bigger things won a feature at La Crosse Interstate Speedway on June 14th. No big deal, lots of guys win right? But this was none other than Steve Carlson behind the wheel of a 1970 Buick Skylark no less, winning the 10 lap hobby stock main at the track.

Dick Trickle captured the second race win of the Red, White and Blue series at WIR, after nearly not making it in time to compete. A crowd of over 6,100 fans anxiously awaited his arrival for the event and he finally did make it and of course the rest is history as Trickle held off Tom Reffner, Marv Marzofka, Mike Miller and Joe Shear for the 55 lap win. Trickle complained of having to remedy overheating problems

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on his Firebird for his late arrival but those in the know realized he was probably just psyching out his competition and waiting until the last minute to qualify. Often times Trickle would be the last one on the track for time trials and much to the dismay of the driver with the fastest time up to that point steal the honor with the quickest lap. On numerous occasions the lap by Trickle would be a track record as that occurred quite frequently during this time in racing. The last minute drama certainly didn't hurt from a promoters standpoint as folks attended events just to see what Trickle's next feat would be.

Marv Marzofka took his turn at winning a bunch of races as he took 7 wins at various tracks in a two week period in late June and early July. Marzofka in his familiar yellow Camaro appeared to be peaking at the right time during the year. And like Miller, Marzofka was doing it his way as he built his race car on his own from the ground up. Unlike so many others that were now utilizing chassis and engines by specialty manufacturers, Marzofka also built his own racing engines at his shop in Nekoosa, WI.

Dave Marcis who had put his time in racing in Wisconsin before moving south to compete in NASCAR was always welcomed home at least once during each season. 1978 was no different as Marcis competed at Dells Motor Speedway in August. Behind the wheel of Larry Detjens' Camaro, Marcis placed a respectable 7th in the 75 lap feature at the 1/3 mile paved oval which was won by Mike Miller. Miller continued to roll and now had two race ready Olds Cutlasses at his disposal to tackle the racing scene. He also captured the 60 lap feature finale of the Red, White and Blue Series at Kaukauna although Dick Trickle had enough points to take the overall series crown.

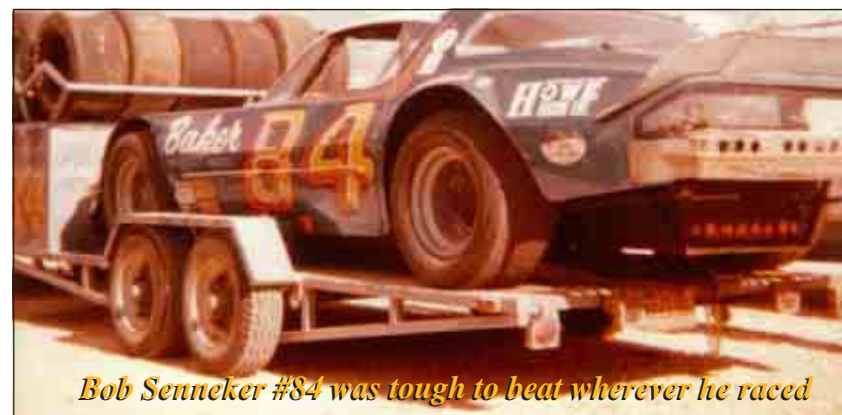
Another driver that was destined for bigger things down the road captured his first career Late Model victory August 19th at the Dells Motor Speedway as Steve Holzhausen in a 1978 Ford Fairmont took the 30 lap main event holding off Mike Miller in the process. Ken Lund had done the same thing a few weeks before knocking off the heavy hitters for his

first career win at the Dells.

With the season winding down and a number of drivers having very satisfying years it was time for big dollar special events. Tom Reffner got things rolling by taking two of three feature wins in the ARTGO finale at Capital Speedway which gave him his second such crown in the series. Larry Detjens took the 300 lap win in the Amsoil sponsored ASA race at the Minnesota State Fair on Labor Day which was always one of the most prestigious and sought after races to win. Rich Somers took an amazing 9 feature race wins at WIR to win that season crown while Marv Marzofka took track championships at Golden Sands Speedway, La Crosse Interstate, Wis. Dells, and State Park Speedways. Of course no season ending event was bigger than the National Short Track Championships at Rockford, IL., Speedway and none other than Dick Trickle claimed the 200 lap win on the 1/4 mile high banked oval. Surprisingly Trickle who won the very 1st NSTC event in 1966 hadn't won one since. 1978 found the tough to tame track smiling upon Trickle and he rather easily took the win lapping the entire field except for 2nd place Mark Martin.

Dave Watson who didn't exactly have a banner year of short track racing in 1978 did at least end the season in Wisconsin in fine fashion by taking the 100 lap main event during Oktoberfest at La Crosse Interstate Speedway.

And drivers that were running well at the end of the year kept their momentum going by traveling out of state and winning at high paying special events. Mike Miller took a \$7,000 win at Craig Road Speedway, of Las Vegas, NV and also won the 150 lap Feature at Bakersfield, CA., Speedway, which was worth another \$4,000. Dick Trickle took the World Cup 400 win at I-70 Speedway and also the Florida State Championship 200 lap Feature win at Golden Gate Speedway of Tampa, FL. Tom Reffner traveled to Colorado Springs International Speedway and took the 150 lap main event win there for the second year in a row. This year's version was worth over \$4,000 in prize money for the Rudolph, WI., racer. I guess the motto is when you are winning you might as well keep racing, and these guys did both during the 1978 season.



Bob Sennaker #84 was tough to beat wherever he raced

Speaking of winning, final feature win totals found Trickle with 47, Miller with 27, Reffner with 22 and Marzofka with 19. This all in one season and most of the time racing against each other. Pretty amazing to say the least, and again no wonder why folks try to calculate just how many career wins these guys really did end up with. Between them that number is very possibly pushing 2,000. Again, pretty amazing, but that

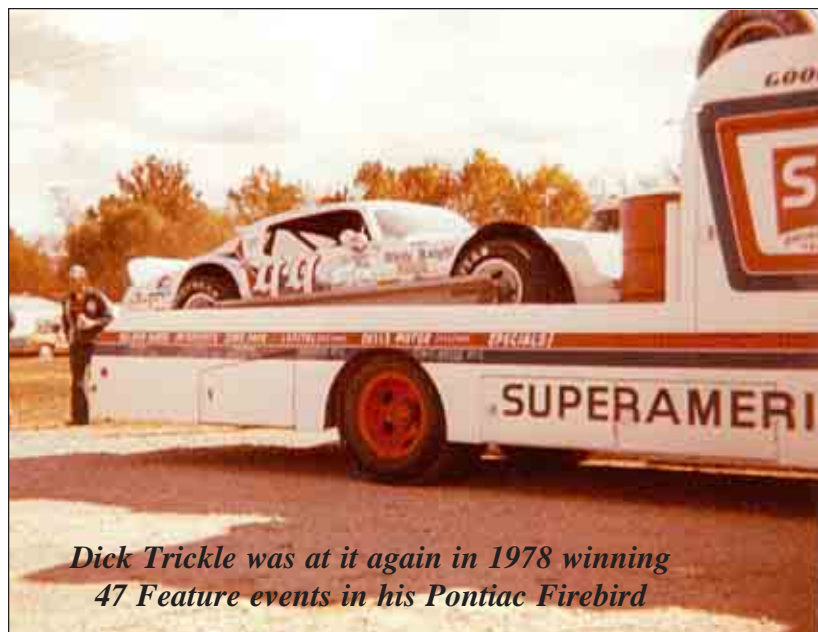


*Marv Marzofka displays some of his hardware at Oktoberfest from the 1978 season.
Dan Plan photo*

was the way racing was during this era.

Looking back at ticket pricing during the year it appeared very affordable to watch racing although I'm sure wages at the time weren't the greatest either. If you wanted to catch racing during the Annual Oktoberfest event, for an adult it would cost you \$3.00 on Friday, \$4.00 Saturday and \$6.00 on Sunday. Students age 12-17 got a break with pricing at \$2.00, \$3.00 and \$3.00 respectively. If you could pass for under age 11 you were in all three days free.

Looking back in time in 1971 at the Dells Motor Speedway, August 28th which ended up being the last event held there during the year it was Dick Trickle taking the feature win followed by Bill Retallick, Tom Reffner, Jim Back and Bill Wirtz. Semi-Feature winner was Del Kemnetz with the consolation race going to Russ Mueller. Heat race victories went to Gene Theide, Greg Delapp, Kato Theisen, and Steve Manke. The Trophy Dash was won by Retallick with Trickle setting fastest time of 14.73 seconds. 1971 was the last year of the full sized, longer wheel based cars as 1972 brought on the pony car revolution.



Dick Trickle was at it again in 1978 winning 47 Feature events in his Pontiac Firebird

Dean & Jason Talkin' Racin'

Chad Walen Named The 2011 Speedtalk Minnesota Asphalt Driver of the Year

By Jason D Searcy

Chad had an incredible season racing at Raceway Park in Shakopee (MN), winning the Super Late Model Points Championship after finishing second the previous two years. He was 8 points behind defending Champion Adam Royle with three weeks remaining in the season but ended up winning the title by 11 points.

Chad scored six wins on the season at Raceway Park but said the reason for success was limiting the bad nights, "We didn't have any mistakes this year, not one DNF."

Chad was a crew member when his uncle Mel was a Champion at Raceway Park back in 1993-1995. Walen racing might be known as a throw-back team because they draw heavily on past experience. "We went back to what we knew back then, and the same stuff works today," said Chad. He went from crew member to behind the wheel in 2001 driving a Modified, and then moved to the Late Model division in 2005 with his father as the car owner. Raceway Park is a tight 1/4 mile track with the fast groove on the bottom but you still will see plenty of two-wide racing. "The only way you are going to win is to figure out that second groove, it's where you've got to pass people" said Walen. The racing is not the only reason why Chad likes Raceway Park, "it's a great family atmosphere" he said "the other competitors are really good, we get along and they help each other out."



Dan Plan photo

Even though Walen racing spent most of their time racing in Shakopee, they also won a race in September at Elko (MN) Speedway and traveled to La Crosse (WI) to compete in the Oktoberfest races. They also enjoyed traveling to Charlotte (NC) for the annual NASCAR Member track National awards banquet in December.

Chad mentioned that the plans are to come back and try winning another championship at Raceway Park on Sundays and hitting a few more shows on

Saturday nights in 2012.

"Speedtalk on 1360" is a weekly MN motorsports radio show based out of Buffalo (MN) on KRWC 1360am.

Past recipients of this award are:

2004 Dan Fredrickson
2009 Adam Royle
2010 Brent Kane
2011 Chad Walen



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