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THE MIDWEST'S SHORT TRACK AUTO RACING AUTHORITY

April, 2010

Inside...



In the Drivers Seat



Bristol Photos



The Inside Dirt



The Racing Geek

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Publisher's Note

Racing According to Plan



Dan Plan

Here we are with one more on-line issue before the racing season gets into full-swing. Since our last on-line issue, we've been pretty busy. I've made a few contributions to Stan Meissner's new website, www.midwestracingtalk.com, and we will start to ramp our contributions as the racing season gets into full swing. Another cool thing that happened since our last issue, was our conversation with Jason Myers. We were also lucky enough to get in touch with Jason from the TV show *Madhouse*. Jason took time out of his busy schedule and joined JT Anderson, Todd Wilson, Mark Bronstadt and myself on the JR's Advanced Recyclers Race Review at Buffalo Wild Wings in Lakeville, MN. I can't thank Chris and JT enough for asking me to help out while Chris took some time off. Although we are about 1200 miles from Jason, I'm pretty sure there are a few new Jason Myers fans in the area. Hopefully the folks at The History Channel decide to renew the show for another season.

I know I've become a big fan of the *Madhouse* TV show. Sure, I enjoy seeing some of the racing action, but what interests me the most is the happenings during the week. This is the part of the show that portray's how racing really is. If you were to stop by most racers garages during the week, you would

probably here the same kind of trash-talking about competitors. It's all part of the show. That's what Bowman Gray has going for them. They are the show.

Another highlight of each winter season is an annual racing themed dinner event. We've been lucky enough to be invited to the Discount Taxi racers dinner the last few years. Each year seems to get bigger and bigger, and a good time is had by all. Tim Tim (as he's known to the drivers he sponsors) is one of the people on a short list of individuals who give tremendously to the sport, with no ulterior motive other than helping people out. The majority of Tim Tim's drivers run on asphalt, with Mark Noble being the lone primary dirt track driver in attendance. Greg Parent (aka; GRP Motorsports) is another person that supports a large amount of racers on the dirt track side of the fence, again solely to help people out. If you come across either of these people at your local short track this year, make sure to thank them for helping short track racers afford to be at the track each and every week. We need more people like Tim Tim and GRP these days.

Recently, I've read some of the feedback on Internet message boards regarding the 2010 John Seitz memorial event. Once again, I'm surprised at the amount of negative comments that relate to this event. In a short amount of time, it has become a must see event. For the 2010 event, there have been some changes made to the show to make it bigger and better. While the number of laps has been increased (from 50 to 92 laps), the starting pay has been bumped up substantially. The event is now a 92 lap race, which pays \$9,200.00 to win and \$920.00 to start. There have been very few races for the WISSOTA type late models that have a winner's purse this large, and with the increased start pay, the overall purse is probably one of the highest ever. My only words of advice are don't look a gift horse in the mouth.

The above comments are strictly my opinion. I've made a concentrated effort since purchasing this publication to reduce the amount of controversy that is stirred up. Sure, some people get a kick out of that type of material, but it's not my style. Rob Hahn enjoyed pushing peoples buttons, and that was his style. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with reporting controversy, it just doesn't suit me personally. I've stated my opinion many times on these pages, both before and after purchasing the

The Midwest

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P.O. Box 22111
St. Paul MN, 55122
651-451-4036

www.theracingconnection.com

Publisher Dan Plan

Contributing Writers

Jordan Bianchi
Dale P. Danielski
Stan Meissner
Paul Pittman
Charlie Spry

Photographers

Jim Ambruoso (815-623-3200)
Rick Blewett (507-398-9483)
D's Racing Imagery (608-448-2288)
Martin DeFries (651-457-7719)
Joe Gibbs (612-860-6622)
Doug Hornickel (920-563-0993)
Ken Johnson (218-590-5820)
Mark Melchiori (414-463-0131)
Stan Meissner (651-428-4717)
Mary Schill/Forte Design (608-792-1317)
Jerry Zimmer (715-792-2174)

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publication. Sometimes I've ruffled the feathers of drivers, sometimes my opinions are not well received by promoters and sometimes race fans don't agree with what I've written. The bottom line is, my intent in stating my opinion is what I feel is best for the sport of short track racing as a whole. No cheap shots, no name calling, just trying my best to do what I can to help.

Publishers Note continued on page 4



Look for more information in upcoming issues of The Midwest Racing Connection regarding the 2010 F.A.N.S. Fund for The USA Nationals at Cedar Lake Speedway

Publisher's Note continued from page 3

The racing season is just around the corner. We're looking forward to seeing a lot of the people that we only get to see during the racing season, and catching as many season openers as possible. Some of these events will most likely be mentioned elsewhere in this issue, but here is a summary of events held at locations and series that will distribute MRC in 2010.

Raceway Park in Shakopee is scheduled to have one of their earlier weekly openers in recent memory, and if the current weather pattern remains, the show should go off without a hitch. The opening event at RWP is their annual Enduro event on Sunday April 11, and I can't think of a better way to spend a Sunday afternoon in April. Weekly racing is set to start on Sunday, April 18.

The same weekend as the RWP Enduro, Cedar Lake Speedway has their 52nd Annual two-day season opener. This event typically features a number of drivers from the northern portions of Minnesota and

Wisconsin, as they have to wait a few months until their home tracks open.

LaCrosse Fairgrounds Speedway kicks off their annual test and tune session followed by Spring Fling Enduro on April 17. Weekly racing starts the next weekend on April 24.

The Big-8 and Mid Am Stock Series are both set to kick off their season with the 33rd Annual Spring Classic at Rockford Speedway April 18. We've been to this event the last two years, and always return home impressed with the car count generated at a two-division show.

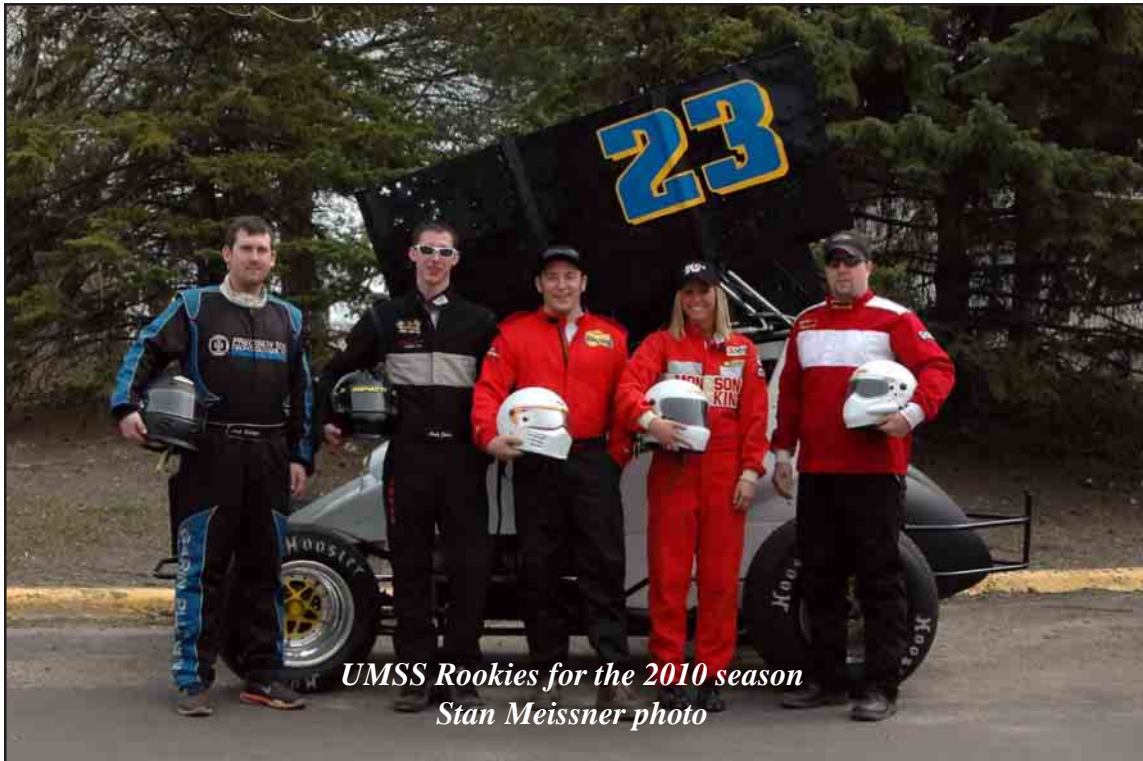
The IRA Sprints are scheduled to make several appearances near our home base again this year and kick off their season with a stop at Beaver Dam on Saturday, April 17. With several appearances at Cedar Lake and the Northern Nationals at Superior, the IRA is looking to have a great schedule on tap this year.

The Upper Midwest Sprints are looking at a large

increase in their schedule for the 2010 season, with 24 events scheduled. The first event scheduled for Friday, April 23 at Kopellah and off to Cedar Lake the next night for the annual Billy Anderson Memorial event. We recently attended the UMSS drivers meeting, and there are several new drivers confirmed, along with more in the works. Things are definitely looking good for open-wheel fans.

With the recently announced addition of Ross Kenseth as one of the drivers on the ASA Midwest Tour, these events are set to be can't miss shows. We're definitely looking forward to the ASA Midwest Tour lid-lifter at Madison International Raceway on Sunday, May 2.

Superior Speedway is a place that really needs a break with the weather for this season. Those in the tundra will have to wait until May 14 for their season opener, but can look forward to the World of Outlaws Late Model appearance at Superior on Thursday, July 9 along with a couple of appearances by the Como Modified Series.



*UMSS Rookies for the 2010 season
Stan Meissner photo*

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Auto Racing Facts, Observances and Opinions



By Dale P. Danielski

All eyes will be on young Ross Kenseth, son of NASCAR Cup Champion Matt as he guns for "Rookie of the Year" honors on the ASA Midwest Tour in 2010.

Kenseth is hot off his 2009 Big 8 Series Championship and is hoping for more of the same on the ASA Tour. He'll also be under the microscope, possibly even more than normal for a son racing in the footsteps of a famous father as the ASA Midwest Tour broadcasts 5 events on FSN North and FSN Wisconsin this year. The broadcast schedule has increased by one from previously announced as an event at Madison International Speedway has been added to the schedule which incidentally will feature none other than Matt Kenseth. Tony Stewart will be along for the ride as well at the event which takes place Tuesday night, June 29th.

You have to believe young Kenseth will be competing in top of the line equipment, but he'll still have to lay down two very good laps at each event to make a go of it. We aren't talking about the last two laps of the feature event here either mind you but the two laps in qualifying in the highly competitive Tour that can make or break a driver.

With all racers having to time trial at ASA Tour events it's extremely important to qualify for the main event on time rather than through a qualifying or last chance race. If you make the race field cut-off this way, you avoid potential problems racing your way in via the other events. In those of course there is always a chance of getting in a wreck or having some type of mechanical issue. Plus, even if you do qualify

via that route you will be starting near the back of the 24-28 car fields. Lay down two good laps and you'll generally be starting somewhere in the first six rows.

Come to think of it, that's generally the case in pavement racing these days. With lap times less than a ½ second apart from first to last in the field at most events, that's what you are faced with; being on the right side of the ½ second difference. Sometimes I wonder if what has been normal protocol for pavement racing doesn't detract a bit from the main attraction. Which is of course race cars passing race cars. On a one and a half or two groove race track, it is nearly impossible to come from deep in the field and get to the front. With times so tight these days, maybe a draw for position format like the dirt World so often uses is in order. Of course usually you find three and even four groove racing on dirt which makes it a bit easier to weed your way through the field. Something maybe to think about to shake things up a bit.

Most tracks have announced their 2010 season schedules and it seems a number of them are opening later this year. The weather, the economy or a combination of both might have some going for a bit more of a sure thing in terms of opening the season

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later rather than spend money advertising early season events only to lose them to wet and cold weather. Can hardly argue with that logic. If you go back to racing when in its infancy, a typical season ran from Memorial Day to Labor Day. That changed probably in the late '60s and early 70s's sometime, with many new tracks springing up all over. Many promoters tried to get the jump and the last money making hurrah on their fellow race track operators by scheduling earlier events and ending seasons later. With track leases and in general operating costs high, and promoters wanting to maximize their profit making efforts, events became (for awhile there) where they were practically scheduled year around. Trying to hit the proverbial home run with an early or late season event is not easy as you have to keep in mind you are usually going to be competing with some other event or activity outside of racing. Sometimes you hit it, but I'll bet a higher percentage of the time you miss. Maybe that May to September schedule of years gone by isn't such a bad idea.

Some of the opening dates that we've observed for 2010 in no particular order of preference or importance include the Seymour Speedway, Seymour, WI., April 10th for the Spring Thaw. In the neighborhood Shawano Speedway, Shawano, WI., gets going April 17th while the Dodge County

Fairgrounds track opens with IRA Sprint cars April 17th. Beaver Dam Raceway Park formerly Charter Raceway Park, located just 4 miles to the West of Dodge County will also open with IRA Sprints, that date being May 1st. Badger Midgets will also be on that card and interesting to note that they will no longer be the featured attraction at the Angell Park Speedway of Sun Prairie, WI., after an amazing 63 year run. Marshfield Motor Speedway, Marshfield, WI., has a very ambitious schedule of racing set for 2010 with the Yellow River Racing Series 50 for Super Late Models kicking things off May 8th on the big ½ mile oval. Of course we would be remiss if we didn't mention the Rockford, Illinois Speedway getting things rolling in the Midwest on April 10th with a 200 lap enduro. The Annual Spring Classic continues its early season opening tradition on the high banked ¼ mile for the stock car group April 18th. Closer to home, La Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway, West Salem, WI., kicks off its season featuring NASCAR Late Models on April 24th. The week prior the track will be open for practice and as an added attraction a 200 lap enduro will be held. Mississippi Thunder Speedway of Fountain City, WI., commences with their first weekly race program on April 16th. Some discussion can also be heard pertaining to tracks that aren't or may not open. Fox Ridge Speedway of Arcadia, WI., has been quiet for a number of years with no known efforts to get it operating in the wind. Rumors had the track in Tomah, WI., again possibly

operating but nothing much has been heard from there in awhile. The Rice Lake Speedway, Rice Lake, WI., also may be shuttered this year although the last to be heard from there was the facility was in the process of being sold. So you wanna run a race track? There might be some out there to do just that with.

And remember the ASA Midwest Tour opening race is May 2nd at Madison International Speedway. More on the way as we go to print in May.

Speaking of openers, check out the photo gallery for a couple photos from the 1973 season opener at the Golden Sands Speedway of Plover, WI. Photos #A3 is Whitey Harris in the Fred Nielsen fielded Camaro. #19 is Harold Mueller better known for his dirt track racing prowess in a 1973 Chevy Laguna.

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The Inside Dirt



Stan Meissner

Seeing as this is the final online edition of MRC prior to the start of the 2010 racing season I thought it would be fun to give you an illustrated preview of my 2010 racing schedule. This preview represents the highlights of my schedule, those special "can't miss" races that I like to build the foundation of my schedule around. Of course there will be plenty of other races that I'm not listing but the ones on these pages are the best bets of my 2010 all Sprints schedule.

My 2010 season will kick off with the UMSS opener at the Kopellah Speedway on Friday April 23. Kopellah has once again booked ten UMSS races for the 2010 racing season. The 600cc Micro Sprints will appear along with the UMSS Sprint Cars six times at Kopellah and two nights at the Dirt Nationals. This April 24, 2009, photo of Allan Gilbertson in the #97 and Jerry Richert Jr. on the outside in the #63 is one for the history books as it was taken during the first ever UMSS event. Something broke on Gilbertson's car sending him hard into a tractor tire at the exit from the track to the pit area. Al would not return to UMSS Sprint Car competition for the remainder of the 2009 season. On this night visiting IMCA driver Tony "The Storm" Norem would win over a stout field that included a visiting Robby Wolfgang with his father the legendary Doug Wolfgang turning the wrenches. The UMSS season starting on April 23,



2010, at Kopellah includes a full schedule of 24 nights of racing at six tracks. You can find out more about the series and their schedule at umsprints.com.



The next special event on my schedule will take place the following night, April 24, 2010, at the Legendary Cedar Lake Speedway. In this photo Mark Toews works his way around Cedar Lake's fourth turn during the 2004 Billy Anderson Memorial which was won by Jerry Richert Jr. Mark is a transplanted Twin Cities area resident who moved to northwest Iowa in order to further his racing career. A longtime friend of the Kouba family Toews still enjoys returning to Twin Cities area tracks when his circumstances allow. The 2009 Billy Anderson Memorial was won by Lou Kennedy Jr. and this year's event should be another dandy with a few possible surprises in store for the fans.

Next on my must see list exactly one week later on Saturday May 1, 2010, the World of Outlaws Sprint Cars will make appear at the Jackson Speedway. In this September 24, 2004, photo Erin Crocker is shown at speed during a World of Outlaws event on the big half mile. What could possibly have been better than spending my birthday watching the Outlaws at Jackson? Since that time some things have changed and some remain the same. In the change department as most NASCAR fans are probably aware, Erin is now Erin Crocker Evernham and old Stan has a few more years on him. In the "some things stay the same" department Steve Kinser made a late race pass of his son Kraig to capture the '04 Jackson win. Steve is still racing with the Outlaws and Kraig returned to the dirt after several years of racing trucks down south. Crocker spent the 2009 season in the Phoenix Racing #59 that will be driven this season by Brooke Tatnell.



One trip to Jackson is never enough so I'm planning on heading back down there on Friday, May 21, 2010, for the annual Sprint Car Spectacular \$5,000 to win JSTS race. Last year this event took place under the windiest conditions I have ever seen at a Sprint Car race. The race organizers hung in there despite the less than ideal weather and managed to get the race in. Terry McCarl spent the 2009 season running a pick and choose schedule and showed up to take the win. This shot of McCarl taken at Jackson last May is sure to be a classic as that's a 360 under the hood and not one of those big Outlaw ground thumpers. 410, 360, it didn't matter, in the end when the money was on the line McCarl was in victory lane with check in hand. Some detractors felt that that race sponsor and McCarl sponsor Big Game Treestands based up the road in



Windom had given out what amounted to a company paycheck. McCarl is never one to be phased by

detractors or mince words in Victory Lane and he had plenty to say about the windy conditions and didn't look the least bit guilty accepting the check. That's what you have to love about Terry McCarl, whether your a fan or not you have to admit that his presence always seems to make things a little more interesting.

Next up on my schedule you can pencil a big question mark on Saturday May 22, 2010. This is the first of two Interstate Racing Association races scheduled for the Rice Lake Speedway. Rice lake has become one of my favorite stops of the season, not just for the racing but for the some of the best photo angles of all the tracks on my schedule. This shot of Lou Kennedy Jr. at the IRA race in May of 2009 should illustrate what I'm talking about. Car pitched sideways, front wheels cocked to the right, driver's eyes looking straight at the lens, this is the essence of what Sprint Car racing is all about. This May 30, 2009, event was won by visiting Californian Tim Kaeding who along with then crew chief Guy

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Forbrook took a detour north to race with the IRA. As I mentioned, this was the first of two 2009 Rice Lake IRA races. I made a return trip to Rice Lake for the August 29 race and ended up sitting in the transporters visiting with friends for a couple hours before the race was finally called due to persistent showers. Upon leaving Rice Lake I headed down to Cedar Lake just in time to catch most of the action on season championship night. In case you haven't already heard, the 2010 racing season is in jeopardy at the Rice Lake Speedway. If the current owners do not find a buyer they have announced that no racing will take place this season. That is the reason that I have the two Rice Lake IRA events written on my schedule in pencil.

On June 18-19, 2010, I will be attending the Masters at Cedar Lake. This has always been one of my favorite racing weekends because I get to see the Sprint Cars and the Late Models on the same program. The Masters will only be one of five nights



all season that my schedule includes the Late Models and I'm sure I'll be anxious to see them. This year the Masters will be a part of the UMP Summer Tour

which is sure to draw a large field of cars. Jimmy Mars won on night one of the 2007 Masters with the second night's Late Model win going to Scott

Bloomquist. In addition to being two of the best Late Model drivers in the business Mars and Bloomquist are both accomplished chassis builders. The Sprint Car shot is of Mike Reinke blasting down the backstretch on June 16, 2007, the final night of the Masters. 2007 was the year that local favorite Travis Whitney swept both nights of the Sprint Car portion of the Masters. Whitney's two night sweep was surpassed in 2009 when Scott Winters swept the Masters as well as the Thursday night UMSS race.

July 3 had traditionally been the date of the Kouba Memorial at the North Central Speedway. This year the Kouba Memorial featuring the

UMSS 360 Sprints will take place on June 5 and I encourage Sprint Car fans to attend this event held to honor the memories of Earl and Ethel Kouba. I have family obligations on June 5 but I'll get to see Sprint Cars at North Central a month later on July 3 when the World of Outlaws return to the Brainerd area track for the first time since 2008. The last time the Outlaws appeared at North Central



Kraig Kinser, who had struggled all season in the Tony Stewart Racing Bass Pro Shops machine, picked up a much needed win. In this shot taken during the Dash at that October 3, 2008, race Steve Kinser gets uncharacteristically close to losing the handle while Kraig motors past on the high side. Steve would finish third behind second place Lucas Wolf and Kraig on this night. The next day the World of Outlaws would make the short tow down to Princeton for the final Princeton National which capped off five years of exciting racing on the high banked quarter mile. North Central had secured Princeton's 2008 Friday night date cutting their final appearance at Princeton to only one night. Craig Dollansky said in a 2009 interview that promoting the Princeton race without sufficient infrastructure in place got to be too much of a challenge and the race likely will not take place again.



Once a Sprint Car fanatic sees one Outlaw race it's hard to shake the habit and the next big race on my schedule will enable me to go through a slow WoOdrowal. Just one week after their appearance at NCS the World of Outlaws Sprint Cars will make their annual stop at the Legendary Cedar Lake Speedway on Sunday July 11, 2010. By my way of thinking this will be great timing for two reasons, one that I get to see the Outlaws and two, that I'll be getting back out to Cedar Lake as I kick off a two week vacation. Actually I'll be attending two nights of racing at the Dirt Nationals on the Friday and Saturday leading up to the Sunday night CLS WoO show but more on the Dirt Nationals to follow our discussion of the Cedar Lake Outlaw race. Craig Dollansky is pictured in Cedar Lake's Victory Lane in this July 12, 2004, photo. So far that 2004 victory has been Craig's lone Cedar Lake World of Outlaws win. Dollansky began the 2010 season driving his own #7 Big Game Treestands sponsored Sprinter and had already captured All Star and Outlaw wins by the middle of March. A lot of fans make a full weekend out of it starting with the Firecracker on Saturday night then stay over for the Outlaws on Sunday. This three week period is going to be like hog heaven for Sprint Car fans starting on Friday July 9 just a few miles south of the Twin Cities.



This year the Dirt Nationals will span three weekends to include a bigger variety of racing and is guaranteed to become one of the premier events in the upper Midwest. As I already mentioned the Dirt Nationals kicks off on Friday July 9 and Saturday July 10 with two nights of racing featuring UMSS/IMCA Sprint Cars. The UMSS/IMCA Sprints will make a return appearance the following weekend, July 16-17 with the Interstate Racing Association Outlaw Sprints capping off the three weekend program on July 23-24.

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Along with the Sprint Cars fans will be able to catch the Late Models of the Corn Belt Clash on July 9-10 and the touring Modifieds of the UMSTS on July 16-17. Last year it took a four days to get the track surface dialed in until Saturday night when the IRA Feature race was nothing short of awesome. Rumor has it that this year the track will undergo some further tweaking to widen the racing surface out a bit and make sure the right type of clay is used and groomed to perfection. 2009 produced some great racing and drew the likes of Terry McCarl to the Friday night IRA show. In this photo taken at the 2009 Dirt Nationals Brad Barickman #34 goes three wide with Scott Beirtzer #4 and Terry McCarl #24. Jake "the Snake" Peters would take the Friday win with McCarl coming in third, Beirtzer fourth and Barickman ending up a DNF in twenty second

Richert's daughter Amy and they make their home at the former Richert residence in Forest Lake so the trophy was quite literally brought home. I watch a lot of races but as someone who got to watch Jerry Richert Sr. race this one was special enough to make a grown man misty eyed. The 2009 Memorial race attracted an all star field that included Scott Winters, Johnny Herrera, Bill Balog, Terry McCarl, Erin Crocker, Lynton Jeffrey, Jake Peters, Mike Reinke, Robby Wolfgang, Jerry Richert Jr., and Mark Dobmeier. In this photo taken at the 2004 Jerry Richert Memorial Ricky Logan #17g, Travis Whitney #9, Terry McCarl #24 and Chris Shirek #1 lead the field down the backstretch in their four wide salute. McCarl would win on this night with Tatnell coming home second, Whitney in Fourth, Logan seventh and Shirek eighteenth.



race for the ages. I vowed when I heard the news that I would not let this one slip away again. Not only was the Deer Creek WoO race an exciting racing event but it was promoted by the Bob Buckmeier Foundation and you can read more about this worthy cause at sprintforacure.com. The World of Outlaws will make their Deer Creek appearance on Saturday September 18, 2010. I have never attended a World of Outlaws race at DCS but I have watched Sprint Cars there. In this May 27, 2006, shot Travis Whitney motors his way to an IRA win on the high banked 3/8 mile.

That's going to do it for the final online edition of the Midwest Racing Connection for the off season of 2009/2010. You might have noticed that several big events including the Knoxville Nationals and USA Nationals do not appear on my 2010 schedule. Knoxville has always been a little beyond my grasp and as a writer for a Twin Cities based publication I don't feel compelled to take on the added expense of an addition week of racing. Perhaps someday I'll be able to make another trip down to the Sprint Car Capitol but until then I'll strive to give our local racing the best coverage possible. The USA Nationals, although arguably the biggest event of it's kind in the upper Midwest, no longer fits into the direction I'll be taking my writing during the coming season. I'm sure that Dan Plan will see that the event receives plenty of coverage in these pages. If circumstances work out that I am able to attend and I feel that I can make a contribution to these pages I will make an exception from my all Sprints agenda. I've got some added expenses and responsibilities with midwestracingtalk.com so I'll have plenty of work to keep me busy this season regardless of which races I am able to attend. I'm looking forward to seeing you all at the races soon!



The next big cornerstone event on my 2010 racing schedule will be the Jerry Richert Memorial at the Cedar Lake Speedway on Saturday September 11, 2010. Last year we saw Brooke Tatnell win his second consecutive Jerry Richert Memorial bringing home the trophy that commemorates the career of a great champion. For those of you who don't already know this, Tatnell is married to the late Jerry

Finally bringing up the rear in my must see races we've got the big one that got away. Last year I had planned on attending the World of Outlaws race at Deer Creek in August but the race was rained out and rescheduled to a weekend in September that I had prior commitments making it impossible to attend. As always seems to be the case word in dirt track racing spreads fast and I found out that the Outlaws played to a standing room only crowd and put on a

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In The Drivers Seat



Rob Caho Jr.

Stan Meissner photo

Rob Caho Jr. recently sat down with The Midwest Racing Connection to talk about his past racing experience and plans for the upcoming 2010 season.

For the full audio interview, go to
www.midwestracingtalk.com

How did you get started in racing?

I guess I would have to say I got my start in racing through my dad. He was a 30-some year short track veteran. I started out racing bikes, and then one day he offered me a ride in a Sprint Car.

What are some of the different types of cars you have driven?

Well, I've raced Sprint Cars quite a bit and then I've

actually raced a dirt Late Model. I've raced Legends cars and race Modifieds now.

Of these cars, which have been the most challenging?

I would have to say the Sprint Car probably would be the most challenging. Otherwise the Legend car was pretty tough to. They're (Legend cars) pretty hard to get a hold of.

What do you enjoy most about short track racing?

I guess the competition and the comrade of the drivers and the fans that show up at the races.

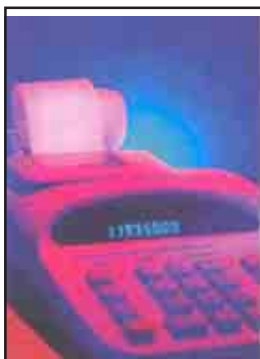
Who owned the car you drove during the 2009 season?

I ran two different cars last year. One was owned by Matt Dickey and me. We both own it together. I also

drove the #97 car that's owned by the Schleusner family, Doug and Ryan.

What are your plans for the 2010 season?

Right now for the 2010 season, we're kind of getting the motor going for our car. I'm also running Doug Schleusner's car up at Alex for the Spring Classic in April. I also have something in the works for maybe five or six Sprint Car shows out in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.



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Going in Circles



By Charlie Spry

Some racing news and notes from Wisconsin and the Midwest...

Two-time Columbus 151 late model champion Dean Schultz has been kept busy at work during the off-season, but he plans on racing as much as possible once again in 2010. Dean has been working on putting another car together, a 2006 Pathfinder that he purchased from Robert Maynor. If time runs out on him, he said he will bring out his "old faithful" and race as much as possible.

Colin Reffner will be racing with a familiar number to Reffner fans, as his super late will carry the number 88 that his Grandpa ran for so many years.

Colin will still run with the number 87 on his super stock. Colin has also done some snowmobile racing this winter to keep in shape.

Jefferson International racer Mark Dewey will be kept busy, as he is going to school and still planning on racing as much as possible. Another member of the WillDew team, Waylin Willman, will be running with a new car in the class, and his Daughter, Felicia, will also be a new entrant in the entry-level four cylinder Bandit class. All will be fielding the venerable Dodge Neons.

It takes most racers many years to win a championship, and many never do. However, one racer who wasted little time doing it is Andy Gross. Andy started his racing career in 2009, and won the street stock title at Wilmot his very first year. For 2010, Andy plans on running at Oshkosh on Fridays, Wilmot on Saturdays, and on the new dirt surface at 141 Speedway on Wednesdays. His mount will be an immaculate looking '76 Pontiac Ventura. Andy said that he also may do some modified racing in 2010. He recently moved to the Oshkosh area to help with the family business, Oshkosh Oval Parts LLC. I've talked with Andy, and I feel that he will have a very good future in the sport. He not only knows how to race, but knows how to meet and talk with the fans and the public in general.

Justin Woller has also moved to the Oshkosh area. Justin ran pavement street stocks, limited late models,

and late models and also raced a truck on the dirt at Antigo. He plans on running exclusively on the dirt in 2010, moving to the SportMod division at Seymour, Shawano, and some at 141.

Seems like many people are very unsure of their racing plans for 2010. Limited late model racer Joel Soenksen says that he is unsure where or how much he will race, but that they did rework their car. He did note that he has marked the Jeff Falbe memorial race at Columbus 151 as a definite "must race." Joel said that Jeff was a good friend and a good guy, and he really wants to make that show. I think that there will be a great car count for that race, as Jeff truly was a great individual, helping many people out with racing and non-racing related things. I can definitely see a packed pit area for that race, as there should be.

Wausau area racer Phil Prah was also unsure what his plans are going to be. He had thought about converting his car to run as a pure stock at Golden Sands, but wasn't even sure if he will race, as his work is keeping him very busy, and shop help is hard to find. He may also do some racing at State Park Speedway near Wausau, but basically just wants to run whenever he can and wherever. (Nothing wrong with that... I've done it for years.)

Super late model racer Jack Greenwood is another "unsure" competitor. Jack said that he planned to get

Continued on page 13

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Continued from page 12

his car on the jig and straighten it out, but that lack of funds may stop his racing. This is a common thing that I've heard everywhere.

Jefferson Speedway competitor Terry Wangsness raced hobby stocks for many years, winning the 2003 and 2004 track titles there. He also ran in the sportsman division for awhile, but found the cost a bit too much to handle at the time. He then stepped back to the hobby stocks for awhile, and now said that he plans to bring the sportsman car back out in 2010, but will still keep the hobby stock on hand, in case he changes his mind.

Jody Krueger plans on racing his late model primarily at Madison International Speedway this year, with his Dad, veteran Gary Krueger racing his dirt modified anywhere and everywhere.

Dave Gigl plans to run a '94 Ford Taurus SHO in the new Jefferson six cylinder class, which has been named the Road Warrior division. Dave has also moved from Johnson Creek to Jefferson.

With all the vast racing history in the central Wisconsin area, wouldn't it be interesting to have a central Wisconsin hall of fame, or something similar? Just think of the people that could be inducted into this.. You'd definitely have to go with Dave Marcis, who was the originator of the Midwest jump to

NASCAR, even before it was cool. Dick Trickle, Tom Reffner, Marlin Walbeck and Larry Detjens would have to be on the list. I'd put announcer Don Bethman and promoter Sam Bartus on there as well. Sure, not everyone liked Bartus, but you have to admit, he built and promoted a lot of tracks, and really made the push for asphalt racing in the area back in the early 1960's. And this is just the asphalt side of it. Think of who would be on the list from the dirt side of things.

Marshfield Motor Speedway is looking to start a stock four cylinder class to add to their program. They already have a stock six cylinder division, so adding a similar division for the four cylinders makes sense. "A fair purse and a season point fund are priorities," Stated track GM/promoter Wayne Brevik.

Columbus has changed the date of their opener to Sunday afternoon, April 25th, which will be the Jeff Falbe memorial race. With other area tracks running shows on this day, they felt it was best to change the date.

As I've been writing some of this, the weather has been sunny and around 50 degrees in mid-March. On season opening day it will probably be snowing and 25 degrees. Go figure.

***Our first print issue
will be available in
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The Racing Geek



by *Jordan Bianchi*

When Tiger Woods was at his apex – on the golf course mind you, not off, this is after all, a family website – rarely were there questions about whether his dominance was bad for the sport.

In fact it was the complete opposite. Television ratings skyrocketed. Crowds paid exorbitant ticket prices for the privilege of seeing the greatest athlete of his generation practice his craft. Even Tiger's competitors, while acknowledging their frustration over not being able to stop him, understand that Tiger's impact was better for them, their pocketbooks and their sport.

Which begs me to ask the question; why isn't Jimmie Johnson's dominance being celebrated instead of being despised. Why are all the troubles that NASCAR is currently experiencing (poor crowds, bad attendance) being placed at the feet of one of the greatest drivers in the history of the sport?

I've heard all the excuses. Jimmie doesn't have the kind of personality that resonates with the fans. People are sick of him winning all the time. He's boring, he's this, and he's that.

Excuse me, but Tiger Woods isn't exactly Mr. Personality. Outside of his exploits in the bedroom, the guy is about as dull as a 30-year-old steak knife that's never been sharpened. Neither is Roger Federer, who has dominated tennis in much the same way that Woods and Johnson have dominated their respective sports. And no one is complaining when Woods or Federer wins another tournament.

Actually it's the complete opposite in Woods' case. During his self-imposed exile from golf, TV ratings have plummeted and the PGA Tour is eagerly

anticipating his return to competitive golf.

If Jimmie Johnson stepped away from NASCAR for three months, would the television ratings go in the tank and would people stop paying attention? The answer is no. I believe people would be more inclined to watch a Sprint Cup race assuming that the race would be more wide-open because Johnson wasn't in it. This doesn't make any sense at all if fans were to realize that Johnson's NASCAR supremacy on the racetrack is really no different than Woods' dominance on the links.

As for the excuse that Johnson wins all the time.

Remember when Jeff Gordon was winning just about every race in the mid-90s? Or going back even further, when Richard Petty and Dale Earnhardt were dominating in the 70s and 80s? People paid good money to watch them race, and in Earnhardt and Gordon's cases, the television ratings grew to such levels, that NASCAR eventually evolved into a mainstream sport of them winning so much.

Are fans upset that Johnson doesn't have a rival like Petty had with Pearson, the Allison's and Yarborough? Or like Earnhardt had with Waltrip, Elliott and Rusty?

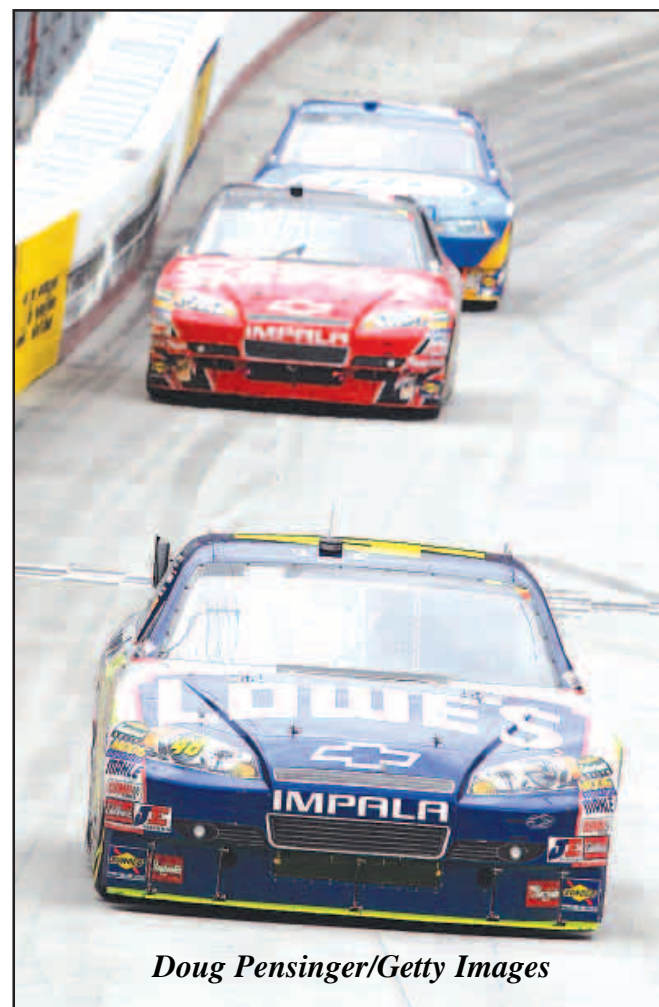
Fans need to understand this though: You can't create a rivalry. It's something that has to develop and fester on its own. To this point no one has been able to slug it out with the 48 week-in and week-out.

Both Carl Edwards and Denny Hamlin appeared to have what it takes, on and off the track, to win a championship. To this point though, neither has shown to be capable of handling the pressure. Edwards, who was the preseason title favorite last season, went winless and finished the year a disappointing 11th in the standings.

This year Hamlin, who many tabbed in January as the guy with the best shot to derail the Jimmie Johnson Express, is on track to have the same kind of season that Edwards had a year ago.

Don't feel too bad for Johnson though on the lack of adulation he receives from the fans. Because he certainly doesn't feel guilty over his dominance and what some people perceive it's doing to NASCAR's popularity.

When asked in a press conference with reporters if his winning all the time was taking the fun out of the sport, Johnson replied in much the same manner that



Doug Pensinger/Getty Images

Woods or Federer would have replied, stating "No, I'm having a blast."

Johnson did go on to say though that he hopes people can step back and realize what he and his team have accomplished.

"What we are doing is pretty amazing, so it just depends on how everybody wants to spin it. We're working extremely hard to operate at this level. There's a lot to be proud for if you're a 48 fan, and what we're doing isn't easy. So I think it just depends on how you look at it. Hopefully people will start viewing it — I think a lot are viewing it as something — even if they aren't a 48 fan, pretty remarkable what we're doing, and hopefully the masses will agree."

What is sad is that Johnson shouldn't have to make a plea to the masses for them to start appreciating his accomplishments.

Then again it took awhile before both Dale Earnhardt and Jeff Gordon were generally accepted by NASCAR fans. Here's hope this is a feeling that Johnson can experience sooner rather than later, because he's more than earned it.

Rock and Race**Paul Pittman**

Wow, where did the off season go? Here we are, almost ready to go racing again. I've already seen my first Robins, the yard has been thatched and the trees are already showing signs of budding. Wait a minute, it is still March. Granted, April is here as you are reading this but for us up here in the North Central area of the country, we are still a few weeks away from opening day. I hate to be pessimistic but for nearly as long as I can remember since moving to Wisconsin, the opening dates have always been plagued with questions like, "Will the snow be melted in time to get the tracks ready?" and "Will it be too cold to fire motors and actually race?". It would appear that the racing gods have smiled on the region and with the snow now a distant memory already and temps already pushing 70 degrees (that's Fahrenheit for anyone north of the border) it would appear that all should be green and ready for opening day. Blame it on Global Warming if you want to, I don't care. I'll take it.

There is one thing that concerns me again though with the upcoming season. It's the gas prices again. First,

let me start by saying that I am neither a Republican nor a Democrat. I am an Independent party member so I am a realist. I saw the impact on tracks a couple years ago when gas prices began their historic rise. I saw the concern on promoter's faces when they looked into the stands and saw more open seats than fans. And we have all seen the result of a bad economy on tracks in the area. This week's racing card replaced with the foreboding "For Sale" sign. And I do not care what anyone says. The economy is not fixed. When Americans are back to work, house payments are caught up and the stress of making ends meet is replaced with "When are we leaving for the races", then I'll be convinced. Once upon a time, it was simply a matter of giving people a choice of where to spend their entertainment dollars. Now it's a matter of entertainment dollars vs. food on the table and I am sorry, the family comes first.

Don't get me wrong. This is not a "Doom and Gloom" column. At least it is not meant to be. It is a hard look at an issue every track and promoter needs to keep in mind as the season rapidly approaches. Keep the family in mind. Short track weekend racing is thrived on being a family sport. A special thing that the entire family could go out and spend the day and night at together and have a good time. The theaters have recently done you a favor and raised their prices. Apparently convinced that the need to go to the box office will far outweigh the need to keep the account balanced, they raised the prices on tickets overnight. I recently spoke to a friend and invited them along to opening day and got the response, "I would but it cost too much". They further explained that the last time the three of them went to the races, it cost them well over \$75 dollars for the night, and that did not include a T-Shirt of any of the other extras. To make matters worse, they were not entertained and described the evening as very boring. You may be saying that these are not race fans so it doesn't matter. WRONG! One: They are very active in the automotive industry and follow racing regularly and Two: Anytime a current or potential fan is turned away, it hurts the sport. When we get to the point of saying we do not care because of this or that, we might as well start selling popcorn and tell everyone to insure their cell phones are silenced for

the consideration of everyone else in the theater. My message here is simple. FIND a way to keep the family in-tact at the track. It is your best asset.

So, with that all being said, let's take a quick look at opening day schedules for the month of April, shall we? The Interstate Racing Association (IRA Outlaw Sprint Series) is set to kick things off on April 17th at the Dodge County Fairground in Beaver Dam, WI with the Rick Schmidt Memorial. Also joining them will be the Mid-West Sprint Car Association (MSA) 360 sprints so for those sprint car enthusiasts out there, this one should be marked on your calendar. For those who do not remember, Rick Schmidt was instrumental in the development of what we now call modern sprint car racing in the upper mid-west. On April 23rd, The Upper Mid-West Sprint Series (UMSS) kicks their season off at Kopellah Speedway in St. Croix Falls, WI. For those Midget fans out there, a lot of exciting news concerning the Badger Midgets in 2010. The series will go on the road and kick things off on May 1st at the Charter Raceway Park (that's the track closest to highway 151) in Beaver Dam, WI. Incidentally, joining the Midgets on the 1st will also be the IRA Outlaw Sprints and the Mid-West Allstar Sprint Series so yet another blockbuster open wheel show on tap. The venerable Knoxville Raceway kicks things off officially on May 1st as well with their season opener. April 17th will also see the weekly 360 series racing begin at the Plymouth Dirt Track near Sheboygan (WI). Wilmot Raceway gets things underway on May 15th with their weekly program, which also feature sprints on a semi-regular basis.

As far as the tracks over on the Minnesota side of the border, I will have to refer you to my partner Stan for their outlook as I've been just a little too busy in the recording studio lately to get out and see what is going on to the West. By the way, we are really excited about the recording s thus far and will have more tunes out soon to rock all the way to the track with. The pressure is on though, to have all the tracks recorded before opening day, which is coming faster than I had thought. Well, back to the music. I hope to see you at the track somewhere along the road in 2010.

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THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

Photo Gallery



Don't worry fans, this was just the crowd for practice at Bristol



Cup cars working out in the open, just like most short track teams



Kasey Kahne on his way to a track record at Bulls Gap



UMSS Drivers pose for the camera

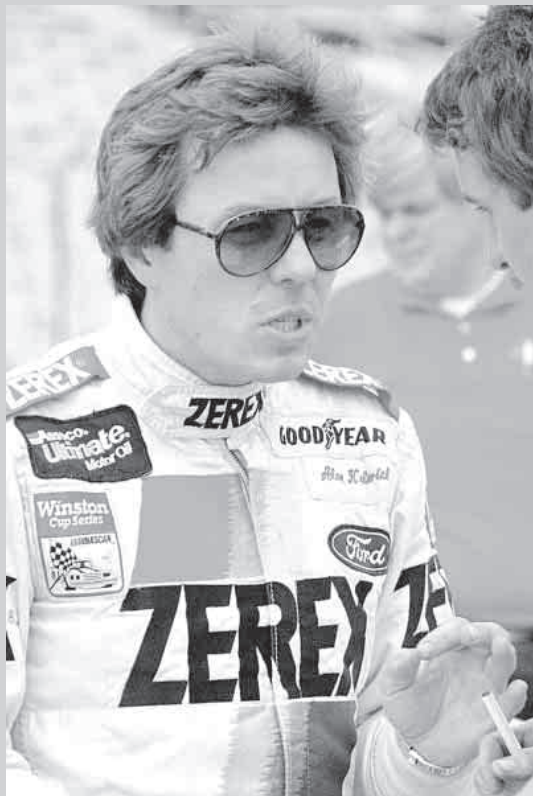


#A3 is Whitey Harris in the Fred Nielsen fielded Camaro



Harold Mueller was know his dirt track racing prowess

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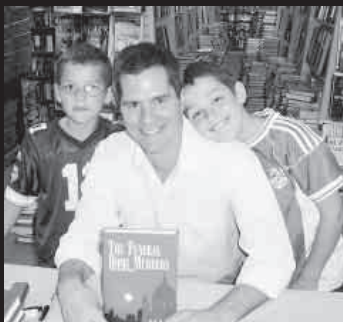
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