

# THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

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THE MIDWEST'S SHORT TRACK AUTO RACING AUTHORITY

August 4, 2011 Vol. 15, No. 8

## Inside...



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Photo Finish at Elko



## Thrills and Spills

## USA Nationals Preview Issue



✓Yes



✓Yes



✓Yes



✗No



✓Yes

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## Publisher's Note *Racing According to Plan*



**Dan Plan**

It seems to me like we need more rivalries these days. I'm not going to go out of my way and fabricate them, but I think there are a few out there that do exist, on the short track level, all of the way to Cup.

Years ago, there may have been more focus on the rivalries, or maybe they just seem to get bigger as time passes.

## Rivalries and the Color Orange

Growing up in Minnesota, I remember what seemed like a rivalry between the Minnesota and Wisconsin drivers, or reading old racing stories about Danny Prziborowski and Norm Setran. For all I know, Setran and Prziborowski could have been good friends off the track, but the race reports have led me to think otherwise. On the national scene, there was Petty vs. Allison battles or Waltrip vs. Yarborough back in the day. Of course, you can't forget the rivalry of Dale Earnhardt, and anybody that dare get in his way.

Regardless of how things were in the past, I think we may be starting to see a few rivalries form in our area again. Kyle Busch and Kevin Harvick have done their best to create extra interest in Cup racing. Chad Walen, who I must add is no relation to WNBA player Lindsay Whalen, although I seem to misspell Chad's name often enough to make one think they may be related. Back to my point. Chad Walen and Adam Royle continue to win races at Raceway Park, and run close to each other every weekend. I'm going to go out on a limb, and say they probably don't meet each other for lunch during the week, but sure remain close to each other on the track each Sunday night. As a fan of the sport, the battle between these two this year has made me look forward to Sunday nights like never before, even with an early wakeup call on Monday mornings.

Across town at Elko Speedway on Saturday nights, two drivers have finished first and second on countless occasions this year. When they haven't finished 1-2, they finished right next to each other. Here I go with my broken record again, but Ted Ruevers and Brent Kane are battling tooth and nail for the championship, and in each race they are in. As we go to press, less than a handful of points separate these two drivers. They seem to still be at the point of shaking hands after a good side-by-side battle or a bump and run. That could change at any point as we start nearing the end of the season, but we hope it doesn't change.

The one common item in these two scenarios is the color of the car. The color orange seems to be an advantage of some sorts. Growing up in

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*Racing One/Getty Images*

*The Midwest*

**RACING**

*Connection*

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

info@theracingconnection.com  
www.theracingconnection.com

**Publisher**

**Dan Plan**

**Contributing Writers**

**Jordan Bianchi**

**Dale P. Danielski**

**Stan Meissner**

**Charlie Spry**

**Photographers**

**Jim Ambruoso (815-623-3200)**

**Rick Blewett (507-398-9483)**

**D's Racing Imagery (608-393-4993)**

**Martin DeFries (651-457-7719)**

**Joe Gibbs (612-860-6622)**

**Doug Hornickel (920-563-0993)**

**Mark Melchiori (414-463-0131)**

**Jacy Norgaard (612-432-9113)**

**Vince Peterson (612-419-6372)**

**Stan Meissner (651-428-4717)**

**Mary Schill/Forte Design (608-792-1317)**

**Jerry Zimmer (715-792-2174)**

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## The Inside Dirt



**Stan Meissner**

If you've been reading this column with any regularity you probably know that I lean more towards the "glass half empty" school of thought than it's more positive counterpart. When August 23 weather reports assured us of an 80% chance of severe storms later in the evening I decided that racing close to home would provide me with the best odds. I was chastised for making my decision known publicly but in retrospect I made the right call. One photographer friend called me when I was half way to CLS wanting to know if the races at his intended destination had been canceled. He said that when he checked the internet at 1:30pm the show was still on but when he arrived he found out that the race had been canceled. Unfortunately I couldn't provide an alternate destination along his route home that I was 100% certain would still be racing. This is a case where the optimism of the track's internet updates weren't enough to conquer Ma Nature and a few people made the trip in vain. I understand the need for optimism and to put people in the stands but I have adopted a trust but verify approach in recent years. This time it served me well but sometimes I guess wrong and get burned. Cedar Lake was able to get all but two Features in the books on July 23 before rain forced postponement of the Modified and Late Model Features to the following week.

When I arrived at CLS I was greeted with the words "what are you doing here, there aren't any Sprint Cars here tonight" by more than one person on my July 23 visit.



*Stan Meissner photo*

Further proof that a few people actually are paying attention to my rantings. Jason Vandecamp won the Midwest Modified Feature and Cory Davis won the Pro Stock Main Event before the skies opened. The track had been deluged by heavy rain earlier in the morning resulting in a soft surface that required frequent blading and packing. Deciding to race or not to race in those kind of conditions is a tough call for promoters. The internet has made it possible for critics to chime in with comments like "why did they cancel, it's 4pm and the sun is out" or "they should have canceled" when conditions don't meet their approval. As they say, you can't win for losin'. The Cedar Lake Speedway did a great job getting this show in and the track was much improved the following week just in time for the USA Nationals.

The Saint Croix Valley Raceway or to borrow a line from the artist formerly known as Prince, "the track formerly known as Kopellah", opened their gates for the first time under new ownership on July 29. Co-owner Ron Bernhagen (the man formerly known as a Cedar Lake partner) was as nervous as a cat on a hot tin roof prior to race time.

Concerns were laid to rest when it became obvious that the car count and fan support was going to be excellent on this first night of racing. Several months ago when plans were being made to purchase the facility Ron guaranteed that when they opened there would be so many improvements that I wouldn't know the place. Ron's glass is half full and the facility still looked familiar but the sale of the property put improvements on hold until just days before the opener so taking that into consideration they worked a miracle. When I stopped by the track on Friday July 22 intending to take some photos I took one look and opted to leave my camera in the car. There was no grader, no tractor and no water truck on the grounds and the track was overrun by weeds. Quite frankly I wondered how they would be able to open as scheduled. Not only did the opener go on as scheduled but despite starting a half hour late the last checkered flag waved at 10:25pm. SCVR is going to be a great Friday night destination and I look for good things to happen there.

The UMSS winged Sprint Cars kicked things off at St. Croix Valley with a two-day race weekend that included a stop at Cedar Lake on Saturday. Andy Jones etched his name in the history books as the first UMSS Sprint Car victor at the St. Croix Valley inaugural event. The following night when the series showed up at Cedar Lake the weather was a carbon copy of the previous week. Hot, humid weather with storms moving in later in the evening. Racing began promptly at 6pm and included Modified and Late Model make up Features from the previous week.



*Stan Meissner photo*

Brent Larson was on a roll and picked up make up Feature wins in both classes. Brent went on to score a win in the scheduled Modified Feature as well but fell one race short of a four Main Event sweep with Rick Hanestad winning the scheduled Late Model Feature. Brooke Tatnell finished second to Andy Jones on Friday at SCVR but would not be denied on this night. Tatnell put the skills he acquired as a traveling Outlaw on display passing race leader Cody Hahn with two laps remaining. The Cedar Lake Speedway did an outstanding job of running off their entire program including two extra Features and the sometimes volatile

Sprint Cars as storms approached from the west. The program concluded before 10pm and rain held off long enough for fans to make a quick walk through of the pits.

Hats off to Eric "Herbi" Hebrison on his first career victory in the NASCAR Midwest Modifieds at Cedar Lake on July 30.

Rob Caho Jr. won the UMSS Traditional Sprint

Car Feature at SCVR on July 29 and Joseph Kouba took the win at Cedar Lake. Kouba was substituting for Johnny Parsons III on this weekend and is contemplating putting together his own non-wing car. This class is a ball to watch and will be calling SCVR their home track along with appearances at several other events throughout the season. The Traditional Sprints are just a few cars away from abandoning their exhibition format.

Craig Dollansky was the subject of criticism by the NASCAR media for punting ex boss Kasey Kahn out of the park in a spectacular crash at Williams Grove on July 22. Mainstream media chastised Kahn for racing in a "lower form of the sport" and questioned whether NASCAR drivers should race Sprint Cars on their off weekends. Meanwhile Craig Dollansky passed Steve Kinser on the 2011 WoO win list scoring a series high sixth win two nights later at New York's Lebanon Valley Speedway. The NASCAR mainstream media made no mention of Craig's success.

Speaking of World of Outlaws wins and NASCAR drivers Tony Stewart won his first ever World of Outlaws Feature

*The Inside Dirt continued on page 19*



## Auto Racing Facts, Observances and Opinions



**Dale P. Danielski**

Although I couldn't attend the event this past week at State Park Speedway, Wausau, WI. the scheduling of it brought back many memories of the man and racer the Memorial race is named after; Larry Detjens. The majority of Detjens' career took place in the 1970s until sadly, in 1981, he was killed in a racing accident. Detjens packed a lot of racing and success into a short period of time but it's still a terrible shame his life was cut so short.

Larry began racing in the Wausau area in the Hobbystock division but it wasn't long thereafter however that he was piloting a Dodge Coronet in Late Model competition. What immediately set Detjens apart from most of the others was the appearance of his race car. Purple in color with extreme detail in both the painting and lettering of it. It was something folks weren't used to seeing as cars racing 4-6 days a week would get pretty beat up looking. This also was in the days of all paint, no vinyl for lettering or wraps. Most amazing, was Larry kept his cars looking that way the entire season! We later learned that Larry was the owner of Detjens Body Shop in Wausau, WI., and we realized where

the work was being done and the race car maintained. It certainly couldn't have been too bad for his business either!

Almost as unique as the race cars themselves in those days were the haulers drivers brought them in on. Of course enclosed trailers hadn't even been thought about yet, so the open variety was the way to go in many cases. Larry at one point did have a trailer of that type but what was really cool was what he used to pull it. The best way I can describe it is a mini wrecker! A Dodge pick-up of some kind, which was Larry's vehicle manufacturer preference, with 4 wheel drive and a boom and hook in the back. The unit couldn't have had a wheel base of more than 90 inches and when it was packed up for racing the front end was practically off the ground! There was no mistaking it was Larry showing up at the race track as in addition to the aforementioned the cool wrecker thing was bright yellow to boot! With fuel prices being low I guess burning up a bit more with a 4x4 unit traveling all around the state wasn't a concern either.

Something else that set Detjens apart from others and certainly his finest attribute, was how well he handled pressure under fire. No matter how bad things seemed to be going Larry was able better than nearly everyone to keep it all in perspective. He'd say, "When things are going bad, that's when you build character." Tom Reffner vouched for Detjens' even disposition. "When all of us racers would be getting down in the mouth about other drivers or things going on Larry would just be the same Larry." Speaking of disposition, I can remember a certain racer and his crew banging away at trying to get a shock removed from the mounting on a race car and getting madder by the minute. Larry walked by and said, "Wait a minute and in short order he returned with the proper tool to do the job. Added to that he helped with a couple set up tips to make the car better and said, "If you ever need any other help just ask." That driver was me and I never forgot that day at the Wausau track.

Larry was never the most prolific winner of feature events but he was a master when it came to the long distance race. He had a way of pacing himself and hiding on the track until it was time to go. At that point he'd use all the reserve he still had in the car and win going away from competitors who had nothing left for the end. His smooth calculating style resulted in big paying wins in the Nashville 500, at the Minnesota Fair as well as in California, Florida, Nevada, Missouri, Illinois and of course Wisconsin where he took numerous 50 and 100 lap wins.

It's ironic and sad that while in the midst of his winningest season and the chance to move into NASCAR racing his life ended. With 22 Feature wins heading into August, in his Packerland Packing Dennis Frings Chassis Camaro his next scheduled event was at the Wisconsin International Raceway of Kaukauna for an ARTGO event. Forgotten by many is the fact that a disagreement had taken place and Detjens was back in a Bemco Camaro for the

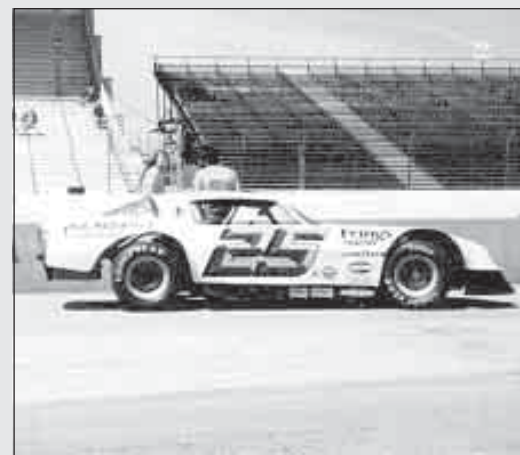
event. Without a lot of time in the car he didn't qualify as well as he had been, lining up on the front row for the first 50 lap feature. Setting a torrid pace at the outset Larry and Alan Kulwicki raced side by side for 14 laps with neither giving an inch. Kulwicki thought he was far enough inside Detjens at that point with the two making contact which sent Detjen's car into the inside guard rail on the backstretch. The wreck looked reasonably harmless but it wasn't, as the end of the guard rail went right through the side of Detjens car inflicting fatal internal injuries to the driver. Having been taken to an area hospital, by 9:25 pm that night it was announced Larry Detjens had died.

It was one of the few times during that period in racing that I remained in the pit area for an entire race program, usually opting to sit in the grandstands for the feature finals. On this occasion I wish I hadn't, as I was in the immediate area where the incident took place and witnessed it very plainly.

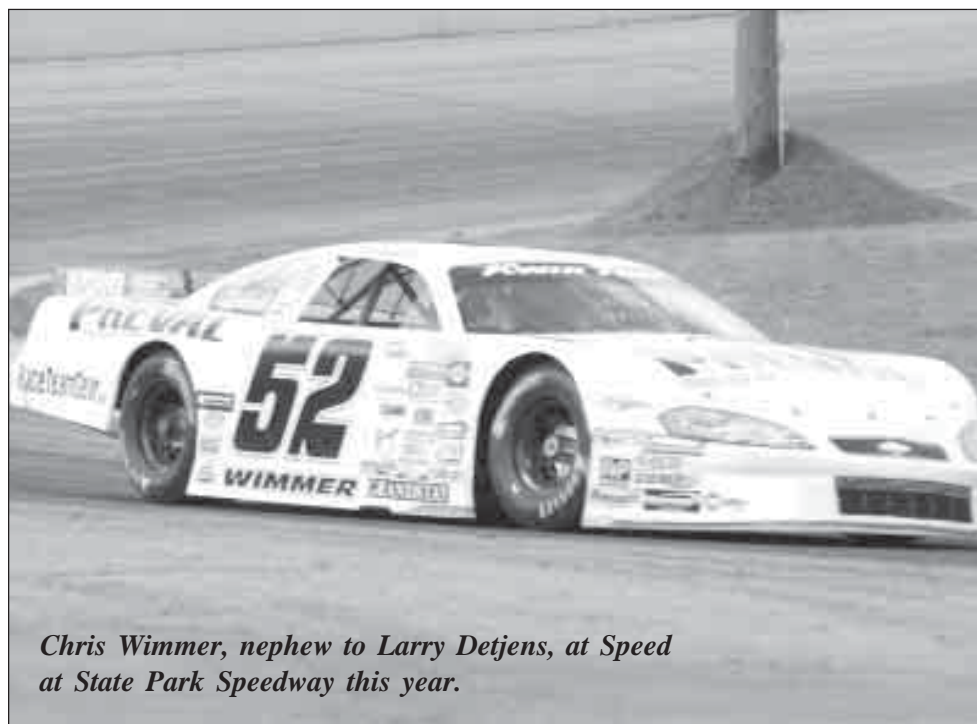
It took a long time for many to forgive Kulwicki for what they saw as over aggressive driving especially so early in the race in going for the lead and causing the contact between the two. Some never have. Somehow I don't think Larry Detjens would have felt that way even though at just 37 years of age his racing career which was actually really just about to begin and now his life had ended. With George Gillett involvement, discussion had taken place that Detjens was headed to NASCAR's top division for the next season. Most of us had caught wind of at least something happening for Detjens and were extremely excited knowing his long race prowess would prove him successful at that level. Furthermore is the fact NASCAR was really just

*continued on page 7*

## Dale's Pictures from the past



**Larry Detjens in his Packerland Packing Frings Camaro at the Milwaukee Mile in 1981. Detjens in 1973 with his Dodge Challenger being towed by the mini-wrecker.**



**Chris Wimmer, nephew to Larry Detjens, at Speed at State Park Speedway this year.**



## Dirty Talkin'



**Kris McMartin**

The saying is if you build it they will come and come they did. It is hard to imagine that just 10 short days ago when the sale of the previously named Kopellah Speedway finally went through that we would be racing tonight on the newly purchased and renamed St. Croix Valley Raceway. Just a few days ago this was an overgrown weed bed that had not seen life other than the wild kind in more than a year. Through much sweat, long days of hard work and a lot of perseverance it has shaped into a working track ready for operation and while there is still much work to do it is easy to believe that under the new ownership and with

some patience from both drivers and fans this will become the place to be on a Friday night.

Upon entrance to the St. Croix Valley Raceway this bright and sunny Friday afternoon the grounds are clean and looking better than ever, the pits are starting to fill up and the fans beginning to file in, all while the track prep for the evening is wrapping up. The infield is clean and looks great while the track is looking race ready and much improved compared to years past.

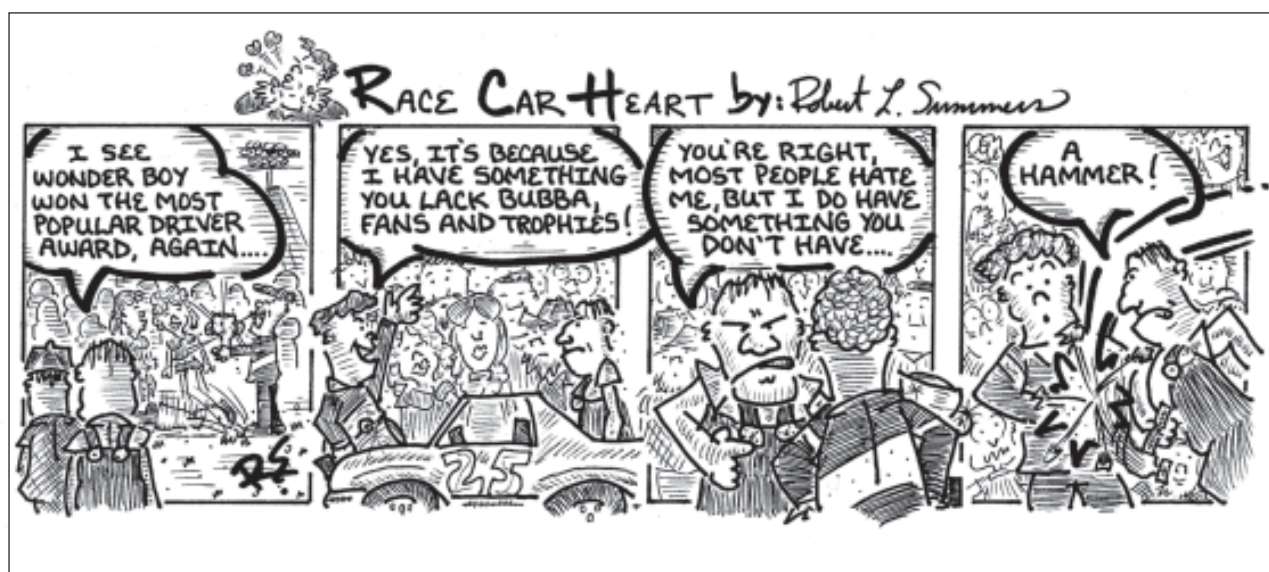
With over 60 cars in the pits and more race fans than I have seen file into this track in previous years, racing began promptly at 7 p.m. as the first heat races of the night rolled onto the track. The nights program, aptly named Thunder in the Valley, rolled right along featuring Karts, Future IVs, Pure Stocks, Pro Modifieds and both Winged and Traditional (non-winged) Sprint cars there was some fantastic racing and very few cautions, with a track that was wide and very racy all night long creating some feature racing that left the fans happy and ready to come back for more.

## Build It and They will Come



*Vince Peterson photo*

Kudos to The St. Croix Valley Raceway's new owners and all of the people that helped to make this great night of racing possible. I believe that the race fans in this region will be looking forward to more racing here and I look forward to spending another Friday night with this Raceway very soon.



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*Coming in the next issue of*

**THE MIDWEST  
RACING CONNECTION**

**ASA Shakopee 100  
Preview**



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### *Racing Observations from page 5*

starting to become the media monster and money making machine it is today and having someone from our neck of the woods do well would have greatly served the Midwest in showing it had quality talent in racing. It just wasn't to be.

But gladly, Larry Detjens' memory lives on in the event held at State Park Speedway fittingly near his home town and now owned and operated by the Wimmer family including father Ron and racing sons Scott and Chris. And maybe after all, even in death, Detjens positive, optimistic disposition and success so many years ago has paved the way for others in racing in the Midwest. Scott Wimmer has tasted success at the top levels of NASCAR and Chris is carving out a nice career of his own. Their uncle Larry Detjens sure would have been proud.

Here and there...Steve Carlson who hasn't shown his age racing but must have had a bout of it in his daily life was unable to compete here recently at La Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway due to back issues. He lent the car he normally drives to Tim Schendel who placed 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> respectively in the two 20 lap NASCAR Features on the night. Not to be outdone in his return he won the 25 lap feature July 23<sup>rd</sup>...15 year old Michael Sauter, son of Jay has had his ups and downs at the speedway this year, but things were definitely on the upside here July 16<sup>th</sup> as he captured his first ever NASCAR Late Model win taking the first preliminary event on the night...Dustin Bagstad definitely had a different approach in the Novelty Outhouse race held at the speedway. Instead of hopping out of his car and quickly heading over to grab a sheet of toilet paper as is required for the event he went around to the other side of his race car and picked up a newspaper! Taking it in with him to the outhouse it took track announcer Dan Deicher after a fair amount of time had elapsed, sneaking a peak inside to get him out of the John! It must have been some good La Crosse Tribune reading keeping Bagstad detained. He definitely didn't win the event with the effort where speed is a necessity...NASCAR Late Model competitor Albert Locy has battled an electrical problem nearly all season. A distributor pick up failed for a 3<sup>rd</sup> time which really has the team searching...J.Herbst solidified his NASCAR Late Model points lead with his 4<sup>th</sup> Feature win here Saturday night. Herbst can thank NASCAR driver Kenny Schrader who was a guest at the speedway on the night for assisting as he drew the invert number that put J. on the pole for the race!...Shawn Pfaff stayed close in 2<sup>nd</sup> in the points race even though he was forced to use a backup car here tonight...With a little extra money on the line in the Darius Pettibone 20 lap Sportsman feature tonight everyone was definitely more racey. Cars were loose and sideways for much of the race and in most cases amazingly great saves were made before necessitating a caution flag! What was all the fuss about? \$1,000 to win the race that's what. Jimmy Gilster ran a smart race and very happily took home the grand with a late race pass of Jamie Dummer...Jordan Myers was a happy guy tonight as the rookie driver took home his first ever Thunderstox feature win... And in racing history, on August 26<sup>th</sup>, 1971 it was season championship night at State Park Speedway where Dick Trickle won the 50 lap feature event followed by Tom Reffner, Larry Detjens, Marv Marzofka and Bill Wirtz. The 25 lap Semi-feature winner was Dick Bentley, followed by Chuck Cherek and Terry Semrow. Heat race winners were Sonny Immerfall, Bentley and Trickle with the Trophy Dash going to Marlin Walbeck. Fast Qualifier was Jim Back at 14:97 around the ¼ mile recently repaved track. Over \$4,000 was offered in purse pay-out with \$500 going to Trickle for his Feature win. An "overflow" crowd attended the event, the last of the 1971 season at the track...

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



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# Where Are They Now?

**How did you get involved in racing?**

It's kind of a long story. The short of it is mostly by chance. We grew up living in the country. I was born in Hibbing, but raised outside of town up until elementary school. Our family didn't have a lot of money to be able to drive in and out of town to go to different things. Essentially, we were able to move to town when I was in elementary school. There was a guy down the street that had a race car, and I always wondered what that noise was in the evenings. I ended up walking down there and met the guy that owned the car. I started handing him tools and eventually started helping him on his car. When he retired, I turned into a race fan. I became involved again with a different competitor through that relationship, a guy named Kelly Estey. I worked on his cars through high-school and college. That's how I got my start, running around the dirt tracks in northern Minnesota.

**Who were some of your favorite drivers in this area while you were growing up?**

Obviously, Kelly was one of them. Guys like Jimmy Mars, Rick Egersdorf, Rick Aukland, Pat Doar and guys like that who ran the Late Models. A lot of those guys are still racing, and Jimmy Mars has been pretty successful in the world of dirt Late Model racing. Those were the guys I always enjoyed watching when I was growing up.

**What steps did you take to get a job with NASCAR?**

I had a big sports background, and enjoyed all kinds of sports. Getting involved with racing, I ended up going to college at Bemidji State University and took up Sport Management. Through that, I decided to apply my interest in racing to my education. I just was persistent more than anything, chasing internships and

2010 Como Mod Series Champion Kelly Estey was one of the first drivers to get Kevin involved in racing



Jacy Norgarrd photo



Dr. Troy Powers photo

**Kevin Nevalainen  
Hibbing, MN**



opportunities. I called and talked to race tracks about getting an internship and ended up talking to a guy that ran a race track, and got some more experience on what it took to be involved in racing. I eventually landed an internship with NASCAR and did that for 4 months. I guess I must have done an OK job. I worked my way from that opportunity, built good relationships, networked, and that lead to an opportunity to work for NASCAR.

**What is your favorite memory since you began working for NASCAR?**

Holy cow, there are a lot. I think I'm fortunate to work in a program at NASCAR that is such a strong program in the industry. It's an honor for me that I've been around short tracks since I was a kid and enjoy that part of the sport. Seeing our program grow in the amount of time that I've been here, not solely due to myself as we have a great team here, and being able to be a part of something like that is memorable to me. One of the neatest things that I've been able to see is watching the young people, build their way up. A guy like Clint Bowyer worked his way up into the Midwest Elite Tour and now he's having success at the Sprint Cup level. I remember the days when he was winning track championships and coming to our banquet. That was the best thing ever for him, and I can only imagine his goal now is to win that Cup championship. I obviously wasn't directly responsible for, or part of that, but seeing people like that is what makes it worth everything to me.

There are a lot of people out there that are racing, whether you're at a NASCAR track or short track anywhere in the country, that are talented young drivers. There are also the guys that aren't so young any more and doing it as a hobby. That's the best thing about weekly racing is there's a little bit of everything for anyone. Whether you're a young fan, or a young driver, or if you're a guy that just wants to be there on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday night, there's a little bit of something for everybody. Watching them grow and making to a touring series or the Truck, Nationwide or Cup. It's pretty neat. There are just so many good drivers across the country, and it's fun to watch them grow up and get to know them.

**What are some of the challenges you see short tracks facing in the next 5 years?**

I think there are a lot of challenges, but also a lot of opportunities. On the short track side of things, whether you're a NASCAR track or any short track, we need to have the ability to adapt and change. With the ever changing economy, sponsorship is tough and I think tracks are struggling with these things. With all of the new social media like Facebook and Twitter, there are new opportunities to breach that, but it's getting to that point that is taking some time. I think the tracks across the country may not be used to these new tools and it's come a little bit slower to our industry. As a sport, we need to work on the young fans. There are so many different things younger people are doing today. There are just so many entertainment options out there for everybody. Continuing to get youth involved in short track racing is the biggest challenge we face. Racing isn't the only ticket in town, options like Xbox, Playstation, all of those other entertainment options weren't there five or 10 years ago. I don't see that changing as we move into the future. Everyone's dollar just doesn't go as far as it did five years ago. Until that changes, we need to continue to find ways to get new people.

**What advice do you have for people looking to further their career in racing?**

The biggest advice I can give as it relates to racing is probably similar to advice in any job. Taking initiative, networking with people as much as you can and creating opportunities. Eventually an opportunity is going to become available, and you need to take advantage of it. Having a strong commitment to short track racing is important. There are a lot of opportunities working for NASCAR, with tracks, teams or sponsors. There are so many ways to get involved in racing. I think more so than any other industry. Just by having the initiative, working hard and networking, you'll be able to create opportunities. It's never easy. The harder you work, and the more dedicated you are to creating those opportunities and taking advantage of them is the best advice I can give to anyone, whether it's in racing, or anything really. If I can do it, anyone can do it.



Chris Stepan interviews Kevin at the Cedar Lake Speedway banquet in 2009

Stan Meissner photo



## 2011 USA Nationals Preview



Once again, the USA Nationals will feature three days of dirt Late Model racing with all of the top drivers in the nation on hand.

While the event has been known for great racing, the fans that live and breathe for an extra twist to a story, have had their share of conspiracy theories and controversy over the years as well.

There was the conspiracy theory of deals being made on the grassy knoll to let drivers win bonus money during the early 2000's or last year's event with Scott Bloomquist coming out of the pits and picking up his fifth USA Nationals crown.

Controversy and conspiracy aside, it is a great racing event. Along with the long-standing traditions associated with the USA Nationals, another new event has been added during the afternoon for the last few years.

Rich Olson started the FansFund a few years ago to offset expenses for some of the drivers traveling a long distance. Fans are encouraged to donate money. In return, they receive a free lunch, T-shirt, poster and are eligible for prize drawings on Friday afternoon of the USA Nationals.

Great racing, controversy, FansFund, glowing balls and runaway tow trucks sure make for a great weekend. Here's to hoping the 2011 is just as good as last year.

### USA Nationals Winners (1988-2010)

1988 - Billy Moyer  
1989 - Billy Moyer  
1990 - Billy Moyer  
1991 - Rick Aukland  
1992 - Billy Moyer  
1993 - Billy Moyer  
1994 - Jack Boggs  
1995 - Jack Boggs  
1996 - Jimmy Mars  
1997 - Rick Aukland  
1998 - Donnie Moran  
1999 - Scott Bloomquist

2000 - Davey Johnson  
2001 - Dale McDowell  
2002 - Rick Eckert  
2003 - Scott Bloomquist  
2004 - Brian Birkhofer  
2005 - Dale McDowell  
2006 - Scott Bloomquist  
2007 - Brian Birkhofer  
2008 - Scott Bloomquist  
2009 - Jimmy Mars  
2010 - Scott Bloomquist



Scott Bloomquist and Billy Moyer battle for the lead during the 2010 USA Nationals (top photo), The coveted trophy (left photo), Rich Olson addressing the FansFund crowd (above)

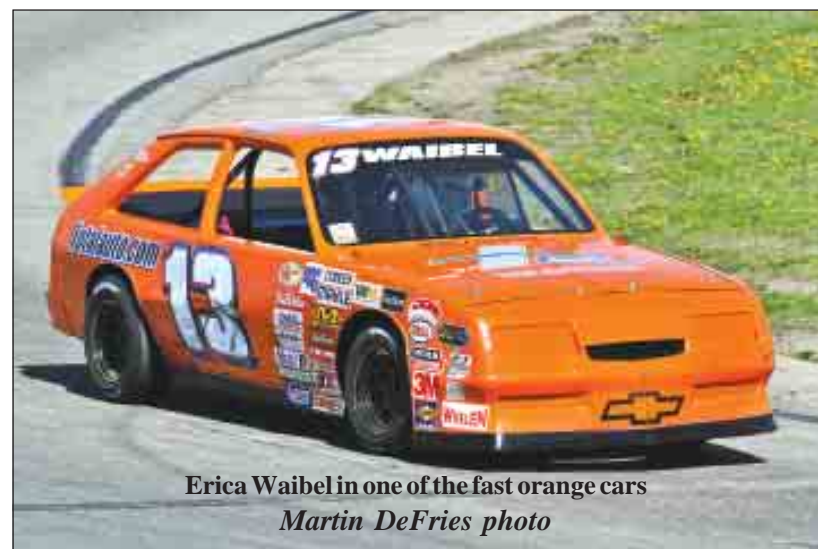
*Jerry Zimmer photos*

### Publishers Note from page 3

the Midwest, Joe Shear had a number of successful years running an orange car. While Joe may have had his cars painted just about every color in the rainbow at one point or another, the orange ones always stood out with me. Both Royle and Kane have orange cars, with Royle's having somewhat of a Joe-Shear-like theme. If you throw in Erica Waibels orange Chevette and Jack Purcell's orange Escort mini-stock, it would appear that the color orange makes race cars go faster. Racing has always been a "monkey see, monkey do" type of activity. I wonder if some drivers might change the color of their car before the season ends, in hopes of having more success? Or possibly a rule change over the winter prohibiting orange cars? One never knows.

Miscellaneous news and notes;  
We heard a couple of good comments over the last few

weeks. One came from Eric Heim, as his son was preparing to start from the pole position in the Midwest Modified feature at Cedar Lake. When asked where they were starting, Eric replied "On the pole, and nervous as hell." I wasn't sure if he was talking about Dagan or how he felt. It must have been Eric that was nervous, as Dagan held up well, and finished second to perennial front runner Jason Vandekamp. The other comment came from recent birthday boy, "Dyno Don" Swearingen as I was handing out copies of The Midwest Racing Connection. "Thanks, I really like All The Dirt" were the first words Don spoke to me on this evening. Thanks Don, I'll see if I can pick up a copy of that paper for you somewhere.



Erica Waibel in one of the fast orange cars  
*Martin DeFries photo*



# THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

## Photo Gallery



LaCrosse Sportsmen winner Branden Berg  
*Bruce Nuttleman photo*



Bryan Syer-Keske has picked up a few trophies this year at Elko Speedway  
*Martin DeFries photo*



Cory Davis has dominated the Pro-Stock division at Cedar Lake Speedway  
*Stan Meissner photo*



Raceway Park Mini-Stock winner Tony Hallberg  
*Martin DeFries photo*



Driver X and crew celebrate a win at Rockford Speedway  
*Jimmy Ambruoso photo*



Hot Rod Hentges celebrates the second win of the season  
*Martin DeFries photo*



# THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

## Photo Gallery



The King of the Short Tracks and Dan Deicher at LaCrosse Speedway  
*Bruce Nuttleman photo*



Adam Wiebusch picked up his first Thunder Car win at Elko Speedway  
*Martin DeFries photo*



Cedar Lake Midwest Mod winner Jason Vandekamp  
*Stan Meissner photo*



Matt Lundberg and the Family Truckster in victory lane once again at Rockford  
*Jimmy Ambruoso photo*



St. Croix Valley Speedway UMSS Winner Andy Jones  
*Stan Meissner photo*



Jake Krueger and his hot rod El Camino in victory lane  
*Bruce Nuttleman photo*





*Whether you like him or not, there is no doubt Kyle Busch is an asset to the sport of oval track racing. As one of the few drivers on the Cup circuit that still actively competes at short track events, Kyle has been picking up some pretty impressive wins.*

*Recently Kyle accomplished something nobody has done before in the world of short track racing.*

*In addition to winning the Slinger Nationals, Rowdy Busch followed up this performance with another short track crown jewel win - The Oxford 250. The winners list of both races is a who's who of racing, but nobody has ever won both, let alone in the same year. That is until Rowdy came to town.*

*The photo to the left is courtesy of Bruce Nuttleman, as Kyle prepares for his customary bow to the crowd following his 2011 Slinger Nationals win.*

## Thrills and Spills

*Matt Henderson (car #33) went for this wild spin recently at LaCrosse Speedway. Top point contenders Todd Korish (32) and Shawn Pfaff (21) work to avoid Henderson. Korish made it, Pfaff did not. Jeff Backer and Todd Oliver also were involved in the melee.*



Mary Schill photos



*The Figure-8 drivers at Raceway Park are starting to get more daring as we pass the mid-point of the season. Robert Carter and Jerry Ziemieki came a little too close in the "X" recently. If this is any indication of the way things went towards the end of last year with the Figure-8's, look out.*



Martin DeFries photos



## Going in Circles



By Charlie Spry

Another hot and wet weekend started off on Friday, July 22, at Columbus 151 Speedway. The hot weather is keeping some cars and drivers away from the local tracks, along with the threat of severe weather. Don Gaserude set fast time for the late models, and then backed that up with the feature win tonight. It was a very interesting race, as early leader Al Weishoff led a good portion of the race as Gaserude worked the outside. Several times it appeared that Gaserude had cleared Weishoff, only to have Al battle back. Gaserude finally got the job done late in the race, followed by Weishoff, Spencer Schultz, and Lincoln Keeser finished off a good run with a fourth place finish. This track uses the “pick your groove” cone for restarts, and while this doesn’t work well at some tracks, I think it adds to the excitement at this particular track. What brings excitement for the fans brings more of them to the track, which will ultimately help the drivers, so, while some drivers may not like the deal, they seem to accept it.

Dells regular Tyler Sauter had his late model here tonight, while former late model racer Bob Taylor was back behind the wheel in one of Duane Deppe’s hobby stocks. Tony Chase has been also racing one of Deppe’s cars and was present tonight. Tony also has a dirt sportmod in his stable, and hopes to do a little dirt racing this year yet, possibly at Darlington. Hobby stock racer Kyle Chwala also had a street stock car out for the first time tonight, finishing fourth in his feature, which was won by Ben Hewitt. Danny Birkett is now racing the Ben Hallock owned Bandit car and was present tonight. Danny knows this track very well and will be ultra-competitive.

Phil Wuesthoff, who was dabbling in a street stock owned by the Desjarlais family went out and purchased another Bandit car to race here, and promptly took it out and won that feature tonight over Derek Dixon, who came close to a clean sweep by setting fast time, winning his heat, and coming a bit short in the feature. Andy Raley won the hobby stock feature over Kale Peterman. This division is really gaining in car counts and in competitiveness. Very good racing all the way through the field. John Von Allmen won the Backup feature, but had to tiptoe around spun cars around the last turn, nearly losing the win at the end, but still getting it done.

The Misfits were on hand tonight as well. No, not some rowdy people, but a group of Formula Indy, Rascal Outlaw and one Legend car to do battle with each other. Only two cars finished out of a much larger field which started, as cars kept dropping from the event with various maladies. Jason Dull seemed to have control of the event until with only a couple of laps to go he suddenly dropped from the event, giving the lead and win to Tim Roach. Justin Lindeman was the only other finisher of the event.

The following night was spent at the Jefferson Speedway once again. This was a night where several race cars must have had enough of the heat and said “enough.” At least seven were back on the trailers before racing even started, dropping the car count a bit lower than normal. Jeffrey Lafave had trouble with his hobby stock, so took the short drive home and got his Bandit car instead, so he got some racing in. Keith Bell had his International car break, Mike Taylor was loaded up before racing, and Dustim Ward had to hop in a borrowed hobby stock to complete his racing. Dustin did pretty well with the borrowed machine, bringing it home in second behind Jim Tate Jr., who won for the sixth time in the last eight shows. International division driver Darren Brown was in the stands spectating. Darren is recovering from injuries he received in a shop incident, including fractured ribs and a leg injury. He reports that he is still in much pain, and was lacking his usual big smile at the race track. I personally wish Darren the best in a speedy recovery. I raced against him in the Bandit division when he raced with that group, and found him to be one of the cleanest and most respectful drivers out there, as well as a good person. Get well, Darren. Tommy Pecaro was out with his late model for the reported third time this season, and took the early lead in the feature, with veteran Roger Behlke on his tail for many laps. While this pair was battling, Jason Erickson snuck up on them and swooped by to take the lead and ultimate win. Steady Dylan Schuyler had another strong finish to take second, with Steve Dobbratz getting third.

Just as I said earlier in this column about Danny Birkett being very competitive, he won the Bandit feature tonight here at Jefferson. The guy knows his way around a race track, and while he started up front, he had some heavy pressure the whole race and had to drive the wheels off the car to stay up front. Jay Kalbus won the sportsman feature, taking the lead from Tory Bagley in a spirited battle. This will close the gap in the season point race a bit, as leader Jason Thoma was mired deep in the pack for most of the race. International division point leader Kyle Stark won the feature once again after a week off. This was his ninth of the year at this track. Don’t think there will be anyone catching him in season points this year. Gary Stark finished second, and Mike Lambert backed up last weeks feature win with another strong run to take third. The show was run off very quickly, as rain was reported as moving in from the north. While it got very cloudy to the north and the clouds moved our way, it never did rain at the track. Still, getting done early is a good thing, as it allowed everyone to mingle a bit longer after the races.

The following Friday night took us back to Columbus once again, with an increase in car count and fan attendance. Veteran Bill Retallick won the late model feature, but had a mirror full of Andy Wendt and Scott Patrick the whole race. Both drivers could have dumped the leader several times, but being the veterans that they are, they settled back and took what they could get. Nice driving by all to NOT bring out a caution or cause anything that might be detrimental to anyone. Nice run by Bill as well, as he really showed that he can still get it done after nearly fifty years of short track racing. It was Bill’s first late model feature win since 8-4-06. Some might remember Bill as the winner of the 1971 National Short Track Championships at Rockford, behind the wheel of a purple 1969 Chevelle, holding off the legendary Dick Trickle for that win. The present car is still #9 and still has some purple on it.

Quite a few drivers made their first appearances of the year here tonight. Jason Deppe had his late model out for the first time, while Kurt Kleven was present in the street stocks. Tom Schuette also brought out the sharp looking Mustang normally driven by Mark Deporter at Jefferson.

Tony Ciano and Chester Williams also came out to play in the hobby stock division. The newcomers fared pretty well, as Schuette won a heat, Kleven placed second in the feature, while Williams also won a heat and Ciano placed third in his feature. Randy Breunig was back out in the JRC Enterprises street stock, and Randy had told me a couple of weeks ago that they were waiting for engine parts, but that while the car was idle that they were making some chassis tweaks. He wasn’t kidding, as the car was a rocket. Couple that with a good driver like Randy, and it becomes a combination that is hard to beat. Tonight, nobody could. Randy set fast time, won his heat, and won the feature going away, getting a clean sweep. It had been ten years since someone had scored a clean sweep here in this division until Phil Denikas did it a couple of weeks ago, and now Randy did it again in short order. Jim Tate Jr. won the feature in the hobby stocks, which had their largest field in quite some time. This division is really growing here, with more cars showing every week. Not only that, but it is a fun division to watch. The Legends were the guest division of the night, and they responded with an excellent car count. Aaron Moyer took the victory over the Jones boys, while it was also fun to watch Rodney Mundt race, as he spent quite a bit of time here racing in the Bandit division in the past, and had much more track time here than the other Legends drivers who were present. Ryan Oetzel took the backup race victory over Dustin Von Allmen, who closed rapidly at the end of the event.

On Saturday, the hot weather continued with some equally hot racing at Jefferson. A very nice field of late models were present for the night, with Jason Erickson getting his second straight feature win. He passed Roger Behlke late in the race to gain the position and took it from there. The way Roger has been running lately, I’d expect to see him get a feature win real soon.

Late model rookie Dale Warner was present again, as he continues to work the bugs out of his car and get more familiar with racing in this division, and with his car. Dale raced a Bandit car here back in 2004, then hobby stocks from 2005 to 2008, and has also done some drag racing with an ’81 Z28 Camaro. This is his first time driving a late model, and he is doing it with a tight budget. “The car is an old RanderCar that had been raced at Lake Geneva by Randy Rodgers,” Said Dale. “I got it at a price I couldn’t afford to pass up. It only has a hobby stock motor in it, and the only new parts on it are the two right side tires, the fuel and water pumps, the plugs and wires, and the hydraulic clutch line. Everything else is hand-me-downs and used stuff that I picked up. I fabricated the shift linkage myself because of where the tranny sits forward of where I sit. I’m trying to show that you can go out and have fun and not spend the big bucks like others do. I don’t think there is \$3,500 in the whole car.” Dale reports now having only some minor overheating issues to take care of, and make lots of laps.

Sportsman racer Adam Bleskan reports that he has picked up another chassis to begin working on another car for the future. “Don’t have much time to work on it though, we just had a baby girl about a month ago, so we are pretty busy. I took last week off and probably will take another week off yet this year. Otherwise we will run here the rest of the year and maybe Slinger at the end of the year.” Veteran racer Tom Collins was present for the second time this season with his sportsman car. “You know that car that was sitting on the corner by the Dells track? This is that car,” Said Tom. The hauler used to transport the car is turning heads. It is a ’71 Chevy ramp truck that had belonged to Butch

*continued on page 15*



By: Ashley Iwanski  
Bruce Nuttleman photos

It was another crazy, caution filled night at the La Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway that crowned J. Herbst the winner in the Kwik Trip NASCAR Late Model feature. It started with the front three leaders, Herbst, Matthew Henderson and Brent Kirchner, pushing and shoving each other all over the track. Meanwhile hard-charging Steve Carlson was passing cars left and right to make it to the front of the field.

On lap nine, Carlson was challenging Matthew Henderson on the outside for second when he and Kirchner made contract. Carlson was sent spinning like a top in turn four. Carlson came to a stop right as Todd Korish lost control of his car and ended up facing backwards on the track. Korish just missed slamming into the side of Carlson when Cole Howland lost the control and drove the rear of his car up over the front end of Korish. Korish’s car was in pieces as it was pulled off the track. Carlson was able to restart the race at the back of the field, while Herbst, Mike Carlson and Matthew Henderson sat in the top three spots. Henderson was impatient to get to the front of the field and within a lap had passed Mike Carlson. Shawn Pfaff, who is second in points, stole the third spot from Carlson after that.

Steve Carlson was eager to get back to the front of the field and it didn’t take long. Carlson was passing cars high and low making it look too easy. In ten laps Carlson worked his way from the back of the field to fifth place where he

Herbst Wins Fourth Feature

eventually finished. Henderson meanwhile was hard on the throttle trying to close the gap between himself and the leader Herbst. He never made it. Herbst took the win followed by Henderson, Pfaff and Kirchner.

Jimmy Gilster was the big winner for the night in the North Country Contractors Sportsmen Pettibone memorial feature. With 1,000 dollars on the line for winning the race, every driver was taking every advantage they could, which led to four cautions. The top fifteen drivers were all over the track, going three wide through the turns and pushing each other all over the track to get to the first position. Troy Maier was driving like a dirt track racer, making multiple saves through turn four. But, his luck ran out on lap twelve when he spun out in the same turn. As the caution flag came out Bill Martin came around the turn and slammed into the side of Maier destroying both cars. Gilster took advantage of the restart and quickly moved to first, taking the win and the money. Matt Inglett was second and Dan Gilster third.

Rookie Jordan Myers won the United Auto Supply Thunderstox feature, but it didn’t come easy. Myers had to dodge lap traffic cars and make his way around division leaders Jason Bolster, Brad Warthan and Raymond Hardy, to make his first trip to victory lane. Hardy finished second followed by Warthan and Bolster.

The Window World Hornets were also in attendance to night, putting on a show in two feature races. Chris Swenson was fast as lightning to take the checkered flag in the first feature. And in the second feature, Jay Raines had to hold off persistent Chris Sampson for the win.



Andy Jones Opens St. Croix Valley Raceway With Third UMSS Win

By Greg Parent

On a warm summer evening, the Upper Midwest Sprintcar Series (UMSS) along with several weekly racing divisions and a strong turnout of fans helped welcome the rebirth of a dirt track back amongst the living. In just a short ten day period since the sale of the former Kopellah Speedway, a host of volunteers and the new ownership team accomplished a tremendous amount of work to reopen the 1/4 mile dirt oval under its new name, St. Croix Valley Raceway, on Friday night July 29. Racing for car owner Rick Mastell, one of the new owners of the western Wisconsin facility, Andy Jones put his name in the record books as the first UMSS feature winner. For Jones, it was his third UMSS victory of the season and fourth over all in his brief sprint car racing career.

Jones started on the pole and led the entire distance, but the race got very interesting when the lone caution waved with fourteen laps in the books. Veteran racer Brooke Tatnell had worked his way forward from his sixth starting position and suddenly found himself right behind Jones on the restart. Commenting after the race, Jones stated, “I

knew Tatnell was behind me on that caution. I just needed to keep running a smooth consistent line and not overdrive the car. My crew gave me a strong car for the feature, and I’m really happy to win this first race at St. Croix Valley for them and my car owner to help reopen the track.” Not bad for a modified driver turned sprint car racer, as Jones narrowed the points lead on Jerry Richert, Jr. who finished fourth. Coming into the weekend, Chris Graf had held the top spot in the point standings. Graf, who was unable to race this weekend due to being in a family wedding, slipped to fifth behind Scott Broty and Cody Hahn.

With the traditional double round of qualifying races back in use, high point driver Brooke Tatnell pulled the six pill for the feature race invert. Earlier in the night Tatnell had captured victories in the Meeks Video second Ultimate Sprint Race and the Mastell Brothers Trailer Service second Challenge Race. Defending UMSS Champion Cody Hahn won the Alpha Apparel & Promotions first Ultimate Sprint Race while Scott Broty defeated Hahn in the Driverwebsites first Challenge Race. The invert for the

feature put Andy Jones and Brad Barickman on the front row.

Jones immediately jumped into the lead at the drop of the green with Barickman a solid second. It only took the “Awesome Aussie” Tatnell two laps to move up to third and five more laps to get by Barickman for second. The leaders encountered lapped traffic at this point and Tatnell began closing the margin lap by lap. When rookie racer Anna Kouba looped her car in turn two fourteen laps into the race, the margin shrank down to nothing. Many fans wondered if Jones would be able to hold off Tatnell, and a quick six lap dash to the checkers answered that question with Jones picking up the \$1,000 top prize and trophy. Finishing behind Jones and Tatnell in the top five was Barickman, Richert and Hahn. Completing the top ten finishers were Broty, Mike Luks in his second night out, Joseph Kouba, Ronnie Erickson and Anna Kouba.



## Late Model Finish Too Close to Call between Goede and Schneider at Elko

By Jim Burns

*Note: Official results are pending review as we go to press. Following the release of the official press report from Elko Speedway, officials have decided to review the final Late Model results. Matt Goede and Racin' Jason Scheidner scored identical times according to transponder results. A feat not even accomplished at the highest levels of racing.*

Get to the checkered flag first...that's it, don't worry about winning margin, just get to the checkers first. For New Germany's Matt Goede and Lonsdale's Brent Kane, those words proved to be true as the margin of victory combined in the NASCAR Super Late Model and Thunder Car features was less than a foot, sending the enthusiastic crowd into an ear splitting roar to highlight the EVE of DESTRUCTION RAW at Elko Speedway.

In the NASCAR Super Late Model main, Donny Reuvers bolted from his outside front row starting position to grab early control of the 40 lap headliner, with Adam Royle, Steve Anderson and Matt Goede in tow. As Reuvers looked to pull away early, Goede moved under Anderson on lap four to third, but wasn't in position to challenge either Royle or Reuvers. As the action stayed "clean and green", Royle got a huge run off of turn two on lap 11 to pressure Reuvers, but was unable to make the pass, while "Racin' Jason" Schneider worked around Nick Murgic and then Anderson to fourth at the midpoint.

The action then went from competitive to all out war as Royle and Reuvers battled high and low, lap after lap, trading the lead until Royle took the point on lap 34 and looked to settle in. Just one lap after taking the lead, Royle moved high to block Reuvers exiting turn four and the tandem made contact, with Royle into the fence and out the race and Reuvers sent to the tail. On the restart, Goede

jumped to the lead with Schneider and Murgic in tow, but it would be Schneider moving under Goede on lap 38 looking for the lead and. As the white flew, the fans rose as the pair went down the back straight side by side and as they exited turn four, the pair made contact and only the electronic scoring would be able to determine that Goede had scored the win by inches over Schneider, with Murgic, Dan Fredrickson and Anderson in the top five.

In the Big 8's, Travis Stanley looked to continue his recent success, moving to the early lead before Dylan Moore charged to the point on lap two before the caution flew on lap three for a spinning Dan Whitehead. On the restart, Moore quickly reclaimed the lead, with Jon Lemke sliding under Stanley before the caution flew two laps later as Lawrence Berthiaume suffered mechanical woes, dropping fluids high and low, with Darren Wolke and Josh Christy spinning as a result of the track condition. On the second restart, Moore left the field in his wake, with Lemke holding off Stanley and a fast closing Doug Brown, while Chris Marek ducked under Nick Beaver to join the top five on lap seven. The action remained under the green through lap 16, with Moore continuing to dominate, but things were getting interesting behind him as Marek and Brown battled for fourth, with contact sending Marek spinning wildly in turn four to bring out the final caution. On the final, single file restart, Moore pulled away to the win, completing a "clean sweep" on the night, with Stanley, Lemke, Beaver and Ryan Kamish in the top five.

The Thunder Cars saw familiar faces in familiar places as last weeks winner, Adam Wiebusch made an early charge by Greg Borchardt to the front, with Dillon Sellner, Brent Kane and Ted Reuvers also on the move. As Wiebusch set a rapid pace, the caution flew on lap five as Sellner hammered Borchardt in turn two, stalling the action. On the restart, Kane needed just three laps to track down Wiebusch for the lead, as Kyle Kirberger moved under Dan Weber for fourth on lap 11. The action was stalled again on lap 14 as Mike Homans patience ran out, as he drilled Weber exiting turn four to bring out the caution for the final time. On the final restart, Kane jumped to the lead, but Reuvers drove around Wiebusch in turn four on lap 18, moving to second with his sights set on his nemesis. Over the final seven markers, Reuvers closed on and then caught Kane but was edged by inches in the second closest finish of the night, with Wiebusch, Kirberger and a rebounding Borchardt in the top five.



Martin DeFries  
file photo



Dan Kranz photo



Dan Kranz photo



Dan Kranz photo

The Power Stocks were also in action and Darren Waltermann slid by Chris Sjulstad for the early lead, with Matt Ryan and Taylor Goldman continuing Sjulstad's slide on lap three. As Waltermann continued to show the way, Sjulstad's woes continued as Devon Schmidt, Dustin Mann, Dan Bohnsack and Paul Hamilton all worked by, while Ryan ducked under Waltermann to take the point on lap five. Once in the lead, Ryan pulled away to an insurmountable advantage to cruising to the checkers, with Waltermann second and Schmidt third after he worked below Goldman and Mann on lap 17, with Mann able to move to fourth bypassing Goldman on lap 19.

### Going In Circles from page 12

Mierendorf. "My Brother is a good body repair person, and he spent a lot of time on this. It was all rusted out and beat up, as we had used it to haul junk cars. We pulled it into the pits, and my son said "look, everyone is staring at our car. I said, they aren't staring at that, it's the truck." It is one sharp ride, and has a strong history behind it. "I was going to take out the two seats in the cab, and put a bench seat in it, but Butch told me, "Do you know who all sat between those two seats? Dick Trickle sat there, and that's just the start of the list. A lot of big timers have sat there between those seats." So, I decided to leave it as is, there is so much history involved. That is why we restored it, we were ready to scrap it, and I just said, there is no way we can do that, too much history here." It is a hauler from a

whole different era, one in which race cars were hauled out in the open as rolling billboards for their sponsors and racing in general. I miss those days and think racing has been hurt by the lack of people being able to see cars going to the track in plain view. Nice job by Tom and crew.

Nice to see Greg Staude get his first career sportsman division feature win tonight. He got an early lead and checked out, with the group of Jim Taylor, Tory Bagley, James Helmer and Jay Kalbus all reeling him in. Staude held them all off to get the win. Kalbus is slowly reeling in point leader Jason Thoma in the season point race. Should be interesting.

Nice to see veteran Paul Dygon make his first appearance

of the year in the late model division. Paul usually comes out about this time of year to race, as this time of year works well for him in his busy schedule. Paul formerly has raced at Madison and also quite a bit at the old Lake Geneva Raceway, which unfortunately, is no more. Jim Tate Jr. won the hobby stock feature in his fiancée's car (Jamie Dunn) when his own car broke. He had driven his own car to the feature win the night before at Columbus, so it doesn't seem to matter what car he drives, he can get it done. Seth Reamer took the lead from Brandon Johnson late in the Bandit feature and won that event. He had won the previous night at Columbus as well, so he had a really good weekend. Kyle Stark dominated the International division once again, and Bill Reynolds won the Road Warrior feature.



## 15-Year-Old Erik Jones Joins Legends Via Victory Lane in Rockford's 'All-Star 100'

By Jordan Kuehne

The kid doesn't even have a driver's license; that wasn't enough to stop 15-year-old Erik Jones tonight though as the young gun survived a late restart with six circuits remaining to capture the 20th running of the JEGS/CRA All-Star Tour 'All-Star 100' presented by Stanley Steemer and wear the legendary wreath at the Rockford Speedway. With the win, Jones' first in the series, the teenager joins the growing ranks of past legends that have claimed the checkers in the 'All-Star 100' including hallowed names that seared themselves into memory like Allison, Shear, Trickle, and Martin.

Two other prior victors in this event, Rich Bickle and 'Fast' Eddie Hoffman, challenged Jones at various points throughout the race as yellow flags slowed the pace down and offered a variety of drivers a chance to contend for the crown. Ultimately, no one had more in the tank than Erik Jones as the Michigan hotshoe parlayed his fast qualifying effort and an eighth-place starting spot into history. Joining Jones on the podium was another 15-year-old, Cody Coughlin, who kept his nose clean and survived the battle of attrition to notch a career best runner-up result.



Bickle and JEGS/CRA points leader Hoffman came home in third and fourth respectively.

The opening act of the late model doubleheader, the 30-lap Stanley Steemer NASCAR Late Models headliner, went Jerry Gille's way as the two-time division champ continued his summer surge as he eyes another late season rally in the standings. Alex Papini extended his points lead in the Mtn Dew RoadRunners with a convincing victory, his fourth of the 2011 campaign.

### Jimmy Ambruoso photos

Erik Jones, (center) and Cody Coughlin, (left) stand tall with veteran driver in Rich Bickle (right) in victory circle as the top three finishers in the JEGS/CRA All-Star Tour 'All-Star 100'. (Top right photo)

RoadRunners points leader Alex Papini, wasted no time moving from his sixth place starting spot into the lead to bring home a victory in the 20-lap headliner. (Left photo)

The Stanley Steemer NASCAR Late Models headliner, went to Jerry Gille, as the two-time division champ is shown in victory circle with his #1 supporter his father Ed Gille (right) and the division sponsor of Stanley Steemer (left). (Right photo)



## Lebens and Bronstad Lead Figure-8 Drivers at Raceway, Hawkey Tops Media Race

On another hot and sultry July evening, Raceway Park hosted their annual Cars for Courage media race. Teri Knight of KYMN radio won the women's race, with KFAN on-air personality, and more recently Country Super Star, Chris Hawkey winning the men's race.

Regular Sunday night winners included; Chad Walen in the Late Models, Brent "The Freight Train" Kane in the Hobby Stocks, John Lebens and Mark Bronstad in the wild and crazy Figure-8's, Keith Paulsrud in the Short Trackers Doug

Schmitz in the Mini Stocks and Justin Kochevar in the Bombers.

Full race results unavailable at time of publication.

*continued on page 17*



Martin DeFries photo



Martin DeFries photo



Martin DeFries photo



*Raceway Park from page 16*

*Martin DeFries photo*

**Chad Walen picked up yet another win at Raceway Park in Shakopee. (top) Keith Paulsud went two in a row in the Short Tracker division.**


*Martin DeFries photo*

## New Stars Emerge In ASA Midwest Tour's First Half

### Dean & Jason Talkin' Racin'

*By Dean Reller*

Unlike other touring series, where the circuit comes to town and local race fans watch many unfamiliar names stage a race on the track they are familiar with, but the drivers aren't so familiar was the norm, until along came the ASA Midwest Tour. Tim Olson and Steve Einhaus revived the idea of bringing a field of Touring Stars to a local race track to compete against the local stars that race fans are used to seeing running at the front every week. This concept was highly successful in the former ARTGO series, but got lost along the way as NASCAR took over the series and made several changes, which resulted in a touring series that visited local tracks with little chance to see local drivers compete in front of their hometown fans.

In the first few years of the ASA Midwest Tour, the local drivers gave a good effort, but frequently lost the race to the touring drivers. This year has definitely not fit into that mold. In the first seven races, there have been five different drivers taking the checkered

flag. Ross Kenseth, after a strong season last year, leads in the win column with three victories. Touring Star Tim Schendel has one win and Rookie Sklyar Holzhausen has one win. However, the real eye openers have been Jason Weinkauff and Mark Mackesy. They do not compete against many of these drivers on a regular basis, but they had the advantage over the touring series drivers as they used their expertise on their own turf and showed that the local driver can win against the visitors. I may add that these visitors include many track championships and touring series championships throughout the Midwest making them very strong competition and virtually all of them have a chance to win at every race. This fact is backed up by a very unique, but overlooked statistic that at most races the entire field qualifies within .5 seconds from top to bottom. Yes, that's one-half of a second from the fastest to the slowest. This goes to show that the local drivers experience on the familiar track allows them to mix it up with the touring drivers who have to quickly adapt to a new track.

Ross Kenseth has the obvious blood lines of a racer, being the son of NASCAR star Matt Kenseth, but the young driver has been proving that he's the real deal as his three wins having him leading in the win column, but not in the point standings as Andrew Morrissey, another of the young guns of the ASA Midwest Tour, leads in the points with several runner-up finishes and is set to win in any of the final few races of the year. Jacob Goede has recorded a couple of ASA Midwest Tour wins in the last few years, but he too has been snake bit in the hunt to the checkered flag, but sits inside the top five in the standings. Veteran driver Tim Schendel has one win and tons of experience, but sits fourth in points and needs to click off a couple a wins to give him a chance at the Championship. Young gun Nick Murgic rounds out the top five in points and would not surprise anyone if he won at least one of the remaining races. Former Champions Nathan Haseleu and Steve Carlson along with frontrunners Chris Wimmer and Jonathan Eilen are also surprisingly lacking Victory Lane appearances this year and sit surprising lower than expected in the point standings.

Jason Weinkauff and Mark Mackesy may have surprised the Touring drivers, but the chance for the local driver to win over the wealth of talent and experience has made something that race fans can get behind. Prior to the start of the season, officials from the ASA Midwest Tour billed 2011 as "The Best Season Yet". At first I chalked that up to promotional hype, but the stark reality is that so far the 2011 season is living up to its billing and with a handful of key races remaining, the race to the Championship should be just as exciting.

**Veterans such as Tim Schendel (left) local stars such as Jason Weinkauff (middle) or young stars such as Nick Murgic (right) highlight the ASA Midwest Tour**


*Doug Hornickel photo*

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## The Inside Dirt from page 4

at the Ohsweken Speedway on July 27. I happened to be listening to the audio broadcast and Stewart's victory lane interview would have probably earned him a trip to the NASCAR trailer if it had been a Cup race. I don't know if telling it like it is is what makes dirt track racing a lower form of the sport but I for one enjoyed the honesty of his interview.

Jerry Richert Jr. is sporting a retro helmet design this season that was inspired by an A.J. Foyt helmet displayed on the cover of the December 1981 issue of the now

defunct Open Wheel magazine. Open Wheel sprung out of a section of Stock Racing Magazine and enjoyed a 22 year run from 1980 through 2002. Richert admits to possessing a copy of every issue ever published.

Next up on my racing schedule will be another Friday trip to the Saint Croix Valley Raceway sandwiched between two nights of Late Model action at Cedar Lake's crown jewel, the USA Nationals.

We'll see you at the races!

Stan Meissner photo



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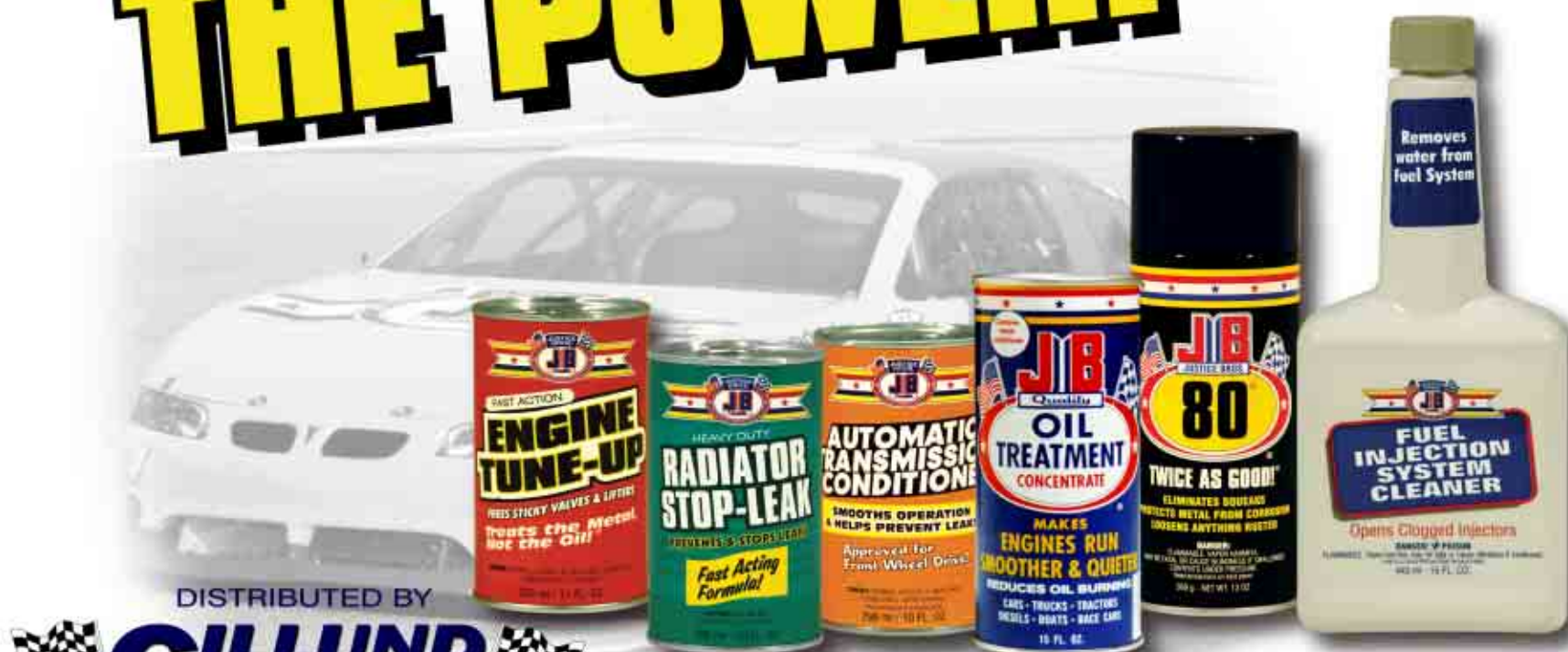
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