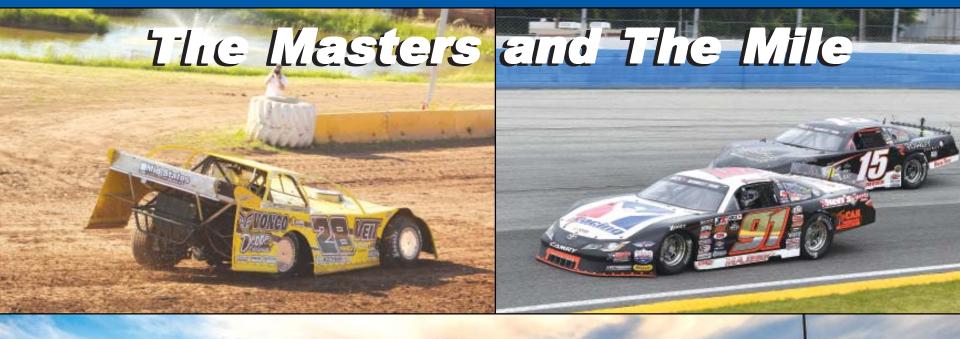
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THE MIDWEST'S SHORT TRACK AUTO RACING AUTHORITY





Vol. XXV Issue 3 July 2021

Inside...



The History of Crowns Speedway



Racing All Over Wisconsin

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## Publisher's Note Racing According to Plan



#### **Dan Plan**

A little over a month prior to this issue going to press, the major suppliers of tires to the short track industry announced a shortage of available tires. Originally it was due to a lack of availability of supplies and now from I understand, it is more of a labor shortage. I've also heard rumor of some teams/tracks were hoarding tires, which in turn limits the supplies to others. It's almost as if racing tires are now like toilet paper was last year?

Regardless of the cause, there has been a shortage, and it adversely impacted some tracks. The shortage appeared to be more prevalent on asphalt track side of the world as compared to the dirt track side.

At the onset of the tire shortage, no races had been cancelled due in the part of the country but there were a few South of the Mason/Dixon line. As we entered the end of June, a couple events have now been cancelled. I also know some tracks around here

### Tire shortage - but no shortage of cars or fans

have limited or reduced the number of tires available to competitors.

Although cancelled races don't help racetracks, having a tire shortage might not necessarily be a bad thing overall, especially on the pavement side. Having fewer tires available has turned into an unanticipated cost savings for some teams. Some of these pavement teams down South go through tires like you wouldn't believe. I can only imagine what the Snowball Derby would look like this year if they didn't have 2 full days of practice for "mock" qualifying runs. In my previous two trips to the Snowball Derby, I've seen huge piles of tires (as much as 20 tires per team) with just 4 laps on them. That is it – 4 laps and they are tossed away like garbage. The teams without NASCAR affiliation or bottomless wallets are at a distinct disadvantage. Can you imagine what a big pavement race would look

#### Publisher's Note continued on page 4



There are piles of just slightly used tires each year in Pensacola.

The Midwest

#### **RACING**

**Connection** 

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#### Publishers note from page 3

like with no practice on new tires? Who knows, if the tire shortage goes on long enough, maybe tracks will just start legalizing tire softener and all those 4-lap tires will be useful once again?

Now on the bright side, even with a shortage of tires, one of the things I've noticed so far this year is there is no shortage of race cars or race fans. The regular weekly events I've been to have had better than normal car counts and crowds. The few special events I've been to in person have done phenomenal as well. Time will tell how this season ends up. Will the tire manufactures catch up and we're back to normal, or will the shortage continue, and tracks and teams have to come up with other new ideas to keep things going?

Chris Marek passes in front of a packed house opening night at Elko







THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION



#### Auto Racing Facts, Observances and Opinions



#### Dale P. Danielski

With too many in the United States trying to cover up History, or have it erased entirely, we are setting out with this new feature to accomplish the opposite. That is, remember what happened in the past and convey how it has led to today. The evolution of racing so to speak in our neck of the woods and the focus will first be on the many tracks that have come and gone. The State of Wisconsin will be the prime target initially since I was born and raised here and have a fair amount of knowledge and notes accumulated on the subject. Notes that ultimately are leading to a book on the subject. So without further adieu as they say, here we go with the first lost racetrack.

I was fortunate to have spent the majority of my existence in Central Wisconsin, the hotbed, arguably of short track racing throughout the land. I was also fortunate to have parents that were interested in the sport of racing, especially my Dad. They attended races and practically from the day I was born I was taken to events. With the family residing in Central Wisconsin, specifically Stevens Point, one of the first tracks they attended was the Crowns Speedway near Wisconsin Rapids, WI. Ironically, this track was located very near where the Golden Sands Speedway today sits, within a mile or two, right off of Highway 54. Clayton Crown who owned car dealerships in Wisconsin Rapids and Stevens Point pioneered this first area racetrack endeavor. "Crowns of Two Towns" was the slogan for the three dealerships, while Crown began his career in stock car racing.

It has been documented that the Crown's track began operation sometime in 1950. Crown thought racing could bring big time excitement to the area and made an arrangement to build a1/4 mile dirt oval on land behind what was then known as Al and Hazel's bar. The new track went over very well as events drew big crowds from the outset. According to daughter of Clayton, Deann Crown Schlueter, a new

### The History of Crowns Speedway

venue was creating the buzz in the area. "The racing brought great excitement folks hadn't seen before. Race on the track and party afterwards. There were lots of parties going on and everyone ended up at the bar after the races. There was smoke in the air and a lot of booze and money flying around!"

Clayton Crown didn't just build a track and get racing going in the area either, he was very hands on including announcing, preparing the track and fielding race cars. Again, according to Schlueter, "He owned two cars that raced, 4 Aces, and Little 4 Aces. All



different drivers raced them and it changed from week to week. Dad also put down black liquor in attempts to keep the dust down, but one time the truck he was carrying it in, overflowed, and he got burned quite badly. Plus in trying to dodge the hot liquid, he jumped off the truck and sprained his ankle!" According to Schlueter Crown, racing was definitely different then compared to today. "Safety wise it was really crude and primitive. I remember a tire flying off one of the cars and because they only had chicken coop wire around the track the tire sailed over the fence hitting a spectator's car parked outside the Speedway. Racing was also so different compared to say today's NASCAR. The guys worked on the cars themselves, they had sponsors, but it wasn't like it is now. They put a lot of hard work and their minds into the cars, but not a lot of money. But for the most part, everyone got along. Nobody cared if so and so won or lost, it was just for fun and boy, the fun they had!"

The 1953 season proved to be one of the busiest as racing took place weekly on both Thursday and Sunday nights and occasionally on Saturday. The featured Divisions of racing were Regular and Modified stocks. Often times, drivers competed in both divisions in the same car on the same night. Hotshoes and most prolific winners on the year were #1, Hugh Leonard, #53 Len Willan, #77 Earl Boyles, #4 and #66, Jere O'Day, and numbers 77, 6, 29 and 74 driven by Don Ruder. Milt Schavie also won many races in none other than the Clayton Crown #4 Aces. Herb Kurth, was another barnstorming, prolific winner back in the day and he remembers racing at Crowns. "I

raced a '38 Plymouth 4 door that was stock against guys that had modified their engines and still finished 5th in all four races I ran one night. I thought that was pretty good because they weren't supposed to do that!" Kurth, raced and won often and claims you could make money at it. "Where I worked, I made a \$1.00 an hour. On the racetrack, if I turned fast time at some of the tracks I could make \$135.00 for just one lap!"

According to Kurth, with the popularity of racing on the rise, tracks were sprouting up everywhere. "You'd see a cornfield one day and practically the next it became a racetrack!' With the tracks getting up and running fierce competition resulted in lack of dedicated race days for all of them. Kurth could bare witness to this. "There was a track just outside of Stevens Point (Bourn's Speedway) that I raced at. It was only a few miles away from Crowns Speedway and there were times they'd race on the same day as each other. I raced at both when I could, but most guys didn't. The two tracks didn't get along, were feuding and I don't know why, but I think they'd have just as soon killed each other than work together!"

Jere O'Day parlayed a racing start at Crowns Speedway into a successful career which included local fame along with some good runs on the IMCA stock car tour. "I started racing at Crowns in the early 1950s with a '37 Ford Coupe. With that car in the first race, I got the front end knocked off. The next one, I rolled it over. The third time I took it to the track, I figured I better do something different or I ain't never going to be a race driver! I thought I could just go out and run the son of a bitch and not work on it. It got better though and the Gross Brothers, Palmer Roeder, Jack Dahlke, and Moose Peterson noticed me and put me in their cars. We won a lot of races together. What follows is systemic recall remembering.

Looking back in August of 1953, it was and Hugh Leonard and Vic Gansch winning the two feature races on DAV Trophy race night at Crowns Speedway. Leonard won the 35 lap Modified stock feature over Earl Boyles, Jere O'Day, Milt Schavie and Bruce Nystrum. Gansch bested 29 other drivers to win the 25 lap Stock feature over Carl Bohm, Ken Schultz, Bull Dassow and Carl Willan. \$1,000 in purse pay-out was distributed on the night with over 4,000

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## THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

#### Racing Facts, Observances and Opinions from page 5

fans witnessing the action... More 1953 action found Jere O'Day driving with one hand on the steering wheel and the other holding the gear shift to keep his car in gear, winning the feature here in July, Thursday night Mod Stock action at Crowns Speedway. Following O'Day at the finish were Dan Mead, Don Ruder, Milt Schavie and Carl Bulow. Red Nickels won the Stock feature over Earl Boyles, Barney Pliska and Ruder...Len Willan and Red Nickels were the feature winners in Mod Stock and Stock action here on Sunday night in July at Crowns Speedway. Following Willan in that main were Jere O'Day, Ernie Dombrowski and Bruce Nystrum. Nickels was the victor over Jere O'Day, Don Ruder and Jere Glodowski...Don Ruder took the feature race of the night here Thursday at Crowns Speedway driving the 4 Aces to the victory. Following Ruder in the Mod Stock main were Jere O'Day, Ernie Dombrowski,

Barney Pliska and Earl Boyles. The Stock feature went to Chet Sergo who was followed by Earl Boyles, Hugh Leonard and Red Nickels.

Crowns Speedway closed with little fanfare in 1955. Racing would not take place in the area for 5 years until the paved Griffith Park Speedway, on Griffith Avenue, Wisconsin Rapids, WI., was built...Clayton Crown died of Pancreaitis in 1982 at the age of 66...One of his dealership's buildings in Wisconsin Rapids, WI., stood for many years and was most notably known as Johnson and Son AMC. It was leveled however and is currently a vacant lot... Deanne Schlueter was last reported to be living in Madison, WI...Herb Kurth and Jere O'Day have both passed on...Don Ruder is also deceased, but noteworthy, after his racing days were over, is his becoming one of the best, most knowledgeable announcers in the area...

Questions, comments, opinions and other information welcome at dale@starmakermultimedia.com







Crowns Speedway photos, provided by Deanne Schlueter. 3 C's for 3 Crowns Dealerships possibly? Judges stand in the speedway infield. Crowns of two Towns 3C Plymouth race car. 4 Aces, another Clayton Crown race car, driven by numerous racers at the track. Rough and tumble racing as the Crowns Speedway ad says. Three wide racing! Started way back then and continues today even if not always in best interest. This #74 driven by Don Ruder, Jere O'Day and others sat at the old Griffith Park Speedway for many years. Dale P. Danielski photo. The #99 of Herb Kurth. May even be one of the cars driven by Herb at Crowns and Bourns Speedways. Dale P. Danielski photo. About the last remaining sign of a racetrack ever being here, posts for the lighting standards Dale P. Danielski photo.

## THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

### Going in Circles



#### **Charlie Spry**

Rockford Speedway has seen a large increase in the car count in the Roadrunner division this year. Quite a few people moving up or down to race in this division.

Zach Cichon raced in 2019 in the Sixer division, then last year moved up to the sportsman division. Finding that the sportsman division was not really his thing, he went to the Roadrunner division this year with a former Dustin Ward car. He has found this to his liking, as he won the first completed feature for the division in 2021.

Former Columbus 151 racer Eric Bennett has joined the Roadrunner ranks here, as well as former Sycamore Speedway racer Joe Jackson. Zack Hawkins moved up from the high school Sixer division last year to the Roadrunners this year as well. Mike Kinney has also moved up from the Sixers, as well as Tyler Vincetich. The world famous "Beerman" Sean Worman has done likewise.

Garrett Braden has moved up from the Bandit division to the American Short Tracker division, with a beautifully prepared car once again. Garrett has come a long ways in a short time in car driving skills, as well as mechanical skills, saying, "Three years ago I didn't even know how to change brakes on a car, now I am building cars. A friend built the center section on this one, but I did the rest. I wish I had better metal fabricating skills, but I don't really have the tools needed to do that yet." The move to the AST division was logical, as he is most familiar with this type of car, saying, "I don't really have the room in my garage for a sportsman car, but this car fits in there just fine. And with these cars, you can race anywhere, Go run with the Dashers, or anything."

Garrett has proven much in a short time, both in fabricating skills and driving skills. He also has a very important element, that being excellent people skills. It will be fun to watch him continually progress all the way around.

Good to see Steve Rubeck grab a late model feature win recently. He says that he thinks his last feature win here was back in 2013, so he was certainly due. His purple and blue cars are always standouts.

Also good to see Bobby Frisch recently get a feature win in the sportsman division here. He is

driving the Austin Fowler owned car this year. He has driven many different cars in many different divisions for many people, and always finds his way to victory lane.

Terry Ciano told me that he blew the engine in his AST car, and plans on converting the car back to the more stock Bandit class, hoping to have more fun in a more stock class, while spending much less money.

David Emery Jr. recently made his debut in the Sixer class here. You may not know it, but the Emery family members were in a racing documentary back in the early 2000's on entry level racing at the Lake Geneva Raceway, entitled "Four Bangers." Their team name at the time was "Puppy Power Racing." If you can find that movie, it documents the 2002 season of the BIC class at the old LGR, and is nicely done.

Madison International Speedway has had some visitors in the early part of the season. Jacob Goede has made the five hour trek from Minnesota to race his late model here so far, with winning the feature one night making it all worthwhile. Some other nights have not been so kind, but he has done a nice job and it is great to see the work he and his team have put into this.

Landry Potter showed up one night with a modified to race in the MisFitz division, and he cleaned house. He said that this would help him get used to this type of racing in preparation for the annual Bahama Brackets at Rockford at the end of the year. He said that they literally threw this car together quickly to get it out. Looks and runs pretty good I would say, as he seemed like he knew how to win the race against the others and the time clock. The Potter's always excel at having really nice looking and running machines wherever they go. He was clearly much too fast for the breakout rule, but still got the job done.

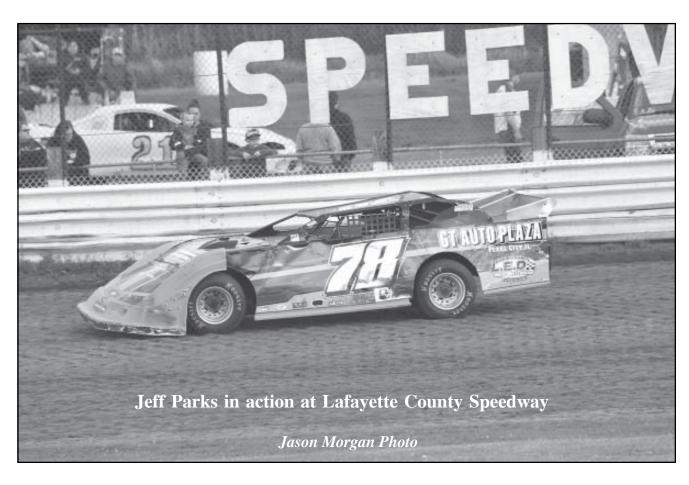
Giving the Bandit division a try was Rockford racer Wanda Dobbs. Having never raced at the track, she did not expect to do much, but I have no doubt she would get fast quickly, as she is a former Winged Women On Wheels champion at the Rockford track.

Veteran late model racer Paul Dygon recently made his first showing of the season here. "I will be sixty-five years of age real soon, so I am not going to update my equipment now, just keep on with the same car. I am just here to have fun, I am real good about getting way out of the way of the other cars when they lap me, don't cause any problems, just have fun," Said Paul. Last year Paul and his team attempted to make one show here at MIS, but on the way to the track had another motorist swerve in a construction zone and crash into their tow vehicle, totaling that rig out, and ending what was already a short season. You can see why many racers will tell you that they are much more afraid of driving on the public highway than on the race track!

With the close proximity that the Rockford and Madison tracks have to one another, you would think that more people would race both tracks weekly in the late models, but only one does. That driver is Hunter Drefahl from Evansville, Wi. It is a ton of work to do and plenty of expenses, but they have been running both tracks nearly weekly. He is starting have some really good runs at both tracks, too.

At the Lafayette County Speedway on the dirt side of things, I recently had a chance to talk with late model racer Jeff Parks. Racing in the limited late model class, Jeff races at both tracks which race this kind of car, here at LCS and on occasion at the

#### Going In Circles continued on page 8





#### Going In Circles continued from page 7

Dubuque Fairgrounds Speedway in Iowa.

Jeff got his start in a similar manner to many, starting out in karts. "I got a later start at it than many, I didn't start until I was seventeen or eighteen years old," Said Jeff. "I won a national, raced at Durand and other places. Then, I tried a three quarter midget at Blue Grass, Iowa."

Even though he calls nearby Lena, Illinois home now, he was born and raised in nearby Freeport, home of the former Freeport Raceway. Later on in the 1990's he bought a modified and started racing there, and later at Darlington. He also took several years off from racing to take care of family matters, like many do "I took a few years off and had kids and all of that sort of thing, so no racing for awhile while I tried to pay for college and all of that," Said Jeff.

Now that those things have been taken care of, it is time to play again, so he got his current late model (a 2011 Mastersbilt) a few years ago to race in this division. Jeff just recently won his first ever feature here at Darlington with the car, saying, "That would probably be the highlight of my racing career so far. I have done just about everything else at this track except win a feature, so we finally got that accomplished. We started studying what it would take to make the car respond to me as a driver and do what I want, and I think we are getting there. Darlington has always been good to me, it is my home track."

As for the future, Jeff said, "I just love racing. I do a bit of hunting and fishing, but this is really the only other thing I do for fun." Jeff noted that he may run an IMCA late model in the future, and would certainly like to race for another owner in the future.

Jeff is a very personable racer with a constant grin on his face while talking racing. He would do well racing for anyone.

In my last column, I gave a shout out to the hobby stock racers here, and they continue to do battle well with one another. However, one cannot overlook the competitiveness of the four cylinder racers here, who have really been running hard against one another in action that gets people up off their seats. Drivers such as Jason Kurth, Noah Krahenbuhl, Dylan Kuhl, Eric Beau, Cameron Wahl, Jared Kingery, Kirt Pierson and many others all are doing an exciting and fun job of putting on a good racing show.

Onward we go, into the month of July. Stay racing!



## RACING CONNECTION

## Talkin' Racin' with Jason



Jason D. Searcy

Bigger is not always better when it comes to ARCA. After skipping a year because of the pandemic the ARCA Menards series will be returning to Elko Speedway on Saturday July 10th. This series has been criticized because of smaller car counts recently which has led to some stretched out less-exciting racing on the bigger NASCAR cup-style tracks, but that has never happened at Elko Speedway, at 3/8th mile the smallest track on the circuit and maybe the best type of track for today's ARCA.

Elko fans were treated to a great cautionless race with the Bandit Big Rig series on June 5th of this year, they put on an awesome show with only 16 race trucks. Mike Morgan from Wartrace (TN) started in the second row and took the lead on lap 17 of 30 after watching trucks go three wide coming out of turn two a few laps earlier.

The ARCA race at ELKO on July 10th will probably have a similar car count as the Big Rigs and they will be racing 250 laps, not 30 and if past results are a predictor of future results, you can expect to see a very exciting race. There have been 6 ARCA races at ELKO and all of them have been spectacular, so much so that MavTV rebroadcasts these past races over and over again (my DVR is full of them).

The most star-studded race was the first one in 2012, current NASCAR Cup stars Chris Buescher, Erik Jones and Alex Bowman all raced in it and Brennan Poole won it. The 2013 event had Frank Kimmel winning his 78th ARCA series race, later that year he surpassed Iggy Katona with 80 career ARCA wins. Kimmel was so pleased with ELKO he was quoted as saying "this is the way it should be, this is such a cool place to race, a lot of beating and banging but not all the crashes and wrecks." Kenny Schrader won the pole that day and finished 5th. Schrader's quote about ELKO was not as eloquent, but also

#### Bigger is not always better

accurate "it's got four turns, so it works for me," local star Jonathan Eilen was third, 78-year-old James Hilton finished 19th of the 22 cars entered.

In 2014 it was Grant Enfinger winning and a 15 yr old Justin Haley who won the pole, a few years later Haley won the Coke Zero 400 at Daytona in the Cup series, he now drives #11 in the Xfinity series. The series then went away from Elko Speedway until returning three years later in 2017, that was the most thrilling finish of them all as Austin Theriault edged Christian Eckes by 0.029 seconds at the line.

In 2018 Gus Dean won because his pit strategy paid off. He did not change tires when most of the other cars did early in the race, as a result, he eventually went two laps down but with the help of a few cautions late in the race, got back on the lead lap, changed tires during a late race pit stop, raced through the field and won for local car owner Kevin Cywinski. Two current Xfinity drivers (Riley Herbst, Natalie Decker) and 4 current Truck series drivers (Zane Smith, Christian Eckes, Sheldon Creed and Chandler Smith) finished that race.

Chandler Smith won the 2019 ARCA race at Elko Speedway, the Grandson of NASCAR owner Joe Gibbs, Ty Gibbs finished second, current Truck series driver Sam Mayer was third and ARCA rookie of the year Hailie Deegan was 8th.

In the past the car count has ranged between a high of 30 cars in 2012 to a low of 18 cars in 2018. The number of cars finishing on the lead lap at ELKO has been impressive. Grant Enfinger won by nearly a half lap in 2014 and only four cars finished on the lead lap that year but all the other races have had very close finishes at the end and between 9 and 11 cars have finished on the lead lap each of those years.

The ELKO races have usually had a caution somewhat early in the first 50 laps or so, then a long green flag run of 100 or more laps, then another couple cautions near the end setting up a dramatic

finish for the fans including a few big crashes on the last lap, just ask Zane Smith, Shane Lee or Cole Anderson.

This year the Menards 250 race at ELKO is race 3 of 10 in the Sioux Chief Showdown, a series-within-the-series that allows drivers younger than 18 years of age to compete for a Championship. 18 yr old Ty Gibbs has won 5 races this year and the first two races of this Showdown series, he has a 6 point lead in the standings over Nick Sanchez who turns 19 on race day and 20 yr old Thad Moffitt who is the grandson of Richard Petty. Corey Heim has already won at both Daytona and Talladega this year and will have just turned 19 the week of the race, he is just 7 points back of Gibbs.

Spectator gates open at ELKO Saturday July 10th at 2pm, local division qualifying at 4:30pm, ARCA qualifying at 5:30pm, NASCAR Late Models, Thunder Cars and Power Stocks will each race one feature event at 6pm with an ARCA on-track autograph session to follow. The 250-lap race will begin promptly at 9pm, the race times the previous years have ranged between 60 minutes in 2012 when this was a 200 lap event and the longest of 90 minutes in 2019. I expect that we will see again this year that the smallest of the tracks will provide the biggest punch of excitement.

THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION



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## RAGING CONNECTION

### Dangerous Dan



#### **Dan Margetta**

If this month's column seems kind of all over the place, it's because it resembles my race chasing activities over the past few weeks where a month with really no definitive plans quickly turned into a hefty schedule featuring a little bit of everything motorsports wise.

The stretch really started off Memorial Day Weekend where a much-anticipated trip to the Outagamie Speedway to video the Dirt Kings dirt late model tour for a live internet broadcast for WatchFYE.tv was dashed by Mother Nature and rain. Another spur of the moment video opportunity with the same group and series a few weeks later would've been my inaugural trip to Eagle Valley Speedway in Jim Falls, Wisconsin but that ended up being cancelled at the last minute as well. I'll get another crack at the dirt late model action with the Russ Scheffler Tribute Night at the Plymouth Dirt Track at the end of June.

Slinger Speedway's Memorial Day Weekend show provided fireworks both on and off the track as Steve Apel and Luke Fenhaus continued their budding rivalry before Dennis Prunty closed at the finish to edge Fenhaus for the victory. From there it was back to the dirt tracks with a trip to Wilmot Raceway for the All Star Circuit of Champions Sprint Car Series first stop on their Wisconsin portion of their schedule.



#### Racing all over Wisconsin

"Sunshine" Tyler Courtney had them all covered on this night but Wisconsin's Bill Balog put on quite a show driving from dead last to sixth. Balog was originally supposed to start near the front but had problems during the pace laps and was forced to head to the work area for repairs which relegated him to shotgun on the field for the start. Balog got his revenge the next night at the Plymouth Dirt Track by picking up his first All Stars victory but I didn't get to see it as I was back on the pavement at Dells Raceway Park for the super late models and the Dairyland 100 Round 2 of the Alive for Five Series (I really need to figure out how to be at two places at the same time). Back at the IceBreaker 100 which opened the Alive for Five Series in April, Ty Majeski had an uncharacteristically off performance and wasn't a factor all day. That changed in a hurry as Majeski and crew chief Toby Nuttleman brought the same car back and this time drove to a dominating victory. I'll be back to Dells Raceway Park the night after the Scheffler tribute race in Plymouth for the Dick Trickle 99 and the third installment of the Alive for Five Series. The opening weekend of June concluded with another stop at the Slinger Speedway where the late models were the main attraction and Jack Stern edged

The only stop on my schedule for the middle weekend in June was back at the Slinger Speedway as the super late models returned and once again they put on a memorable show. Extra money added to the purse really ratcheted up the competition and hard racing was the theme throughout the 77-lap event as Rich Bickle, Alex Prunty, and Steve Apel all found themselves involved in on track skirmishes. Once the dust settled, two relative newcomers to the Slinger super late model ranks, Ryan DeStefano and R.J. Braun, put on a classic battle for the

Ryan Craine for the win in the 50-lap

main event.

win with DeStefano
picking up his second
career feature win and denying
Braun his first feature victory by just
.019 seconds in a photo finish.
Speaking of newcomers, North
Carolina's Carson Kvapil and
Idaho's Zach Telford made their
Slinger debuts as well. The stage is
set for a competitive Supply Zone
Slinger Nationals that will feature
NASCAR star Erik Jones among
others in a few weeks.

The following weekend it was back to the dirt tracks as I took in the Clash at the Creek IMCA modified



special at the 141 Speedway with my radio partners Todd Behling and Brian Schmitt. We had the honor of running into Kenny Wallace before the races and just a simple hello turned into a 45-minute comedy show. Kenny invited us in the trailer and said since we always get to interview him, he was going to interview us and I wish I could remember everything we talked about. All I know we spend more time laughing and carrying on than anything else and Kenny Wallace is a



treasure to the racing community. We were also there to catch up with Arizona friend Chuck Kuehl and his family. Chuck's son Austin and daughter Taylor both race and Taylor was at 141 to compete in the Sport Mod division. Taylor was coming off a feature win at Marshalltown, Iowa a few days earlier and was looking for a good run at 141. She didn't have much luck however as a broken transmission sidelined her on the first night and when we got there she and Chuck were under the car replacing the transmission with one they got locally. It was hot and rain was in

Dangerous Dan continued on page 16

## The Masters & The Mile





Two big events took place in the state of Wisconsin over the Father's Day weekend. The 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Masters took place at Cedar Lake Speedway and the ARCA Midwest Tour returned to the historic Milwaukee Mile. Jimmy Mars saved the best for last and picked up the win and the \$10K payday on the final night. Other winners for The Masters weekend included:

Thursday

Late Models - Jake Redetzke USRA Modifieds - Jake Timm USRA Late Models - Matt LaDuke

Friday

Late Models - Jake Redetzke



Jimmy Mars (left) and Ty Majeski (right) were the big winners in Wisconsin on Father's Day weekend

USMTS Modifieds - AJ Diemel USRA Late Models - Lance Hofer

Saturday

Late Models - Jimmy Mars USMTS Modifieds - Jake O'Neil USRA Late Models - Gavin Tarras

Ty Majeski picked up the win at The Milwaukee Mile in the rainshortened event. Majeski set fast time and started 17th with the invert. An early pit stop allowed Majeski to work his way back to the front before the rain set in. Other winners at Milwaukee included James Swan in the Midwest Truck Series, and Mother Nature in the remaining divisions on hand.

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### **Goede on the Go**



Jacob Goede has thrown his hat in the ring for the 2021 NASCAR Home Track Championship. Starting out the season in February with several top-5's at New Smyrna Speedway during the World Series of Asphalt Stock Car Racing, Jacob has gone on to pick up wins at Elko Speedway, Lacrosse Fairgrounds Speedway and Madison International Speedway. As we go to press in early July, Goede is second in national points.



Thur. 7/8 - Thursday Night Street Drags Fri. 7/9 - Kid's Night (Ages 11 & Under FREE) Fri. 7/16 - Buck Night (all Concessions \$1, Beer \$2)

Fri. 7/23 – NASCAR Weekly Racing Series

Fri. 7/30 – Racers' Reunion '48' featuring Big 8









Sat. 7/10 – Grundy County Speedway, Illinois Sat. 7/24 – State Park Speedway, Wisconsin Tue. 8/3 – Wisconsin Int'l Raceway, Wisconsin Sat. 8/21 – Hawkeye Downs Speedway, Iowa Sat. 9/4 – Dells Raceway Park, Wisconsin











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## August 14

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## August 21 CLS DASH RACE #14

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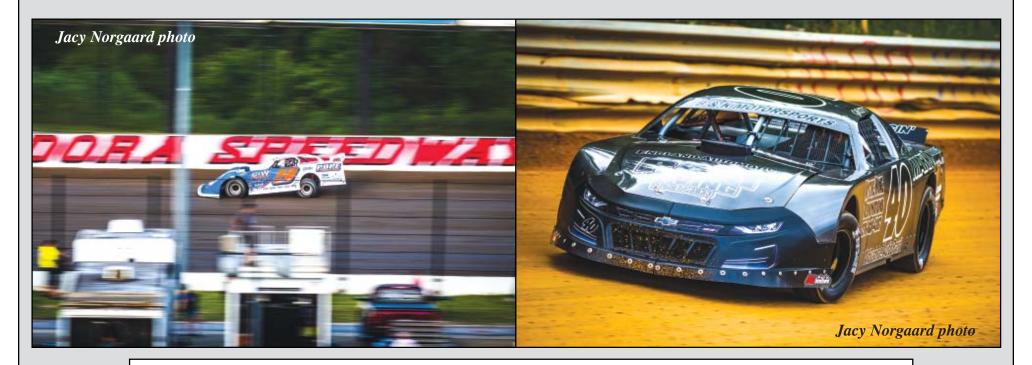
\$20 FOR ADULTS • \$10 FOR KIDS RACING AT 6PM

## Father's Day at the Mile



Here are just two of the Father/Son combinations on hand during the Father's Day ARCA Midwest Tour race at the Milwaukee Mile. Derek and Mark Kraus (right photo) along with Carson and Travis Kvapil (left photo). Carson Kvapil ended up with the best finish of the group, finishing fifth. Mark's return to racing netted a top-10 over Derek's 21st place finish due to a flat tire.

## Life on the road



Jacy Norgaard is the official photographer for the World of Outlaws Late Model Series but he still finds time to visit a few shows that are not part of the Outlaws schedule. For more photos from Jacy's life on the road, check out his column New Dirt on page 17 of this issue.

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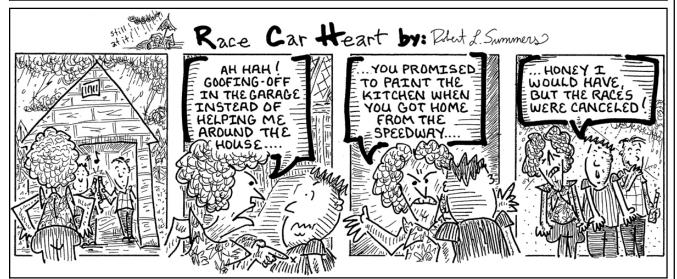
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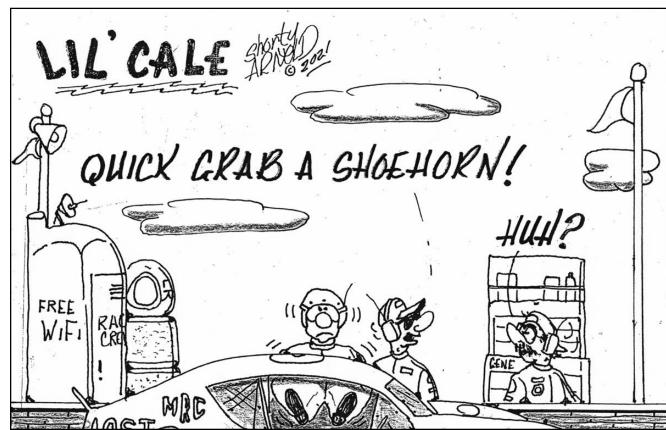
## RACING CONNECTION



The 2021 edition of the FANS Fund is up and running. The objective is to attract new and upcoming drivers to attend the USA Nationals at Cedar Lake Speedway. Voting is now open. Please check out the website to make your donation and cast your vote for the 2021 drivers.

#### www.fan/fund.com





#### Dangerous Dan continued from page 10

the area but the two of them, covered in grime, thrashed pretty hard to get the transmission in and find a drive shaft that fit to make the grid. Two laps into the qualifying race, the lead cars spun and Taylor got shoved into the wreck which meant bent wheels and more dented body panels. Rather than put the car on the truck and call it a day, she was determined to race and immediately went to work pounding out the body panels while neighboring crews helped cut pieces away with a sawzall and replace the bent wheels. While they made the start of the B Main, more issues in the race resulted in a non-transfer to the main event but the effort of all exemplified the grit and determination of true racers. They could have easily just given up but they came to race and worked their tails off to meet their goals. It was refreshing to see a young race team with that kind of ethic and attitude and I made sure I bought a hoodie as a small consolation for their tough night. Local racer Johnny Whittman, or the "Hit Man" as they call him, bested the visiting stars and walked away with the \$10,000 top prize in the IMCA modified Clash at the Creek main event.

I spent the rest of the weekend road course racing as the NTT Indycar Series made its annual stop at Road America. Road America is a beautiful course and it's best explored with a golf cart which we did and my GPS app on my phone looked like one of those old Family Circus cartoons as it showed us crisscrossing all over the four-mile course. Brian Schmitt and I did our radio show live from the track on Sunday morning and earlier in the week, Brian met George Petropoulos from the REV Group who was sponsoring the race. We were set to have George on the show when he mentioned he might have a surprise for us instead. That surprise turned out to be having four time and defending Indianapolis 500 winner Helio Castroneves take George's place in the interview. The radio segment with Castroneves was one of the most enjoyable I have done and what you see on TV is what you get with Helio. He is one of the most personable drivers I have ever met and most important of all, he's real and genuine.

Alex Palou won the Road America Indycar event but once again I couldn't be two places at once and didn't see it as I left early to head to the Milwaukee Mile where the ARCA Midwest Tour staged the Father's Day 100. I met my parents at the Mile after coming directly from Road America and got to spend Father's Day with my Dad at the track he took me to so many times as a kid. It was a fun day despite the race being called 19 laps early due to rain and it was cool to see Ty Majeski finally get his Mile win which meant he has now won at every paved Wisconsin race track. The rain doused my plans to do "the triple", Road America, Milwaukee Mile, and Slinger all in one day as Slinger's program was rained out.

The hectic couple of weeks was just a warm up to July which will be Wisconsin's busiest racing month with many prestigious events set for the Badger State. As always, I wouldn't miss them for the world and I'm sure I'll see all you racers there as well.

## RACING CONNECTION

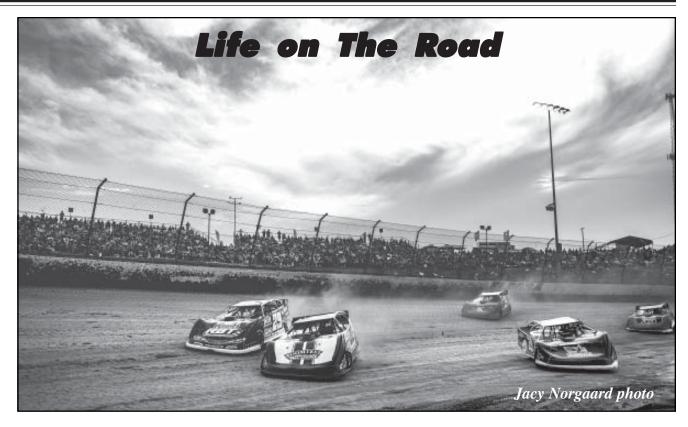
### **New Dirt**



#### **Jacy Norgaard**

Our plane touched down in Charlotte and my mind started racing. Mikayla and I were spending Memorial Day visiting friends and family in the area while taking in some racing. But rather than think about that, I thought about the busy month that lay ahead. We were in Charlotte for 7 days and would return home on a Tuesday. I would then leave Wednesday for 10 days on the road in Indiana with the World of Outlaws and DIRTcar, head home for 3 days and then spend another 10 on the road with the Outlaws. It would be the busiest stretch of racing to date for me. Instead of dwelling on a busy month, I thought to myself that I was lucky to be able to travel around the country seeing races and being paid to do it. I put the thought out of my mind and we focused on enjoying our vacation.

Mikayla's cousin Brandon Lambert is a railroad man by day, turned dirt track racer on the weekends. His race shop is quite unique being that he shares the converted barn with chickens, goats, cats, and a horse. We were staying with Brandon and family for the



weekend and attending a few races of his. We visited Ararat Thunder Raceway in Virginia on Friday night. I wrote about this mountain bull ring last fall when I made my first visit. If you are ever in the Mount Airy area, I highly recommend catching a race there. Brandon got a few hot laps in before rain came and washed away the rest of the night. Mikayla and I debated on what to do Saturday. We considered driving over to Hickory Motor Speedway and attending an asphalt race. Mikayla grew up on dirt and I on asphalt. I thought it would be nostalgic to take in a weekend pavement race. Mother nature on the other hand did not. We looked at the radar and opted for a baseball game in town. Hickory cancelled shortly after hot laps.

Sunday, we drove a few hours north to Rural Retreat, Virginia and the Wythe Raceway. A large ½ mile dirt oval awaited us with the longest and steepest hill into the track that I had ever seen. Brandon has been racing on the Mid East Modified Tour in the Carolina Region and running well in points, Sunday

happened to be a tour race. The largeness of the track and the uniqueness of the corners made for some good racing with a consistent track surface. I love when you can discover hidden gems in racing. Wythe Raceway is one of those places. My favorite part of the entire trip to Wythe was their Super Street class. The cars looked just like Asphalt Late Models I grew up watching at Raceway Park! A fellow photographer clued me in a couple days later that the cars were old Late Models from the Motor Mile asphalt track. They removed the front sway bar and added dirt tires. The sight of them brought back youthful nostalgia of watching Steve Murgic and Brad Miller race around the action attraction.

We landed in Minnesota on Tuesday, and I started preparing for 10 days in Indiana and Ohio. I did

New Dirt continued on page 18



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#### New Dirt continued from page 17

some laundry, packed my bags, and headed for Indianapolis. I normally try and fly to distance races, but car rentals this summer are outrageously priced for extended periods of time. I also don't mind the road and the radio. The World of Outlaws Late Model Series rolled into Circle City Raceway in Indianapolis for the second ever event at the track. The facility has all the potential in the world. Less than ideal weather and a newer surface made for tough track conditions. Saturday, we headed north to Plymouth Speedway in northern Indiana for our final night of the year in the Hoosier state. After the weekend wrapped, we all headed to Indianapolis to stay for part of the week. We enjoyed the downtown scene and did some Go Karting. Our Late Model Public Relations Coordinator left me in the dust on the road course. I dominated the slick track though. We switched out of our red Outlaw shirts and into our blue DIRTcar uniforms and headed for "The Greatest Dirt Track in the World." Eldora Speedway was set to host the DIRTcar sanctioned Dirt Late Model Dreams. The 27th running paying \$127,000 to the victor and the 26<sup>th</sup> running paying \$126,000. Many of us were confused as to why they decided to run the 27th before the 26th. It was explained that do to COVID delaying the 50th running of the World 100, they wanted to make it up in 2021 and will do so on Friday and Saturday this year to ensure a large crowd. Eldora Speedway is one dirt track that I was looking forward to visiting but also regretting. I had heard from many that it is one of the worst tracks to shoot at due to the fencing all the way around. The

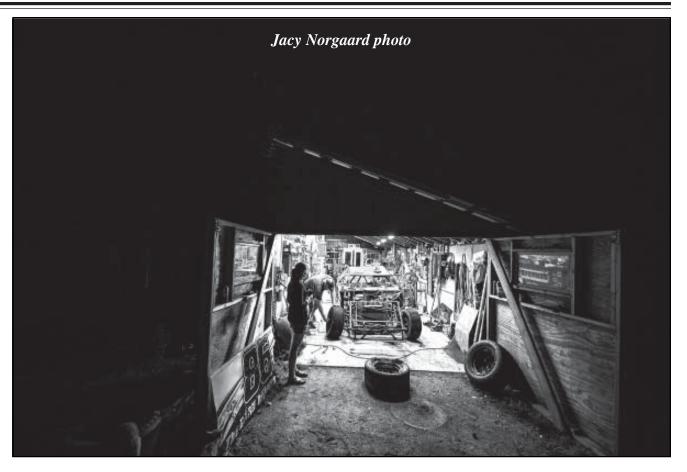


photo holes are less than ideal, and the photo towers can be challenging. I made it work and got some awesome images from The House that Earl built. In a loaded field complete with the greatest driver of our time, Kyle Larson, a Georgian stood tall. Brandon Overton clean swept the weekend and took home \$273,000 in the process. A historic and perhaps never

repeatable feat in dirt track racing.

I left Eldora on Saturday night and headed home. I drove a few hours back before pulling into a rest area to take a couple hour long nap. I made it back Sunday night and once again prepared myself for another swing. I left Wednesday and made the trip east to Stateline Speedway in Busti, NY with the World of Outlaws. The grandstands were standing room only, a much-welcomed sight after the year of COVID and restricted crowds everywhere. A local driver ended up winning the show and besting the Outlaws. Mother nature took the next two nights of competition for us, and I started questioning whether I should fly back home for a few days. It was disappointing to come all the way East for just one night of racing. No one wants to have to cancel a race. Not the tracks, not the series, and certainly not the teams. But sometimes you just can't do anything if the weather doesn't cooperate. I ended up staying in Pittsburgh and checking out the sights with one of our officials who is from the area.

As I write this column from the Lernerville Speedway Media Center, I can't help but think about how life on the road can be taxing. Time away from home and loved ones can be difficult. Hotel laundry, restaurant meals, and hotel WI-FI can be challenging. I recognize that I am fortunate that I get to be able to do this, but this experience has also taught me just how hard it is for the teams and people that do this constantly. Having lived a month on the road basically, I have a newfound appreciation and understanding for the teams that are away from home longer. This life is not for everyone by any means.

Working on the road in racing can be fun, but it also comes with great difficulties and even deeper understanding. You learn who you are, you learn to adapt, and you learn to appreciate every moment of the ride.



## THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

## Racing Nuggets



#### PJ "Jacklyn" Nuttleman

I know I'm not alone when I say how happy I am that racing continues at the Milwaukee Mile. I was just a little kid the first time our family went to The Mile for a race.

I remember climbing up to the top of the grandstands with my brothers and being in awe of the view. I was just a little kid and my two big brothers began to have a loogie spitting contest off the back of the grandstands through the chainlink fencing.

It was fascinating watching the wind catching the globules, whisking them off and swirling around, as we watched with wide eyes to see if they would hit someone walking below.

I had no talent for spitting like my brothers. I gave it a go, but ended up with more of it on myself and the chainlink fence, than anything dropping to the ground.

I think back about that now and we should've had our hides tanned for such vulgarity like that. If you were the guy who got hit by my brother's spitball so many years ago, I apologize profusely. I have to admit that we laughed a little too hard back then at your expense.

This year for the ARCA Midwest Tour's Father's Day 100, there was also some serious spitting going on. Only this time it wasn't my brothers or me. It was Mother Nature.

The race ended up being marred by mist and rain. While the sky continued to periodically "spit." There were also plenty of spittin' mad people in the stands and pits due to the drama that unfolded between Luke Fenhaus and Dalton Zehr.

Fenhaus had snagged the lead from Zehr a handful of laps prior to a caution for Mother Nature spitting and misting on the racing surface. It was just enough moisture to wreak havoc and have the red flag shown for a bit.

The restart was just the beginning of what had plenty of tongues wagging. Depending upon which driver you favor, likely determines your take on the incident.

### Spit Happens

Fenhaus was the leader and he was to set the pace, however either he was lagging back or Zehr was not aware that he was several car lengths ahead of the pack and the leader, as they entered turn three.

As Zehr seemed to slow waiting for Fenhaus to catch up, Fenhaus mashed the gas and zipped past Zehr, with the rest of the field firing off behind him. He took the green flag a good 4-5 car lengths ahead of the pack.

Normally, I've seen the restart waived off when this kind of thing happens. But perhaps a sky threatening to do more than just spit weighed on race control's decision to let it go? I'm not sure.

My sources say that race control was telling Fenhaus to give up the position to Zehr because of the restart situation. I'm not a race director, so I can't judge what the right call is, given the pressing threat of rain which was closing in on the Milwaukee area.

Do you focus on trying to get the race in before the sky rips open, or do you take the time to re-rack the field for another restart because of shenanigans and/or gamesmanship being done? It's a mile-long track. Re-racking the field would take more time. Surely, it was frustrating for the powers that be, as they kept one eye on the radar, and one eye on the action on the track.

At any rate, the race stayed green, causing much confusion for many on and off the track, who likely anticipated an eminent restart to be called. However, this was not a normal situation with a big, green blob on the radar lumbering toward the track.

Eventually, it appeared that Fenhaus yielded to the tower's instructions and relinquished the lead to Zehr to avoid any further punishment. The move created a real

hornet's nest, with Zehr, Fenhaus, and Casey Johnson all vying for the top spot.

It was all asses and elbow as the trio charged out of turn two and onto the backstretch.

They were three-wide briefly, before Johnson wisely backed out from the bottom groove. Perhaps experience trumps youth in this case. Johnson's smarts to yield and let the pair fight it out provided him with an incredible view of the carnage, while keeping his own mount in contention.

Contact between Zehr and Fenhaus was swift and hard. Both ended up getting a piece of the wall and effectively ending their days.

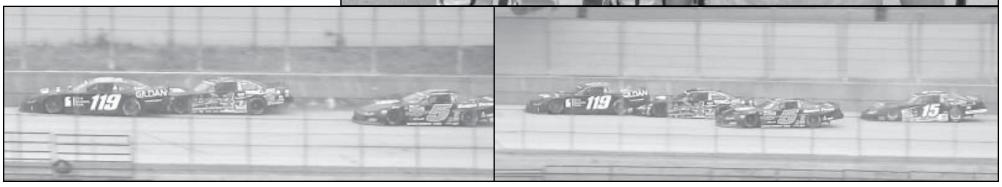
Johnson had the top spot on the following restart. He held it for a while, before Gabe Sommers slipped by him to claim it. But Sommers wouldn't be able to maintain it very long, as Ty Majeski reeled him in and took the lead without much fanfare.

Majeski would go on to win the race, scoring his first ever win at the famous Mile, and delivering the first Milwaukee win to his crew chief—yes, my husband—Toby Nuttleman.

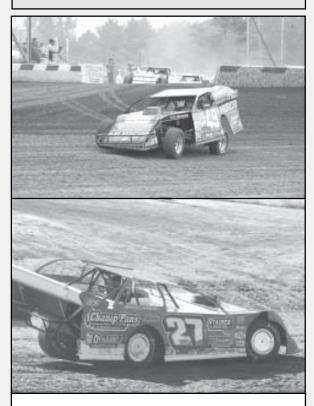
Toby's been wanting to win at the Mile for quite some time. He's been there plenty with various drivers over the past decades, but never able to close the deal until now. It was an extraordinary moment to catch him smiling after the race.

Happily, I was able to document that rare smile sighting. I also documented the entire race with my video camera, so if you're wanting to see anything from the race, it's out there on YouTube. Spit and all.





## Opening night at the Masters



The opening night of the 2021 Masters saw two local drivers pick up the wins in the USRA and Open Late Model main events. Winona's Jake Timm (top photo) captured the USRA feature while Jake Redetzke (bottom photo) won both the the Thursday and Friday Late Model shows.

## 300 hundred and counting



Donny Schatz started his Sprint Car career in the upper-Midwest at Red River Valley Speedway. Schatz moved up to the World of Outlaws in 1997 picking up the rookie of the year honors. Since moving to the World of Outlaws full-time, Schatz amassed an astounding 10 series championships. In June of 2021 Schatz picked up his 300th career WoO win at Dubuque Fairgrounds Speedway.

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## The Ups and Downs of Racing



The sport of short track racing is full of ups and downs as shown here by Brandon Jensen. Early in the 2021 season, Jensen picked up wins at ABC Raceway in Ashland, WI and Cedar Lake Speedway in New Richmond, WI. A few weeks after his wins, he was caught up in an incident not of his own doing and ended his night in the wall.

### **Dirt Late Model 2-Seater**



Darrell Nelson is shown in action giving a ride to a race fan in Butch Erickson's 2-seat Dirt Late Model. Darrell doesn't hold back and gives the fans the ride of their lives. Videos of these ride alongs can be seen on the YouTube channel for The Midwest Racing Connection at: https://www.youtube.com/theracingconnection



#### RACE SCHEDULE FOR JULY 2021

July 10th

July 11th

**American** Clash!

Saturday - 10am **Double Feature** 

Sunday - 10am **Endurance Racing** 

Sponsored by The Car Lot

July 18th

**Double Feature** 

Race Day! 10am Sponsored by Eilen & Son's Trucking Arrive and Drives after race

June 27th

Race Day! 10am **Double Feature** 

Sponsored by Vermillion State Bank Arrive and Drives after race





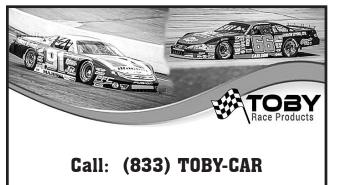
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Sun. 7/18 - Salute to Bryan Gapinski

Sun. 8/1 - 85th BMARA Reunion & Fredenberg 50

Sun. 8/15 - Dirt Kings Late Models 'King of the Park'

Sun. 8/22 - Zimbrick Chevrolet presents Corn Fest

Sun. 9/5 - USAC Midget Firemen's Nationals





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