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A Year Spent On The Road



Field Notes from Florida



December 2021

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Flat Out Friday



Talkin' Racin'



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Publisher's Note

Racing According to Plan



Dan Plan

Many years ago, I had the idea of attending 100 races in a single year. In those days, I had two tracks within 20 minutes of home and a several options less than an hour from home. These days, I'm down to one track within 20 minutes and one track under an hour from home. The days of hitting 100 races in a year are probably out of reach for me now.

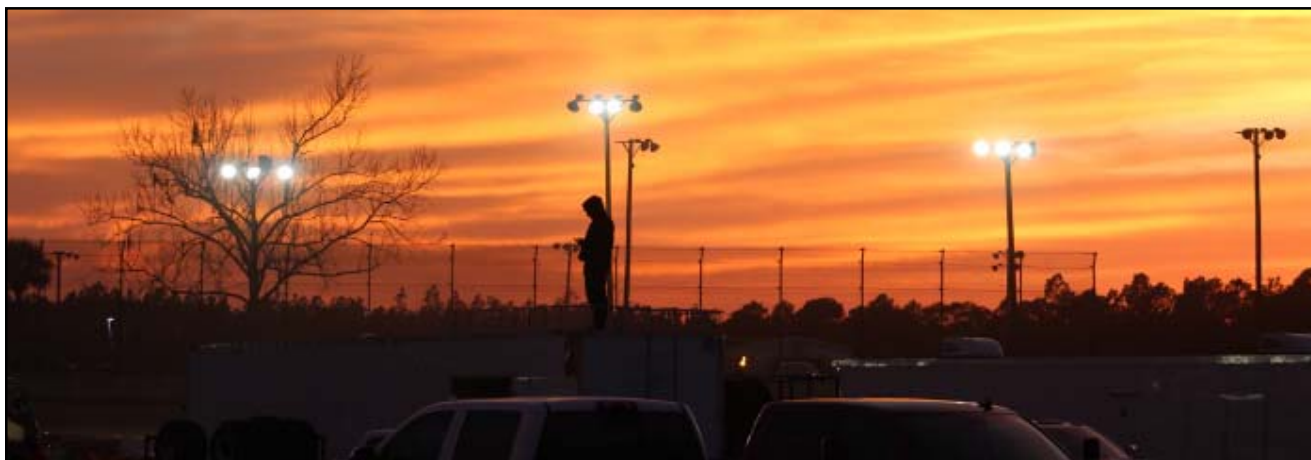
Nerd Goals

Thanks to Matt Bohl, I was able to attend the Sunshine Nationals at Volusia Speedway to start off my 2021 season back in January. After attending this event in January, I had an idea for a new nerd goal at the beginning of this year.

I've been to a race in person in just about every month of the year but can't recall seeing one in the month of January. I started thinking maybe I could see at least one show in all 12 months in a single season. I had January checked off, and February was easy, as I've been going to Speedweeks for several years now. In March, I decided to take my wife on a vacation to Vegas. Well, that's the story I told her. My main goal for the Vegas trip was going to the World of Outlaws at the Las Vegas Motor Speedway dirt track. Unfortunately, the WoO show was cancelled due to COVID restrictions after booking our flight. Luckily, I had a second option, which was the NASCAR Truck race at the big track. Crisis averted.

Living in Minnesota, it's pretty easy to attend racing in person from April to October. Even if the weather is less than favorable, you can usually find something within a 4-hour drive. Luckily, the only 4-

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hour drives I had between April and October were by choice and not by necessity to reach my nerd goal.

November posed a bit of a challenge at the beginning of the year. There are several big events I was looking at for November. NASCAR in Phoenix, The Duel in the Desert in Vegas or the Governor's Cup at New Smyrna. As November came closer, I found there were 2 shows the first weekend of November within a 5-hour drive from home. There was an IMCA dirt show at CJ Speedway in Columbus Junction, Iowa and the 1st annual bracket race at Jefferson Speedway. I opted for the Jefferson show, as it was a little shorter drive and had more time on the Interstate highway and less time on the back roads.

December also had a few options available. I've been to the Snowball Derby in Pensacola, FL 2 times in the past several years. Unfortunately, the 2 times I went, the Sunday main event was postponed due to rain and I had to return home. This year, I opted for the Gateway Nationals at America's Center in St. Louis. I figured I had much better odds of missing a rainout at a show being held indoors. I've watched each of the previous Gateway Nationals via the DirtOnDirt and now Flo Racing Streams. While the streams have been fantastic to watch in past years, seeing it in person is a much better experience.

The Gateway Dirt Nationals in St. Louis put a wrap on my 2021 racing season. I ended up spending 58 nights at the race track this year. The breakdown was: Cedar Lake Speedway 19, Elko Speedway 10, Volusia Speedway 6, LaCrosse Fairgrounds Speedway 5, New Smyrna Speedway 5, Red Cedar Speedway 3, Dells Raceway Park 2, and 1 night each at America's Center in St. Louis, Arlington Speedway, Dodge County Speedway, Jefferson Speedway, Las Vegas Motor Speedway, Madison International Speedway, Proctor Speedway and Tomah Sparta Speedway.



The Gateway Dirt Nationals at America's Center in St. Louis, Missouri has become a must see short track event in just a few short years

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Going in Circles



Charlie Spry

At the end of October I was able to get a couple more racing events in for the 2021 season before the white stuff falls. On the eve of Halloween we attended the annual ISS enduro at State Park Speedway near Wausau.

Matt Rowe runs his enduro series a bit different than most. In these events, if a car or cars crashes or otherwise becomes disabled, after a couple of laps of continued racing, the red flag is thrown. At this point, drivers of cars who cannot get going are able to get out of their cars but the cars must be left where they are as added obstacles. This makes things very interesting for both the fans and the drivers left racing.

Present today was Rockford Speedway regular Bobby Frisch. Bobby was looking to add some new tracks to the list he has competed at, saying, "This is my twenty-fifth-year racing, and this is the twenty-fourth different track that I have raced at in that time. I need to try to find something else yet this year to

make twenty-five." Having never raced on this track, he raced well, but the car failed him about half-way through.

George Seliger took the win by a large margin. A four-time track champion in the Mini-Mod division, he obviously knows his way around this track.

It was nice to chat with Scott "Chico" Riedner and his Son, Brandon, both of whom raced today. Brandon had some bad luck about halfway through and did not finish, but Chico kept going and going and finished sixth at the end of the day. Both have raced in many different divisions and types of cars on both pavement and dirt.

Then, on November 6th we took off to the CJ Raceway in Columbus Junction Iowa, for their annual Turkey Dash event, with five classes racing on the 4/10-mile dirt oval.

I had never been to this track before, so it was nice to see a new track. It is at the Louisa County Fairgrounds, and is similar to many fairgrounds tracks in Iowa, with the wooden covered grandstand. I love these venues, as they are just loaded with history. The only thing I can see that needs to be improved are the restroom facilities, and that may be coming, as there was at least one new building on the grounds.

The racing was good, with 140 cars present. This far exceeded my expectations, and probably the expectations of the people running the track at well. Admission prices were very reasonable, and the crowd was good on a warm day for November.

As for the winners, John Watson won the hobby stock feature, Kurt Kile won the A mod feature, Logan Anderson won the sportmod main event, while Chuck Fullencamp won the four cylinder main, and Johnny Spaw was the winner in the stock car class. I would definitely go to this event again. It was a kind of

long show, but I know that the powers to be are aware and planning changes already. Like I noted, I don't think many people expected that kind of car count this late in the season.

That was my final racing event for 2021. In looking back, I made it to 50 racing events this year at 9 different tracks, broken down as such: 18 at Rockford Speedway, 8 at Lafayette County Speedway, 8 at the Dubuque Fairgrounds Speedway, 6 at Madison International Speedway, 3 at the Marshfield Motor Speedway, 3 at State Park Speedway (Wausau, Wi.), 2 at Dells raceway Park, and 1 each at Jackson County Speedway at Maquoketa, Iowa, and 1 at CJ Speedway. 7 events were lost to rain.

I'd like to thank all of the people at the tracks that I covered in the MRC this year, including Rockford Speedway, Madison International Speedway, Lafayette County Speedway, Dells Raceway Park, and State Park Speedway. Thank you so much for the hospitality from the track promoters, pit gate folks, and of course, the drivers! I would also like to thank Superfan Jason Morgan, who provided me with a ton of photos to use with my columns. Jason goes to many of the same tracks that I do, and takes photos as a hobby, and is very good at it.

Regretfully, I have to leave on a sad note, as we lost John Magnuson Jr. recently, as he passed away in late November. John was the "voice" of the Rockford Speedway and also worked the Big Eight series. He operated a real neat website called "Racin' At Rockford", and had a ton of enthusiasm for this sport that we all love. His pure joy for the sport came through in the announcing at the track that he did. He always had a big smile on his face at the track.



ISS Creepy Classic Enduro action at State Park Speedway in Wausau, Wisconsin



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Talkin' Racin' with Jason



Jason D. Searcy

The 2021 Race season at Elko Speedway felt more like normal after a Covid-19 shortened season in 2020 in which ELKO was only allowed to race weekends in August and September due to state imposed restrictions. An incredible crowd showed up for the season opener Eve of Destruction on May 29th, it was standing room only and cars were backed up all the way back to I-35 entering the track. One of the most memorable moments of my 30-year announcing career happened on that opening night when we had all the drivers lined up on the track for opening ceremonies and the crowd murmur erupted into cheers of relief. It reminded me of the joyous feeling on the last day of school before a summer vacation. After a year of being locked down race fans were so ready to finally be able to enjoy themselves again at the track.

2021 also saw the return of the ARCA Menards series to ELKO and we had a thrilling finish which



The line of cars waiting to get into Elko Speedway opening night in 2021 stretched over 2 miles.

saw Ty Gibbs get moved out of the lead on the last restart by eventual winner Corey Heim. On a personal note, it was fun to interview Ty Gibbs after winning qualifying, he admitted that he was a big Timberwolves fan and was happy to say that Karl Anthony Towns is his favorite player.

The NASCAR Late Model division had 40 drivers participate this year at ELKO, up 6 from 2020 and up 11 from 2019. Race fans saw 24 feature events and 10 different drivers win a race; Jacob Goede, Billy Mohn, Adam Bendzick and Chad Walen all had 4 wins each, Chris Marek had 3, five different drivers scored one win each in the Late Model division including Michael Hagggar, Michael Beamish, Owin Giles, Jon Lemke and Donny Reuvers. Jacob Goede won the Championship for the 8th consecutive year and was incredibly consistent, he never once finished out of the Top 10.

The NASCAR Thunder Car division had 24 drivers at ELKO up 5 from 2020 and down 2 from 2019. The Thunder cars raced 21 features this year and saw 7 different winners. Conrad Jorgenson had 10 wins but experienced bad luck late in the season, Dillon Sellner had 5 wins and won his first Championship at Elko Speedway. Tony Holm had two wins and four drivers each had one win; Matt Wiebusch, Norm Grabinger, Devin Schmidt and Harm Alken.

The INEX Sanctioned Great North Legends had 39 drivers in 2021, up 8 from last year and up 11 from 2019. They raced 21 times and eight different drivers won a race at ELKO led by Jon Lemke with 6, Austin Jahr had 5 wins, first-time Champion Robby Carter had 4, Dirk Henry two and four drivers had one win each including Ryan Rose, Tristan Swanson, Colin Stocker and Keith Paulsrud.

The NASCAR Power Stock division at ELKO had 24 drivers in 2021, up 2 from both last year and 2019. They raced 19 times and had eight different winners, four time Champion Nick Oxborough had 6 wins,

Julie Jorgenson and Joe Prusak each had 3 wins, Matt Frye and Brandon Plekkenpol had two each and Paul Hamilton, Tom Doten and Jason Michaud all had one win during the 2021 season at Elko Speedway.

The INEX Sanctioned Bando's had 14 young

Robbie Carter picked up his first Great North Legends Championship



drivers at ELKO in 2021 down 2 from both last year and 2019. They raced 10 features and had four different winners; Ayrton Brockhouse had 7 wins, Clayton Dorner, Danny Mann and Cohen Henze each had one win at Elko Speedway this year.

Some ELKO regulars did very well on the National scene including Jacob Goede who was the NASCAR Advance Auto weekly series Midwest Champion and finished second in the National points. Billy Mohn was 6th in the Nation, Chad Walen 9th, Adam Bendzick 14th and Michael Hagggar 20th. Nick Oxborough was 13th in the National division III standings.

In the INEX Legends National standings Pro Asphalt division Austin Jahr was fourth, William Sawalich 15th and Robby Carter 19th. Tristan Swanson was 9th in Asphalt Semi-pro, Ryan Braseth won Semi-pro Dirt and Colin Stocker finished fourth in the Asphalt young lions division.

2021 was a very fun season of racing and great to see fans returning to the track in big numbers again. I hope to see many of you at the Driver organized Elko Speedway racers celebration on Saturday evening January 8th 2022 at the Holiday Inn



Dillon Sellner picked up his first Thunder Car Championship

Chatty Madi



Madeline Schultz

This was truly a different event for me. As someone whose background is dirt oval with 410 outlaw sprint cars to go and do an event on Dr. Pepper asphalt racing with motorcycles... kind of crazy at first. Flat Out Friday is an indoor flat-track motorcycle race on a Dr. Pepper syrup coated concrete track. Riders from the ages of 6 to 79 years old come from across the country and the world to compete at the largest and most distinguished indoor flat track race in the U.S.A.

Flat Out Friday Returns!



Demetris Hightower/ OptixSkillz Photography

The action started on Wednesday, December 1st at Elwood's Liquor & Tap in Milwaukee where the boonie bikes would make their first appearance of the weekend. Boonie bikes are tiny, have pull-starters, the left peg must be foldable, have 12" tires, and the rider must be 18 years old. This was my first time being able to meet some of the riders and to see what this racing was all about. When I got to Elwoods, right away I saw the track set up. My head turned a little to see that it was a very compact track. I turned to my boyfriend who accompanied me on my endeavors that

weekend and commented on the size of the track. We both didn't know what to expect and when we said this, we got eager to learn more about the kind of racing that was about to commence. The bikes were already lined up in the chute in the bar for the next race, so we moved to a spot where we could see all the action in turn three. The bikes took the green flag and would run for six laps. They were easily laying laps under 6 seconds, and the passing was phenomenal. Truly an action-packed heat race. When the checkered would drop, they would finish the lap and proceed back into the chute in the bar to finish out of sight to my boyfriend and I. After the first checkered my eyes lit up and my jaw was hanging on the floor. This was my first sighting of the racing that was about to unfold that weekend, and I couldn't wait to see more.

I had done extensive research about what flat track racing was all about. I looked at Flat Out Friday's website, Youtube, and even did a deep-dive into rider's social media to find out what it was all about, but the thrill of the racing only came for me from watching and cheering for the in-person racing. The action continued for the second night of racing for the boonie bikes on Thursday, December 2nd where I took my first trip to the Harley Davidson Museum. Once again, the theme of the night was boonie bike racing. The stakes were higher going into the final night of pre-party races before the real showdown at Fiserv Forum the next day. I got pulled away for a production meeting, but when I came back, the action was already cranked up to 11. I only got the chance to see the main event that night. The main event had numerous passes and the crowd roared for the riders



Demetris Hightower/ OptixSkillz Photography

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Chatty Madi continued from page 8

to pass and fight for the win. The night ended with Preston and I eating fantastic hamburgers and fries at Motor Bar and Restaurant at the Harley Davidson Museum and heading back to the hotel.

There were 11 classes and over 100 competitors on Friday, December 3rd at Fiserv Forum in Milwaukee, WI. I went to Fiserv Forum at 9:30 am that morning to see the rider check-in. I wanted an early view of what the day would look like. The check-in just started and the pits already seemed packed. I got my pass and took the time to walk around the facility and take in everything that was going on. The clean but sticky race surface, the anticipation of the riders, the excitement from the kids about to race their 50cc bikes in front of the enormous crowd, and so much more caught my eye. I got the chance to meet some of the kiddos from the 50cc, and Zaria Martens, who was racing with the open women's division at 18 years old. Throughout my time at the event, I met and talked with so many amazing people. If I had to name them all, this article would be pages long. The photographers, track workers, producers, safety team, parents, the riders themselves are all passionate about their racing and what they were doing there. They all welcomed me with open arms and introduced me to their unique world of flat track racing. Rider's meeting was at 11:45 which was similar to a dirt track driver's meeting. After this, I got the chance to watch the different classes of bikes rip around on the larger Fiserv Forum track. The track was larger than the two previous nights of racing I had seen. The track was also wider, which provided a lot more wiggle room for passing. Heat racing was broadcasted only, and no



Demetris Hightower/ OptixSkillz Photography

Demetris Hightower/ OptixSkillz Photography


one could watch in the seats yet. The night continued with thrills and spills, until the doors opened to the public. We cleared the worked-in track and waited for the seats to fill up with eager fans who had waited over a year and a half for flat track racing to return. When we returned to on-track action, we started with semi-features and proceeded to the feature events of the night. Most of the 8 lap features ended with a final lap pass and the crowd going wild. One of the coolest classes that raced was the Goofball Class. The only rule of the Goofball class is that you have to wear a costume. I am not joking when I tell you Santa made an appearance, along with a port-a-potty, Hulk Hogan on a jet-ski, beer man, an eyeball, and others took to the track for the final race of the night. I even got the ride of my life riding on the jet-ski to end the night.

That was definitely the highlight of my trip.

I cannot thank Jeremy Prach and the whole Flat Out Friday team for bringing me onboard for this show. This truly was an amazing experience, and I cannot emphasize that enough. I also want to thank all the riders that made me feel like I belonged there and taught me a lot of the information that I used that day, my parents who support me, Ray Underwood the announcer for the IRA Sprints for coming out and supporting me, Preston Ruh for accompanying me the entire weekend, and my best friends for coming out and being my number one fans.

Want to see this action for yourself? Flat Out Friday will return to the Dr. Pepper coated track at Fiserv Forum in Milwaukee, WI March 4th 2022.

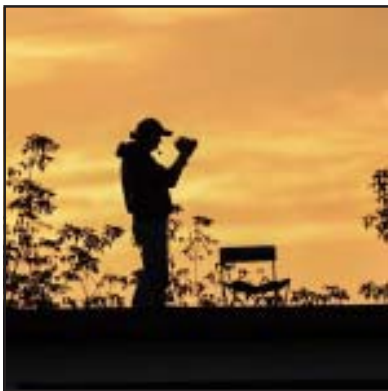


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Dangerous Dan



Dan Margetta

Traditionally December is known in the racing world for two marquis events, the Gateway Dirt Nationals in St. Louis for the dirt track crowd and the Snowball Derby in Pensacola for the asphalt gang. While I was unable to attend these races in person, I did intently follow along through the various online streaming platforms and I'll admit both events were quite entertaining.

The Gateway Dirt Nationals had the buzz on Thursday night as during the preliminary event, both on and off-track action fueled a pro wrestling/Jerry Springer vibe and let's be honest, you can't walk away from that kind of drama. From Ricky Thornton Jr's fiery interview to Tyler Carpenter's non-approved shoes in victory lane, the night was full of social media gold. The racing indoors in the dome had its moments too although the tight track did produce quite a few time-consuming cautions. Friday night's races also had a compelling story as Miles Moos scored the biggest win of his career in the late model feature. Moos is an Illinois driver who is always at the big events and I first noticed him a few years ago when he ran up front in a qualifying feature during the Prairie Dirt Classic at Fairbury. We became Facebook friends after that and I sent him some video of his run and ever since then I have followed his races, so it was cool to see him get a big win. The USAC midgets joined the modifieds and dirt late models again this year but the late models seem to be the standout class at this event judging from the crowd reaction and online comments. I've

had the opportunity to hang around the dirt late model contingent a few times this year and those drivers and their fan bases really do know how to have fun. That was evident during the driver introductions for Saturday night's main event which have become a spectacle in themselves. I thought Bobby Pierce had the best theme when his group came out dressed as the Scooby Doo characters which matched his car wrap. Then to top it off, when the "villain" was unmasked, it turned out to be none other than Scott Bloomquist which was just perfect. The late model winner of the Dirt Nationals won \$30,000 as well as a NASCAR Truck ride with Niece Motorsports for the Knoxville race next summer. As Tyler Carpenter took the checkered flag I couldn't help but thinking how Carpenter's schtick complete with the crude language, common folk etiquette and Twitter drama would play out on the NASCAR stage. I kind of laughed and thought how entertaining this potential train wreck could be. But then I watched Carpenter's victory lane interview which was so real it was compelling. His emotions and passion through his tears was not an act but rather the realization of what he had just accomplished and what was to come and I think it overwhelmed him. I think this opportunity will be a great story and you know what, NASCAR could use some realness injected into its polished, corporate veins. I hope Tyler Carpenter makes the most of his Knoxville truck ride and enjoys every minute of it. While the chances of this being more than a one race deal are very slim, it does have the makings of a great story which is something we all like to see.

On the asphalt side of things, the Snowball Derby at Five Flags Speedway in Pensacola had its share of excitement as well. Once again Derek Thorn dominated the event but fell short of the victory following a late-race caution when he was "moved" by eventual winner Chandler Smith. Plowing into the back of Thorn and sending him up the race track was the only shot Smith had at winning the race and I get it's a huge event and we've seen those tactics many times recently. While its not the right way to do things and not the best move integrity-wise, I wasn't as bothered by Smith's action as I was with the competition caution with twenty laps to go that set up the whole deal. I understand the need for such cautions in a long race to help level the playing field, but I just don't think they are necessary with so few laps to go. Sure, it bunches the field and creates all sorts of drama, but what it really does is encourages super aggressive racing and risks junking a lot of equipment.

Now a naturally occurring caution with a few laps to go is another story and while the damage risks are the same, I think most racers could live with the outcome set up by a racing incident or mechanical failure instead of something artificially created. I also thought the time taken to complete the post-race technical inspection was a bit overboard. I know the competitors really like the thorough tech process including tearing the winning car and engine down to every nut and bolt as it gives them the sense that everything is legitimate and honest. But to the causal fan who just wants to watch the race and really doesn't care how much a crankshaft weighs, not knowing the official winner some four hours after the conclusion of the race can be a turn off. It's a classic case where the "insiders" such as drivers and crew members and the fans have completely different perspectives on the same situation. While both are right in their own ways, I'm quite certain a middle ground compromise could be made where a thorough and open technical inspection takes place while at the same time ensuring the fans in the stands go home knowing who the official winner is.

On the Midwestern front, many schedules were announced including super late model dates for Slinger Speedway, the ARCA Midwest Tour, Dells Raceway Park, and Madison International Speedway which should provide another action-packed season in 2022. Slinger Speedway will try something different with their super late models in 2022, having announced the inaugural Elite 8 Series, an eight race series paying a minimum of \$2,500 to win and \$400 to start. The series includes many of the traditionally popular dates at Slinger including the Season Opener (April 24th), Memorial Day Weekend Special (May 29th), Independence Day Weekend Special (July 3rd), the Alan Kulwicki Memorial (August 7th), the Carl Wegner Memorial (August 28th), and the Labor Day Weekend Special (September 4th). The Keith's Marina Race Against Cancer (June 12th) and the PMF Father's Day Special (June 19th) are also part of the new series. While not part of the new series, the Miller Lite Slinger Nationals also had its 2022 date set with the 43rd running scheduled for Tuesday night July 12th. The track will have more announcements regarding the 2022 season in the coming weeks with a wide variety of racing divisions and events in the works.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a wonderful holiday season as well as a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year as we all look forward to getting things rolling again in 2022.

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New Dirt



Jacy Norgaard

When I was growing up the race season was always April to September. February to November was something only the stars on television did. I never thought a long season was remotely possible in the world of short track racing. The older I got the longer the season became. Races got further away from the home base and the calendar got longer. My longest season to date has been 82 races in 2013. I tied that record in 2021 only with a bit more travel. Between cars and planes, I logged 45,119 miles this year. I attended 1 race and photographed 81 others. I visited 41 tracks and 17 states on a journey that started in Arizona and ended in Tennessee. 26 of the tracks I attended I had never seen before. From a photography standpoint this made things challenging. It's always easier to shoot somewhere where you know the good spots and all the unique quirks of the facility. With my first year in the books with the World of Outlaws Late Model tour, I wanted to reflect on some of my favorite



Jacy Norgaard photo

places, races, and moments on the season. Additionally, I wanted to touch on the excellent year we had in WISSOTA country and hand out some virtual awards to a few folks.

Favorite Race Track

Visiting 41 tracks gives you a wide variety to choose from. Some tracks were excellent, some were difficult. Some tracks raced well and photographed bad, while others photographed great and raced bad. Port Royal Speedway in Pennsylvania tops my list for favorite track. With great scenery and tremendous shooting locations, the track is a photographer's dream. The state fair concession stands, and passionate fans make for an excellent experience. I am looking forward to returning next year.

Favorite Race

In a year where I witnessed some of the biggest Dirt Late Model races, deciding on just one race was tough. But it had to have been the Prairie Dirt Classic at Fairbury Speedway. If you have never been to FALS, you need to go. The entire community supports the racetrack like no other community that I have ever seen. We constantly hear about towns and their people trying to run existing

speedway's out of business. That is not the case in Fairbury, Illinois. They embrace the track and the event. Neighbors kindly let you park on the lawn and attend the races with you. The track is incredibly racey and a memorable weekend was capped off by Kyle Larson winning his first ever World of Outlaws Late Model feature.

Best Moment of the Year

I don't think you can classify this as one specific moment, but more of a collection of moments throughout the season. Ryan Gustin's constant talent show casing ability was a joy to watch. Gustin and crew spent 2021 building out a playbook for Tour racing and had some excitable moments along the way. He led several laps at Outagamie Speedway before spinning out, rejoining in the back and driving back up to the Top 5. A race he surely would've come back and won had there been a few more laps. And then there was Sharon Speedway a few weeks later where he went toe to toe with Kyle Larson and nearly defeated him. I still remember when Ryan Gustin dominated the USMTS Tour. Now that the rookie campaign is out of the way and the team has a good notebook, I expect you will see Gustin in victory lane a few times in 2022.

Best Race Track Food

Cedar Lake Speedway duh! While I do agree with that sentiment, Friendship Motor Speedway in Elkin, NC has got them beat with one menu item.



Jacy Norgaard photo

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New Dirt continued from page 11

Their fried bologna sandwich with lettuce, tomato, cheese, and coleslaw was incredible.

The Late Model tour occupied quite a bit of my time in 2021, but I still kept tabs on WISSOTA and shot as many races as my schedule allowed. A few notable drivers and moments stood out to me:

Kennedy Swan

The season she had was historic. Kennedy won some big races and was competitive everywhere she went. Our sport needs drivers like Kennedy and it's refreshing to see her have such great success in the biggest class by car count size.

Dan Ebert

Dan Ebert has won quite a few races in his career, but the one that has always alluded him in the Modified is the WISSOTA 100. He won the race at I-94 last year, but that is recorded in the record books as a King of The Dirt. Although those of us there called it the Fake 100. 2021 would prove to be different with Dan finally winning the WISSOTA 100 in a Modified.

Parker Anderson

Death, Taxes, Parker Anderson winning a Street

Stock feature. Few have been as consistent at winning as Parker was this season. His absolute dominance awarded him with a WISSOTA 100 and National Championship.

Street Stock Little Dream

Another year, another record payout. The work Chris Stepan and the entire FYE Motorsports staff have done the last few years to continue and grow this unique event has paid dividends. I have no doubt in my mind that the Street Stock Little Dream purse will continue to increase. I'm just waiting for the day when someone like Jonathan Davenport throws a Street Stock into his hauler on a trip to the USA Nationals and competes in the event.

Tyler Peterson

TPO had a breakout season we all knew he was capable of with the Dirt in December victory a sweet



Jacy Norgaard photo

icing on the cake. He had campaigned diligently to get invited to the Dome and backed that up big time with the win this year. His victory was incredible to watch, but not all that surprising. He went the distance with Shane Sabraski for the National Championship and came out on top.

Another exciting season has come to an end and I am greatly looking forward to my 40 day off season.

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On the first weekend November, Jefferson Speedway closed out their racing season with the inaugural Jefferson Brackets. Modeled after the Bahama Brackets at Rockford Speedway, cars from various divisions were broken into timed brackets.

While you couldn't have asked for better weather for an afternoon show in November, my gut tells me they were hoping for more people and more cars. I'm not saying it was a bad show by any means. On opening day, there were over 20 cars in each bracket. Seeing two main events with more than 20 cars these days is not as common as it once was. Watching a full field in each division, with fast cars starting towards the back was about all I could ask for. All in all, I thought it was a good show.

Main event winners during the final day on Sunday were Denny Schott in the A-Bracket and Mark English in the A-Bracket. Hopefully they stick with this show, and it becomes a tradition on the first weekend of November each year.



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Racing Nuggets



PJ "Jacklyn" Nuttleman

Our annual racing trip to Florida was very different and full of memories this year. We headed south earlier than normal, to run an additional race at 4-17 Southern Speedway in Punta Gorda—the “Bill Bigley Sr. Memorial” with a \$20,000 prize for grabbing the checkers. The track has an unusual name—4-17 is named for the date that the owners, Joseph and Janet Gentry met—April 17th. How romantic, right?

There were A LOT of Wisconsin fans in the stands. It was pretty cool to see so many who made the trip south for both this race and the Snowball Derby. I was seated next to a gentleman from Eau Claire who winters in Punta Gorda. It was purely a fluke that we even ended up sitting beside each other. There was a large contingent from over by Slinger Speedway in the stands, and a bunch from the Bangor and Dells area as well. It definitely felt very much like home with so many Wisconsinites in the stands.

Toby and team had the car for Ty Majeski dialed in and set fast time for the event. But racing in the south can be challenging. Some southern guys drive like a teenage boy having sex for the first time: No throttle control—no finesse. A daringly stupid move at the front of the field resulted in a major crash heading into turn three and knocked several contenders out, including Majeski.



Jeff Taber photo

Field Notes from Florida



Jeff Taber photo

Rich Bickle was the best representation for Wisconsin, crossing the finish line second—after a spirited battle with Michael Atwell who was ultimately the winner. Bickle ended up getting DQ'd in the post-race inspection for raised boosters in his carburetor. Years ago, those were legal. They had an old 9:1 engine in the car, which isn't run anywhere much these days, so it makes sense that the old carburetor was on it.

While many cried foul over the incident, I don't think it was deliberate—and neither do many people who understand the situation. It's just an unfortunate turn of events for their team and Bickle's final few races before his retirement.

Both Bickle and Majeski would travel north to Pensacola for the following weekend's race—the Snowball Derby.

For my part, traveling along with Toby and team to Pensacola was interesting. I was originally told that I was likely going to be driving the van with everyone, but it ended up being Majeski who took the wheel first. I appreciated Majeski's ability to corner in a seven-passenger van, fully loaded down with people and luggage.

Riding shotgun as co-pilot, Riley Stenjem—super late model driver from Stoughton, WI. Stenjem shared driving duties and introduced us all to the amazing app, Waze which gives you a heads up where speed traps might be set up. Which is not to say Majeski or Stenjem were speeding as we traversed north to Pensacola. Race car drivers RARELY speed in street cars, right? Especially rental vans.

We arrived at Five Flags Speedway in Pensacola at 5:47am. Majeski immediately wanted to

remove the travel shocks on the race car and get it set to practice when the track opened up at noon. I figured the incident at Punta Gorda made them all want to dig into the next event to put it behind them.

Admittedly, I didn't hang around all day at the track. I was exhausted, got us checked into the condo that we would call home for the next week, and took a top-five lifetime shower. The guys returned after a long day of practice with groceries and beverages. It was then that I discovered Stenjem's love of White Claw Seltzer. Who knew?! I enjoy the tasty cocktails myself!

Suffice it to say, the next week would be a stressful one. The primary car that the team took down for the Derby was a brand new TobyCar chassis. TobyCar 001 to be exact—one that Toby built from the ground up. It was the first time he didn't use the base Lefthander Chassis with his innovations. He's quick to say that there wasn't a problem continuing to work with Lefthander—they have a quality product and have always been great to work with. This move to start building his own complete chassis design was just simple economics of business.

If you talk to Toby now, he laments that they should've just run the back-up car—which won the Derby last year, rather than use this new car that he just built right after Oktoberfest. I don't know if that would've been the right thing to do or not. I think about the car they were dominate with at Oktoberfest this year and remember that it was a real turd in it's first outing at Dells Raceway Park. Sometimes it just takes a bit to dial in a new car.

It certainly didn't help that early in the Snowball Derby, Mason Diaz turned down trying to get into the bottom groove and made tire-on-tire contact with

Racing Nuggets continued on page 16

Racing Nuggets from page 15

Majeski, whose car ended up riding up on the two left-side tires coming off turn two before slamming back to the ground. I was actually videotaping and where that contact was made was a bit of a blind spot for me. I kept the camera moving, but couldn't locate Majeski right away because of the incident. My brother-in-law Bruce Nuttleman had in-car video of the incident; very Dukes of Hazzard-like.

The car suffered some severe damage from that and the subsequent tangle between Daniel Dye and Jett Noland that demolished several other cars, including Dan Fredrickson.

Some days, it's just not your day.

It sure seemed to be Derek Thorn's day. He was dominate all week long in practice, set the fast time in qualifying and led nearly all of the laps of the race. I had the pleasure of interviewing him prior the race for the LTN Radio Network. When I asked him about the pressure of being so dominant leading up to the race—he said he has learned to “embrace the chaos.”

I'm not sure if he feels as loving about the chaos after the finish of the Snowball Derby. The final competition caution flew with about 20 laps to go. It set up a shootout for Thorn and Chandler Smith, who had picked his way to the front from deep in the field.

I thought for sure we were going to see another bare-knuckle battle like last year between Thorn and Majeski—only with Chandler Smith taking the role of Majeski this year. But alas, it was not to be much of a battle. Smith ended up driving right through the back end of Thorn going through turns three and four, effectively sending Thorn up into the marbles.

Several cars took advantage of the track position, as Thorn wrestled with his machine to save it—which he did. Thorn motored back up to second place, but by that time Smith had set sail and ended up grabbing the checkered flag and the \$25,000 pay day.

It was a very polarizing move. Some cheered for Smith. Some booed him. It was not the kind of racing a purist would like to see, that's for sure. I wasn't overly impressed with it either, especially with the post-race interview where Smith actually admitted he basically moved Thorn because he knew “that was the only way” he was going to beat him. I'm sorry. That's not racing.

If it were the final lap, I MIGHT be more inclined to not be salty about it—but he did it with 13 to go. Smith didn't even TRY to race Thorn.

Many questioned why race control didn't penalize Smith, like they did Stephen Nasse in the Snowflake 100 last year for a very similar move to Bubba Pollard. The reason given was because Thorn saved the car and Pollard didn't last year.

At the end of the day, I didn't have any skin in the game for either of those racers, but I sure did feel bad for Thorn. He and his team put together a stellar run and were dominating. It just didn't feel right to see

him get punted for the win, but I don't make the rules.

I will say that I can't wait to see Thorn race against Smith again in the future. Needless to say, my video camera will certainly be focused on the pair because there is sure to be some action there.

As for Toby and his new TobyCar chassis? I have faith they'll get their poop in a group. He had the car ripped apart within the first days of rolling back to Wisconsin from Florida. He discovered a lot of things messed up from damage that will need repairing and things he wants to rebuild differently. Unless we get and maintain enough snowfall for him to go play on his snowmobile—I can guarantee he'll be wrenching on that car to be ready for battle in 2022.

One final note—also during the LTN Hour while

interviewing drivers for that radio show, I chatted with Bickle about his retirement plans. He mentioned that he HAD planned for 25 years to go to Costa Rica, but they require the COVID vaccination to enter the country and he's not doing “the poke.”

When asked if that meant he would be racing again in 2022, he smiled and said Fredrickson has \$1,000 bet that he will be racing and not retiring. Bickle says he's not wanting to help him win that kind of cash.

I'm not convinced Bickle can sit around here and not race. I suspect Fredrickson will be pocketing a cool 1K in 2022. Drinks on Dan at Fest!

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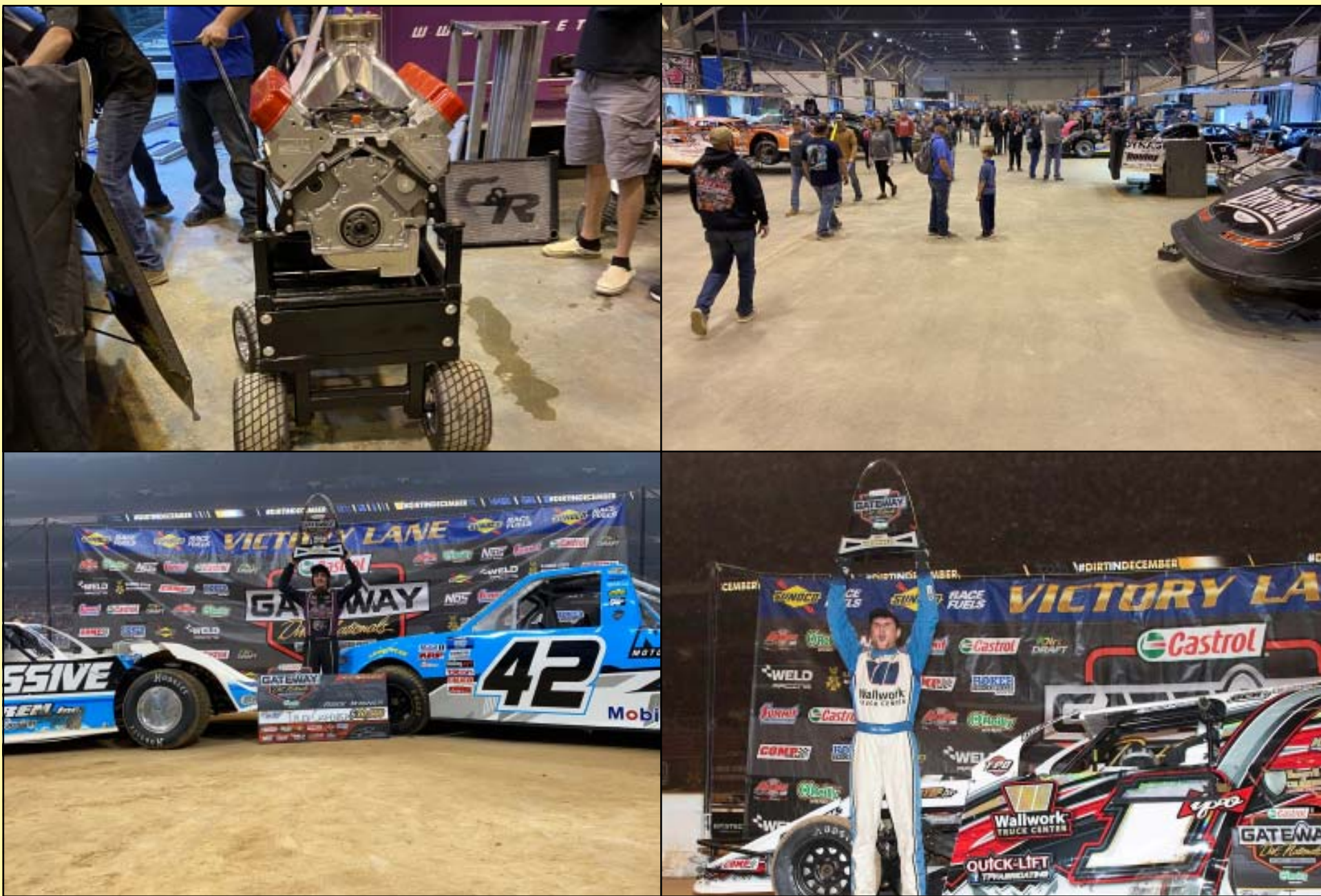
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Gateway Dirt Nationals

#DirtInDecember

After a 1-year hiatus due to COVID, the Gateway Dirt Nationals returned to The Dome at America's Center in St. Louis, MO. Watching all previous via the Flo Racing and DirtOnDirt streams has been nothing short of entertaining. Seeing this event in person is highly recommended. The excitement of being part of an event like this is hard to describe. Everything from the unfiltered driver and crowd interviews to the crashing of the drone, TV does not give the complete picture. The number of vendors on hand and pit access make for an afternoon and evening of time well spent. Seeing the true emotion of Late Model main event winner Tyler Carpenter and WISSOTA's own Tyler Peterson win the Modified portion were just the icing on the cake. An extra bonus this year went to the Late Model winner. By virtue of winning the race, Tyler Carpenter gets a free ride in a Niece Motorsports Truck for the Knoxville NASCAR Truck Race. Quite possible the best racing of the weekend was the Midget main event won by Jonathan Beason. Unfortunately, the Midgets will not be part of the 2022 event, but that should not have any impact on the overall quality of this show.



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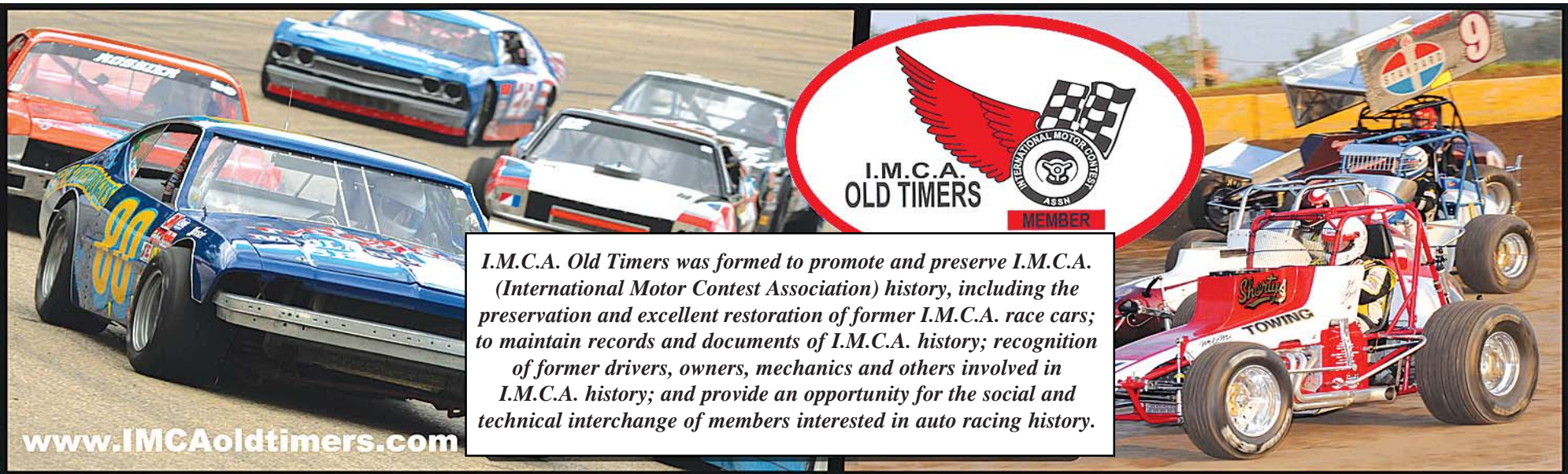


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