

THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

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Racing On The Road



The Nationals Times Two

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Inside...



Going in Circles



The end of Summer

ALL NATURAL
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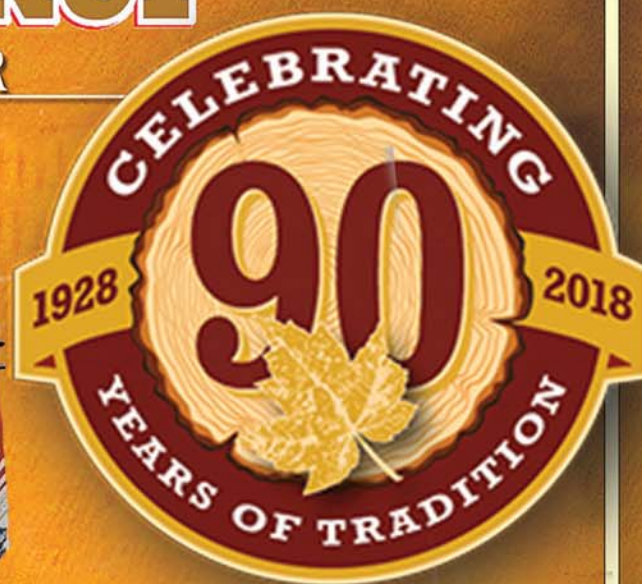
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Publisher's Note Racing According to Plan



Dan Plan

The USA Nationals at Cedar Lake Speedway celebrated its 35th running this year. I'm pretty sure I've been to each one of them. Maybe not every day of the weekend, but at least a portion of all 35. The event continues to grow each year, and this year was no exception. The Thursday and Friday crowds were the best I can recall ever seeing. Superman Jonathan Davenport defended his 2021 USA Nationals title this year, leading all 100-laps of the main event. One might think the same guy leading the whole was a boring race, but this was far from it. "Terbo" Tyler Erb swapped the lead back and forth with Davenport and took the lead at one point, but a caution negated the pass. Chriss Madden was charging towards the end as well. It was not boring at all. To top things off, the

weekly Late Model competitors main event saw Pat Doar go from 17th to the win. That was not boring either.

Two of the things I've come to realize through the years with the USA Nationals are:

- 1 - Even in the midst of a record-breaking drought, it will rain at some point during the weekend.
- 2 - We will end up with some sort of controversy.

I'm happy to report there was no controversy this year, but it did rain. The Saturday forecast looked absolutely miserable upon waking up in the morning. So much so that I packed up my RV and headed home. I only did this because I live less than an hour away and spending the day at home in the rain sounded like a better idea than spending a day in my RV in the rain. Low and behold the weather forecasters were wrong with their predictions and the weather improved. To ensure the show was completed, the start time was moved up 2 hours and everyone got to see a full show. To top it off, I had time to unpack at home, pick up my dad and bring him with to the track to have 3 generations of our family on hand once again at the USA Nationals.

Just a few days after the USA Nationals was complete, I was back on the road to attend another event with "Nationals" in the title: The Knoxville Nationals. I've been lucky enough to attend many big, short track events during my life. Thanks to Bryan Turtle, I finally made my first visit to the Sprint Car Capital of the World in Knoxville. I have to say, the Knoxville Nationals is by far the biggest short track event I've ever seen. To put things in perspective, the population of Knoxville, Iowa is just a tick over 7,000.

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The Midwest

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

www.theracingconnection.com

Publisher

Dan Plan

Contributing Writers

Dale P. Danielski

Dan Margetta

Jacy Norgaard

PJ "Jacklyn" Nuttleman

Dean Reller

Madeline Schultz

Jason Searcy

Charlie Spry

Photographers

Vance Birno (612-308-3572)

Martin DeFries (651-346-1199)

TJ Harron (608-301-5258)

Doug Hornickel (920-723-0522)

Jacy Norgaard (jacynorgaardphotography.com)

Bruce Nuttleman (612-860-6622)

Vince Peterson (612-419-6372)

Jess Riedner (608-334-5329)

Jeff Taber (815-978-5450)

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Cover photos by: Dan Margetta, Jacy Norgaard, Dan Plan and Jeff Taber



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The seating capacity of Knoxville Raceway is listed as 21,135. Essentially, the town of Knoxville grows in size 3-fold during the week of the Knoxville Nationals.

I’ve read about Knoxville since I was old enough to read and watched the Knoxville Nationals on TV since TNN started airing it back in the day. Seeing the facility and the town in person is truly a spectacle of short track racing. The entire town is behind the event. There are campers in front yards, race cars parked on street corners and the souvenir vendor area reminded me of NASCAR in its heyday. I can honestly say I don’t recall ever seeing a church billboard saying, “Welcome Race Fans.” Also have I’ve never heard the Australian National Anthem played at a short track until this event.

Another item that every race fan should experience is the National Sprint Car Hall of Fame & Museum. The museum is located just outside of turn two of the racetrack. The amount of Sprint Car history located here is second to none and admission is only five bucks.

Unfortunately, our plans did not allow us to stay for the entire show, but watching preliminary action was perfectly fine with me to get the Knoxville experience. The racing format discourages sandbagging and encourages going as fast as you can all of the time. At the end of the week, Donny Shatz picked up his 11th Knoxville title. Not bad for a kid that I used to watch race Sprint Cars 50 miles from my house.

My Knoxville experience was made that much better by our camping location. One of the neat things about the Knoxville Nationals is businesses and families make space wherever possible for campers. We ended up at Kading’s Korner about a mile from the track. This is Pat & Tom Kading’s home, not an actual campground. They were the best hosts that a race fan could ask for. When you get home-baked cookies hand delivered to your campsite, you know it is going to be a good time. Thanks to Pat & Tom for ensuring it was a good time.

Dan Plan photo



Dan Plan photo



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Going in Circles



Charlie Spry

Madison International Speedway always puts on a good show for their annual “Racer’s Reunion.” The McKarns family is very good at honoring racers from the past, and this show is tons of fun.

The vintage racers usually show up in large numbers to race in front of the “vintage” drivers. Some are even still racing or come back to race.

One such driver is Le Larsen. Le made his first showing with his vintage Camaro, and I knew it had been a long time since he had raced. He was pretty excited and nervous about the prospect of racing, but I asked him how long it had been since he had last raced. “Forty-Five years,” was the reply. A big collector of racing memorabilia, he decided after so many years to give it another whirl. He got a lot of help from veteran racer Russ Grossen, who still races a late model.

Eric Melchoir finished his vintage racer this year, and it is a tribute to his late Father, Ed. Ed raced with the number 97 car for many years, mostly at places like Madison and Slinger. Eric has done some racing on his own for quite a few years, and his racer is based on one of his old cars, and old Bac-Kar chassis that he purchased many years ago and raced himself at Columbus, Dells, and other places before getting a much newer car. “I have a vodka bottle fastened to the inside of the car, as a tribute to Dad, as he always wanted to race at the Milwaukee Mile, but never did. I had a chance to do that in honor of him earlier this year, so that is a tribute to him.” Said Eric, A pretty neat touch.

Had a chance to talk with long time racer Bill Retallick, who was in attendance. Bill won the 1971 National Short Track Championships at Rockford Speedway, edging out Dick Trickle to do so. His car was a purple ’69 Chevelle, and the story is interesting. “That car had a 482 engine in it that I got from DuWayne Shelter. It came out of a hydroplane, and he could never get it to run right. So, we got it and figured it out, and could it ever run. It just had so much power!” He would dominate the NSTC race until late, saying, “I think I led all but 15 laps or so. Trickle was the only one who had anything for me, and he got a lap down early. He worked his way back onto the lead lap and began chasing me down. I kept my eye on him the whole time and just tried to make good laps and stay out of trouble. He got closer and closer to me but I still felt like I had him covered. On the last lap, I took it

real easy, as I didn’t want to screw it up after leading that long, but Trickle swung down under me and got within a couple of feet of beating me at the line, but I held on.”

Bill had raced here at Madison (then Capital Speedway) back in the 1960’s when it was still a quarter-mile track. He raced all over the midwest for many years, and had a picture given to him by Le Larsen of one of his other cars, a ’66 Chevelle with the style of the day for late models, no front fenders. It had the exhaust coming out right by the driver, which he said was extremely loud. “That car was basically a new street car that got made into a race car when new. It had been put into a tree backwards, wrecking it all the way to the rear seat area,” Said Bill. This was back in the day when late models were made from real street cars. Hard to imagine, now.

Bill also had plenty of good things to say about Dick Trickle, saying, “He was real good about helping others out and getting them faster. He helped me out several times with problems that I had.”

Tom Gille won the vintage feature in his very sharp John Knaus tribute Camaro.

Not to be outdone, there were other races going on as well. The Big 8 late models put on an outstanding show, with a great car count. No surprise in Jeremy Miller over a very tough Will Rece and John Reynolds Jr.

The Mid-Am cars also were present in large numbers. This group always brings lots of cars here. R.J Tackman took the win.

High School racers were also on hand, with Mitchell Berg making the long haul down from the LaCrosse area to take the win.

The Midwest Dash touring four-cylinder group were present for the running of the annual “Cheese Curd Cup,” Where all divisions race on the tight “Ring Of Fire” quarter mile. Kyle Stark went three wide to pass for the lead by lap four, then drove to the feature win.

Point leader Scott Ciesielski told me that he only had a couple more races in his current car, as he has purchased a Midwest Truck from Devine Motorsports, and plans on racing full time with that series next year. The four-cylinder racer will then be sold. The car has many, many feature wins on it, so it’s a good one. “I plan on racing the series next year, except for the Milwaukee Mile. Not sure I will be ready for that, yet” said Scott. He has had some help from Baird Reffner, who needs no introduction. Scott is a very capable driver and has a great team. He will be one to watch.

Phil Malouf has his new car out now. He had been working on it for quite some time but figured that it was time to get it out. His old car had been raced for ten years and was beginning to be kind of needy.

The Hobby Stocks always put on a good show here, and tonight it was Brandon “Bud” Riedner not only setting a new track record, but easily winning the feature. With Tomah being rained out on this night, a couple of their regulars made the trip south, with Charles Vian Jr. taking second. Mike Krueger also made the trip and ran well.

Season championship night here came about with a very real chance of rain moving in at some point during the night. Planned double features became single features for all except the MisFitz division, which got both of their features completed before a light but steady rain ended the night.

Zack Riddle started out strong here in the late models in 2022, and by season’s end he was absolutely dominant. He won the last five features of the season here to make it eight total.

Another dominant racer was Nick Schmidt in the Bandit division. He had a mid-season streak of seven feature wins in a row to propel him to the track championship, his fourth here in a row.

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Jeff Taber photo



Jeff Taber photo



Jeff Taber photo

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The MisFitz division saw Ray Hellenbrand edge out his son and rookie driver Mason Hellenbrand to take the track title in 2022.

Rockford Speedway has had an increase in interest in the Roadrunner division. Once practically given up on, there has been a renewed interest in the division from racers, with car counts of around twenty now normal.

One of the newer drivers in the division is Tyler Vincetich. Tyler is in his second year of racing the V8 Powered cars, after racing in the Sixer and High school divisions for some three years prior. He is a busy guy, as in addition to racing, he also works at a tire retailer during the week in the summer months, and during the school year he attends UW-Stevens Point, now entering his second year. He also runs on the track team there and tries to do workouts daily. "I will be starting back up at school soon, and that makes it even harder to race. I have practice, workout when I can, school, and then try to get back down here to work on the car when I can. Sometimes, I don't get too much sleep," said Tyler.

He is in the thick of the points race, but that also means that he starts the features at the back of the pack most of the time, making it hard to get through and get feature wins. He has been consistent with several second and third place finishes but is still chasing that elusive first feature win. He races clean and does this all with no pit crew.

Six-cylinder racer Julie Hinrichs has now been racing in that division for a few years, and has won several heat races and semi-features, but a feature win has also been elusive. She also is a clean racer and as she noted, "I just try to do the best I can. I am not sure how much longer the car will last; it is getting pretty rusty. Might be time for a new car."

Two more late model drivers have come out to play late in the season. Veteran racer Rich Schinderling has been out the past few weeks with a car that he has been building for quite some time. Hunter Drefahl has returned late in the year as well. Hunter said, "I have been really busy with my job. Gotta earn that money, you know. I sure have missed doing this and am glad to be back." He recorded a fifth place feature finish on his first night back.

Two more drivers have also come out late in the season in the bandit division. Keith Mesch has been present late in the year and has made improvement. Kenny Grabow made it out for the first time, but had his radiator expire as he was getting ready to qualify on his first night out. His racing experience thus far has not been too good. "I raced one-time years ago at Freeport, back before they closed, with terrible luck." Said Kenny. "Now, I got this car and want to try again." Here is wishing Kenny some good luck, finally.

The annual Hugh Deery Sportsman Classic was run amidst another night where rain delayed action and made things difficult. Chad Smith took the lead at about the mid-point and drove off away from everyone to score the win.

Sixer division racer Morgan Mausehund took the lead in their feature and drove away to what I think is here first career feature win.

"Rockstar" Russ Lorbiecki brought his school bus out for the vintage car figure-eight race and took the lead and win when Ryan Lovald drifted up in the corner with his '65 Chevelle late in the race. These guys really put on a show!

Steven Erickson Jr. held off Matt Berger to win the American Short Tracker feature.

At the Lafayette County Speedway, the hobby stock division has brought back many drivers who had been away from the sport for awhile. One of those drivers is Manny Bennett, who races the "9er" car.

Manny actually started racing back in 2003, starting in the four-cylinder division here. He did this until 2007, when he got a sport mod and went racing in that division. After the 2011 season he got out of the sport for a while. He got the urge once again and got



Bennett family photo

his current hobby stock last year.

"I had lots of fun with the four-cylinder car. There were thirty cars racing every night at that time and it was a blast," said Manny. "But I was starting to get into playing for bands and do that sort of thing and got out of it. I found out I missed it, so I got this car from a guy in Iowa, over by Waterloo (Iowa). I do it on a strict budget, it's a \$1,200 car that we put a lot of work into. It has stock heads on the engine and everything."

Right now, Manny is having fun in the class and races competitively, as he considers his highlight in winning a feature with the car last year. "I would like

to maybe go back to a sportmod sometime in the future, but right now, this is it."

Besides his day job at the Lafayette County Highway Department, Manny also plays bass for the 90's rock band "Meatplow." "It is just a small, local, cover band. We play mostly bars and so forth," said Manny. So, you can see sometimes there are conflicts with racing, which is on Friday nights here and Sundays at Dubuque. "That is why I really can't run for points. Sometimes we have a gig planned which goes against a race night. Plus, the fact that I only have one motor. Maybe next year I will try to get a second motor and try to arrange the gigs different so that I can run every week," said Manny.

I asked about the number on his car, "9er." Manny said that it comes from the movie "Tommy Boy" with Chris Farley. One of the characters in the movie is trying to give out numbers to someone, and he kept saying 9er. "I just liked the way he did that, so I took that as my number," said Manny. It has kind of become a neat way to be a bit different and stand out a bit.

Manny likes to try new tracks and is not afraid to drive distances to try a new track. He races here at Darlington and also at Dubuque as much as he can. He has also raced at Maquoketa, Marshalltown, Tipton, and Independence, all in Iowa. He also noted that he would like to try racing on the asphalt sometime.

Helping out in sponsorship on the car are Darlington Mini-Mart, Saunders Oil, Booby's Bar, New Diggings General Store, Schweigert Family Farm, Harris Concrete, and Robbins Precision Machine.

Winning the championship in the four-cylinder division here at LCS for 2022 is Noah Krahenbuhl. Noah has only been racing for two and a half years, and has already gotten his first championship.

"I built my first car in my parents' garage. I ran that car up until this year, when I got my current car, that was built by someone else. I won four features with my old car, three at Dubuque, and one here, Said Noah.

At the first race this season, he won the feature and showed he was going to be fast and one to be reckoned with, and he is and has been all year.

His interest in racing goes back to his childhood, as he noted, "I have always been friends with Jimmy Doescher." (hobby stock front runner) "I hung around at his place when I was a kid, and still learn a lot from him."

Noah is fast, but prides himself on keeping his car looking nice as well, saying, "I like it when the car looks good. It looks much more professional. I work on it all week to maintain it, and that includes keeping it looking good besides the mechanical part."

The Dubuque track does not race this class weekly anymore, but when they did, Noah was there for every race, as well as here at Darlington. He has also raced at Maquoketa in Iowa, and Wilmot and

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Chilton in Wisconsin.

As for the future, Noah is pretty happy where he is right now, but did mention that he might be interested in moving to a hobby stock at some point.

Sponsoring the young Blanchardville, Wi. driver are Krahenbuhl Construction, First Choice Electric, Exit Professional Real Estate, Orloff Plumbing, RBS Activewear. He wishes to give special thanks to his motor guy and tuner, Nick Bean.

At LCS, four cylinder racer Tylor Henneman jumped out to a large lead and looked to be getting his first career feature win. Mr. Krahenbuhl tracked him down and took the lead and win on the last lap. Tylor admitted that he made a mistake on that last lap. A couple of weeks ago the same thing happened in the feature. Henneman jumped out to a large lead, with Krahenbuhl catching him once again. This time, no mistakes, and Henneman got that first win over Krahenbuhl. The two drivers are good friends.

Also winning championships here in 2022 were veteran Jed Frieburger in the A mods, Jarrett Franzen in the Sport Mods, Jimmy Doescher in the Hobby Stocks, and Jason Robbins in the Limited Late Models.

After many years, I finally made it back to Angell Park to see the Badger Midgets, along with area modifieds and the Dirt King late Models. One time per season the mods and late models are here, and this was the night.

Charles Rufi is a rookie with the midget group and has made great strides as the season progresses. The young driver finished second in the B-main tonight to transfer to the feature. All of this going on while his Mom was on his mind. She had been hospitalized since Wednesday and his Dad was attending to her, so neither were present, but they told Charles to go race. So, he did... On his own. He did have plenty of people helping him from other teams, so it isn't like he was alone. "The Badger midget racers are just like a big family," Said Charles, "It is a great group to be with and they have helped me so much." All of this at sixteen years of age. "My family has had some health problems, so I have had to mature a bit earlier than some my own age," said Charles. He is a very impres-

sive young man.

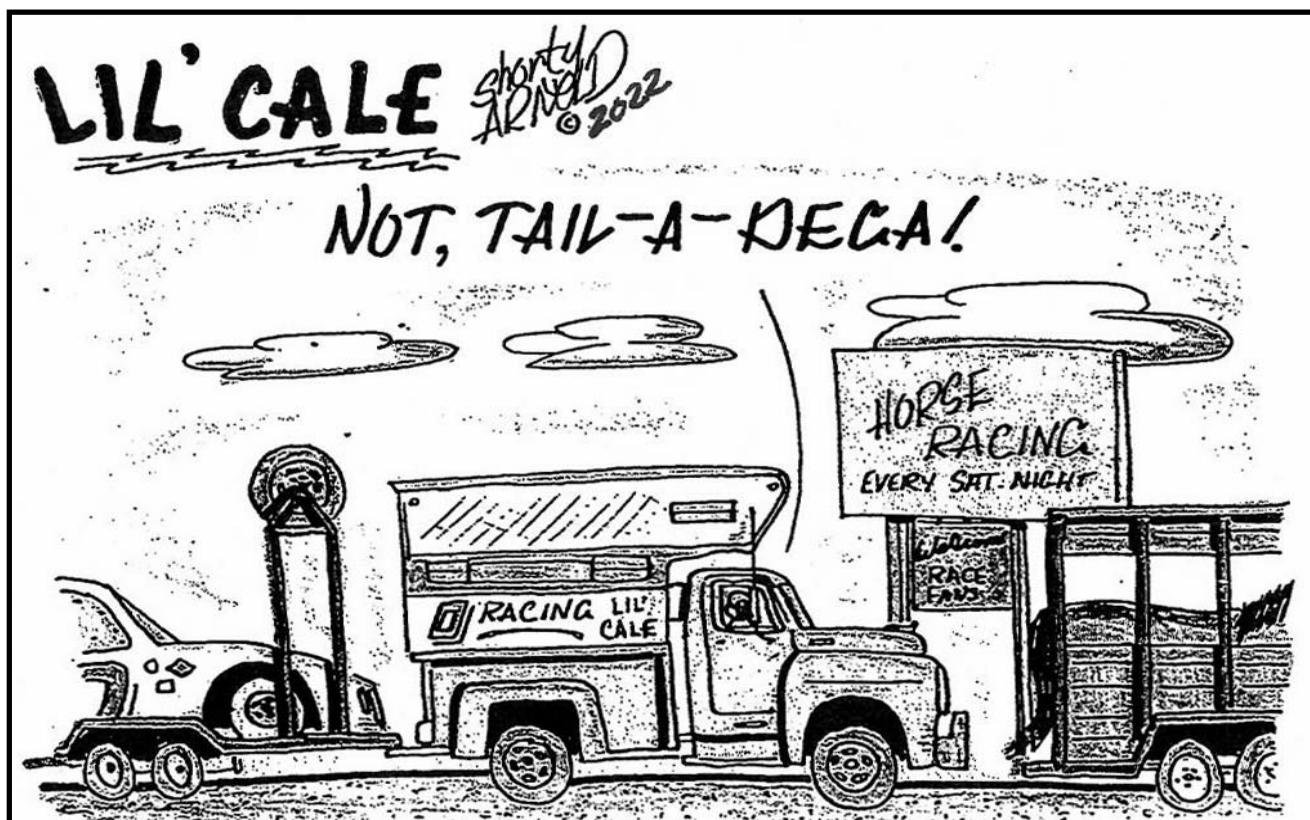
Zach Boden is in a battle for the point lead with the BMARA group. He got his start racing karts, then mini-sprints, and now with the midgets. His Dad is Brian Boden, who raced years ago in four cylinders and late models at Jefferson and Columbus. Had a chance to talk with crew member Eric Ziegler, who raced with Brian back in the day, and grew up with him. "I quit racing years ago," said Eric. "I started working at Oscar Meyer, my Dad died, and other things happened and I just kind of lost my interest in it. I have thought a little bit about getting a hobby stock or something and coming back. I'm not too old to do it, but it is just so expensive now. However, I do need to be thinking about my own retirement, and that means not spending money on a race car." So, helping Brian and Zach works for him.

Talked with modified racer Trent Wyssbrod, who was present. Trent

races usually at Lafayette County speedway but is not afraid to travel and try other tracks. "We like to go and race at a couple of new tracks every year," said Trent. "Last year we went up to 141 for their special and made it into the show without ever having to run a B-main, which I thought was pretty good. This year we are planning on going to Boone for the SuperNationals. I have never been there." Wishing Trent and crew well if they make the trip. He is a strong runner and is a very personable guy.



Jason Morgan photo



Dangerous Dan



Dan Margetta

It's hard to believe the end of Summer is in sight and as is the case every year, it seems to always go by too fast. Maybe it's because the Summer racing season in the Midwest is so busy with so many diverse options that it seems we start in May, blink once, and suddenly it's the end of August. That's kind of the way this month went for me as just about every weekend I was at a race track watching just about every form of racing you could think about.

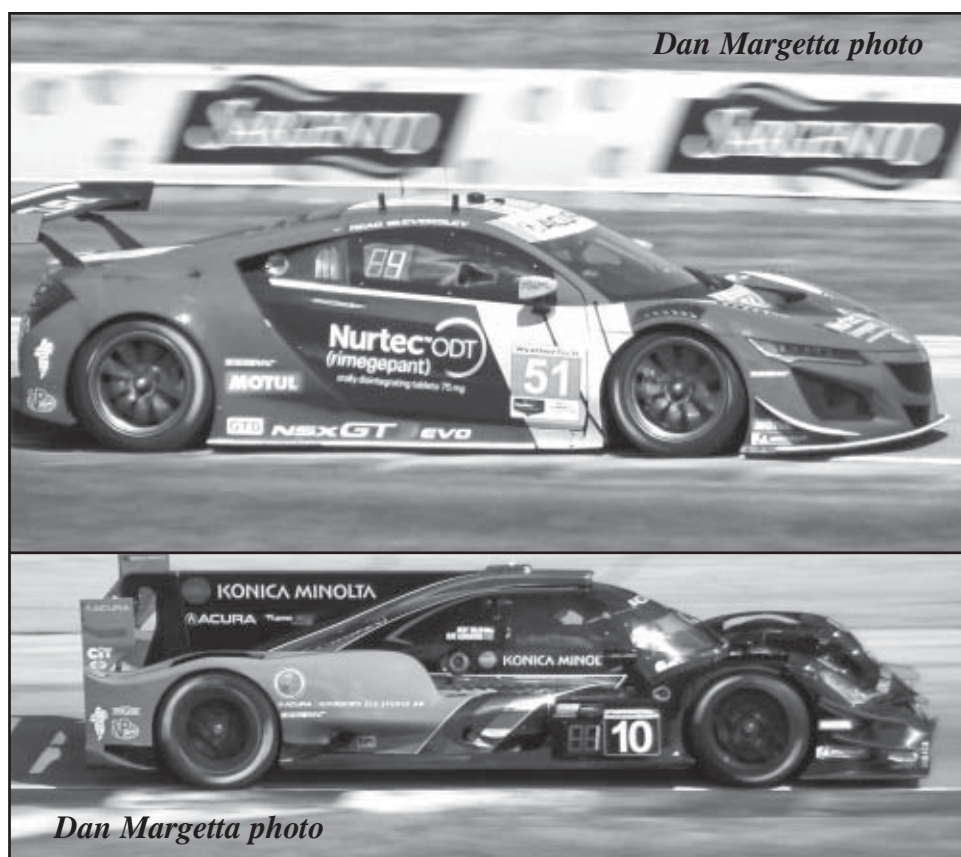
The month began on the dirt with the Prairie Dirt Classic crown jewel event for the World of Outlaws Case Construction Late Models at the always exciting Fairbury Speedway. Fairbury Speedway is commonly known as FALS which is an acronym for the facility's old name, Fairbury American Legion Speedway. Matt Curl purchased the track a few years ago which brought about the name change, and each year he has made impressive improvements to the high banked ¼ mile oval. This year, a brand-new administration building was in place in the pit area which greeted a record number of entries as 82 dirt late models pulled in for this year's Prairie Dirt Classic to go along with the 62 UMP modifieds who provided the undercard. Fairbury is the embodiment of Small Town USA, and the town loves the race track which is evident as you make your way through town. The workers at the local Dairy Queen all wear dirt late model racing shirts

and the people who live near the track, fill their yards with cars for close parking. Kyle Larson won the race last year and came back to Fairbury even though he had to go back and forth to practice and qualify at Indianapolis for the Brickyard weekend. While passing time in the afternoon before the main event, we watched one guy who lived next to the track suddenly take a chain saw to his bushes that lined his yard. When asked why he was destroying his bushes, his reply was he heard Kyle Larson was on his way and figured he needed a place to park so he made an impromptu spot by clearing out his hedges. That's the kind of atmosphere Fairbury brings along with the spectacular racing which is why the event is so popular. This year, the track had a plan where 100 tickets were sold for \$1,000 and half the proceeds would go to pay the drivers \$500 for each lap led and the other \$50,000 was given away to one of the lucky ticket purchasers. Brandon Sheppard and the Rocket 1 Racing team returned to the Outlaw tour and dominated the event by leading all 100 laps which netted him a cool \$100,000 (\$50,000 for the win and \$50,000 in lap leader money). As is the tradition, once victory lane ceremonies were over, Sheppard wheeled his dirt late model through the gates and ripped through town to the local bank to "deposit" his winnings. A lot of the town folk and many race fans were waiting for him at the bank to help celebrate his successful weekend.

From the dirt at Fairbury, I headed to Slinger Speedway (the asphalt version of Fairbury) to video another Sunday night show for Racing America.

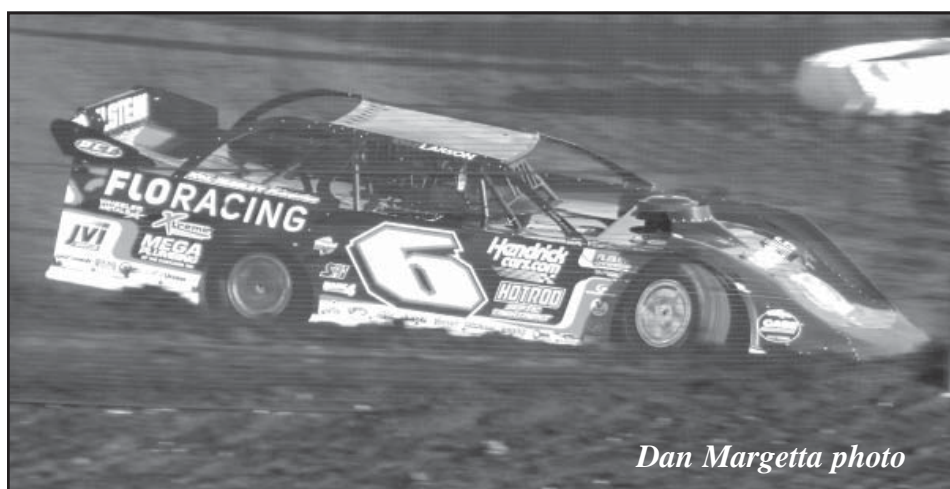
Slinger native Nick Egan, who has been running the CRA circuit and leading the series points, made his trip to his hometown track worthwhile as he won the Pro Late Model main event. If you have ever stuck around until the end of the night at Slinger, you've seen flag man (or as Duane Sweeney would say "official starter") Tim Schinker throw the green flag on the Figure 8

race and get the hell out of the way as the field barrels down to the start. Well on this night, Tim unfortunately tore a calf muscle running for cover and will be out of action for a few weeks and I'd like to wish him a speedy recovery. From there it was on to the twists and turns of the road course at Road America for the IMSA SportsCar Weekend. It's always fun to watch the exotic sports cars of the IMSA series take to Road America and this year some rain showers made the event interesting. I don't get to see racing in the rain too much so despite getting wet, I made my way out to the course to see the action up close. In the main event, the Acura team of Ricky Tayler and Felipe

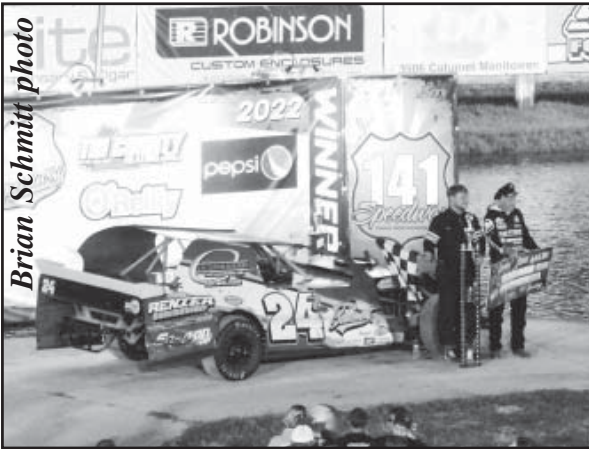


Albuquerque drove their #10 Minolta entry to victory which was sealed when fellow Acura driver Oliver Jarvis crashed the Michael Shank entry in the Kink in the closing laps. The Lamborghini Trofeo series closed out the day and also had issues with the rain. It's not every day you see seven expensive Lamborghinis pile up in Canada Corner but that's what happened when a surprise shower popped up on that section of the track.

Next on the August docket was a trip to the 141 Speedway dirt track for the Captain of the Creek Sport Mod race that paid a whopping \$10,500 to win. You would think a division that usually races for around \$400 to win on a good night competing for \$10,500 could be a recipe for a lot of cautions, but I'll have to give those Sport Mod guys credit. They put on



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a whale of a show with very few cautions and a lot of great racing action. On the final lap Jacob Zellner, Dylan Waldvogel, Elijah Koenig, and Corey Kemkes all had a shot to win before Zellner edged ahead out of turn four to claim the victory. Next up was Slinger Speedway's SlamFest where anything and everything was wrecked on a rainy Saturday night before heading back to Road America for the GT World Challenge sports car event on Sunday. Slinger's SlamFest event meant there was no Sunday racing at Slinger so I was able to spend the whole day taking in the many different classes of sports cars at Road America on a beautiful day. The World Challenge races don't feature as many corporate hospitality areas as the IMSA weekend, so I was able to find a few more places around Road America to watch that normally are hard to get to during a more crowded event.

I'll finish the month with the Dirt Kings dirt late model WABAM 30 at the Plymouth Dirt Track, a trip to Jefferson Speedway for double features, the ARCA Menards Sprecher 150 at the Milwaukee Mile, and the Carl Wegner Memorial and Alan Kulwicki 77 as the Elite Eight Super Late Models return to Slinger Speedway. As always, I'll look forward to seeing you all there as well.



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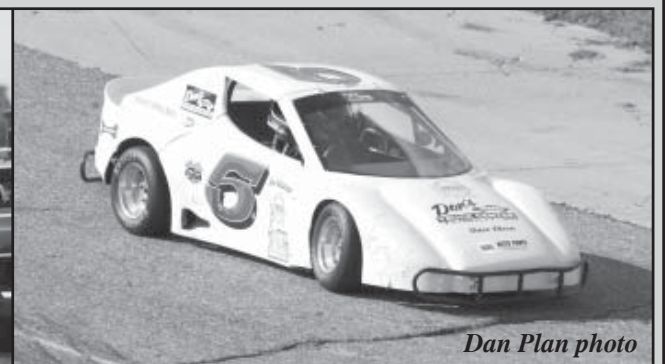
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THEN & Now



Bruce McClain photo



Dan Plan photo

The late Jime Sauter raced this Camaro at Elko Speedway during the 1972 racing season. 50 years later, his grandson Penn Sauter ran his first race at Elko in the Bandolero division.

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New Dirt



Jacy Norgaard

I have always said that someday I would like to follow the DIRTcar Summer Nationals. Also known as the Hell Tour. They typically race up and down the road for an entire month with only a handful of nights off. Someday I hope to accomplish following that entire schedule. This summer though I decided to create my own Hell Tour and spend a month out on the road. Race schedules aligned perfectly for me to try at a rather ambitious schedule. I plotted out 28 races in 30 days at 20 plus tracks in 6 states and 1 Canadian province. Between my schedule of World of Outlaw Late Model races, I would attempt to photograph at various racetracks throughout the Midwest. Many tracks which I had seen before and others that I had not.

I left my Kannapolis, North Carolina home on July 6th and headed North to Illinois. The first stop on my journey was Macon Speedway in Macon, IL for a 100-lap Hell Tour Race. Mother nature threw a curve ball in my plans and forced my first night out on the road into a cancellation. I packed up and drove another 6 hours north to Red Cedar Speedway in Menomonie, WI for Friday night WISSOTA racing. I had only been to Red Cedar a handful of times for Tour races. This was my first ever regular night of racing there. Red Cedar runs a very efficient program

and provides great racing all night. Since moving to North Carolina last fall, this also served as my first WISSOTA race. My friend Hunter VanGilder picked up the Street Stock victory and rising star, Kennedy Swan dazzled in the Midwest Modified feature picking up yet another win in her young career. Her dad Jason told me in victory lane that I had picked a great night to come back. It certainly appeared so! I rolled out of Red Cedar Speedway and headed to my hotel.

The next morning, I pointed the Trailblazer directly West and made my first-ever trip to the Brown County Speedway in Aberdeen, South Dakota. When I first mapped out my summer road trip I wanted to go to as many racetracks as I could. I wanted to see old friends and photograph at the tracks that elevated my career. But I also wanted to utilize the opportunity to go to racetracks I had never been to before. This Saturday was that kind of trip. 6 hours of driving later I arrived at the Brown County Speedway. I was a bit confused when I first arrived because I did not see the typical pit shack that every track seems to have. Instead, there was just a guy sitting in his car with the air conditioning likely on high (it was very hot out). I checked in with him and he sent me into the pits to the concession stand to get my media wristband. After signing in I walked around the pits and chatted with some friends before embarking on a night full of shooting. I really loved Brown County Speedway. It reminded me very much of River Cities Speedway in

Grand Forks, just not as much banking. The infield was mostly unobstructed which made for great photo opportunities. After racing concluded I drove into Aberdeen for another night in another hotel. I got up on Sunday morning and headed back East to the Granite City Motor Park in Sauk Rapids, MN. This was the first race back to a track where I would know almost everyone in attendance. I was most excited for Mac's Mini's which is a mini donut business run by my future sister-in-law, Mackenzie. I enjoyed some mini donuts and mini donut soda and took in the racing program, which turned out to be very quick! We got done by 8:45 and I headed

Racing on the road

Part 1: North Carolina to Canada



Jacy Norgaard photo

to Big Lake, Minnesota where I would be staying for several days at Mikayla's parents. It was nice to not have to spend a night in a hotel for a while and to not have to constantly be driving hundreds of miles each day. Between Wednesday and Sunday, I had been in North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota and South Dakota. I



Jacy Norgaard photo

was exhausted and this was just the early part of the summer road trip.

I enjoyed 3 days off from racing and no race car photography before heading north to Grand Forks. I arrived at the hotel late on Wednesday evening and met up with a few of the World of Outlaw Officials for a couple of drinks at the hotel bar. My plans were to head into Canada on Thursday night and photograph racing at the Victory Lane Speedway in Manitoba. The radar looked incredibly bleak. All day Thursday I was texting back and forth with people from the track ascertaining whether I should make the 2-hour trip into



Jacy Norgaard photo

New Dirt continued on page 11

THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

Photo Gallery



Superman Jonathan Davenport on his way to the USA Nationals win
Jacy Norgaard photo



Pat Doar picked up another championship at Cedar Lake Speedway
Dan Plan photo



3-wide action in the Midwest Tour Dixieland 250 at Kaukauna
Doug Hornickel photo



William Sawalich at the Berlin Raceway Money in the Bank
Bruce Nuttleman photo



Paul Dolphy in Vintage Stock Car action at Red Cedar Speedway
Vince Peterson photo



Alex Hartwig picked up the Bandolero championship at State Park Speedway
QC Willy photo

THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

Photo Gallery



Ty Majeski, Gabe Sommers and Derek Kraus at the Dixieland 250
Doug Hornickel photo



Modified action at Granite City Speedway
Jacy Norgaard photo



Sammy Smith at Michigan International Speedway
Bruce Nuttleman photo



The Steffes Street Stock Tour at Red Cedar Speedway
Vince Peterson photo



IRA Sprint action at Plymouth Speedway
Emily Schwanke photo



A full field of Bandolero's at Elko Speedway
Junior Jackson photo



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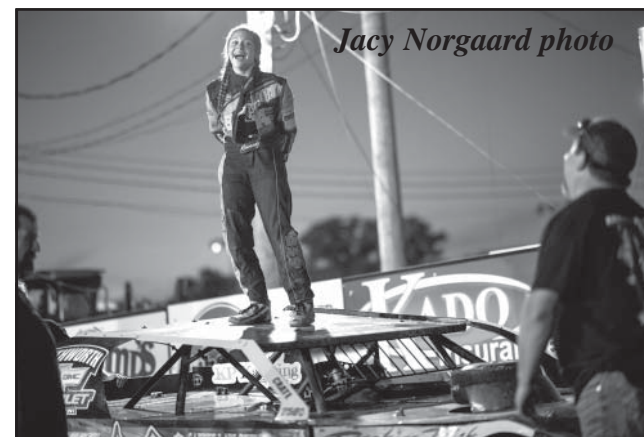
New Dirt continued from page 11

United States-plated car at the track, and I was the only one with North Carolina plates. I got a few looks as I drove my car into the pits.

I grabbed my bags and walked toward the infield. The track looked very nice. I was glad the rain had held off and I would get to experience a night of Canadian Dirt Track racing. Everyone at the track was incredibly friendly and welcoming. I appreciated that a lot. I was after all 1,600 miles from home. Opposite ends of North America it felt like. My friend Victoria Stutsky who drives a Midwest Modified was gracious enough to make a concession stand visit for me and hook me up with some very delicious track food. Which included fries covered in gravy. I finished that and watched as Victoria won her first-ever feature! I was ecstatic to have been able to be there to witness and photograph that moment for her. I hung around for a while after the races and chatted with a few Canadian friends that I had not seen in many years before heading back to Grand Forks.

As I was driving down the mostly quiet highway outside of Manitoba, I thought about how wild the last 8 days had been. I had somehow found myself at dirt tracks in Wisconsin, South Dakota, Minnesota, and now Canada. Not many people can say they have a

week like that where they are crisscrossing North America photographing dirt races. For that I am fortunate. As I entered back into North Dakota I smiled thinking about how cool of an opportunity that race night was and how cool this entire summer tour I was on was. I also thought about how much of a grind it had already been and how much more I had to go. This was just the appetizer of the summer. Next month I will write to you about the crazy adventures and miles that I put on in the weeks that followed. The incredible moments that I got to witness and just how far I traveled.


Jacy Norgaard photo

R & R

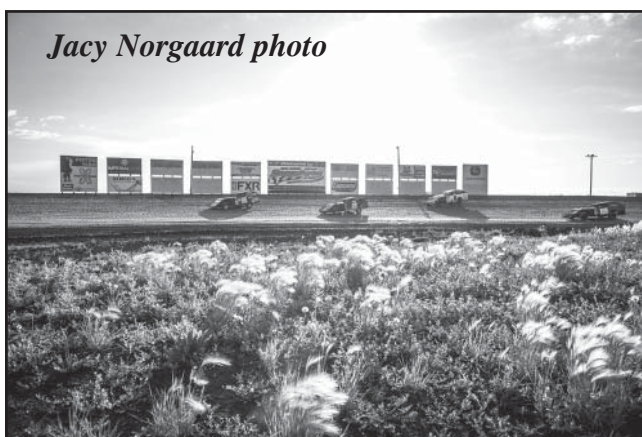
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Jacy Norgaard photo

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SHORT TRACK

SEPTEMBER 24, 2022

PROGRESSIVE
AMERICAN FLAT TRACK



Talkin' Racin'**Dean Reller**

This Summer has been racing, literally, the best way to describe how things have been rolling the last couple of months. As I mentioned the last time I checked in, I'm the announcer for the Structural Buildings WISSOTA Late Model Challenge Series. It has been a season of many new tracks and lots of new drivers along the way. Unfortunately, it has also been a Summer of rain and heat, which hasn't prompted any delays, but dodging the rain sure has.

Rain wiped out an early season race at Viking Speedway and it again challenged us on the series' first trip of the season to Ogilvie Raceway. The track crew was able to get things ready and we were able to get the show in with Cole Searing taking his first win of the season. Too much rain over the weekend washed out the first scheduled stop at Granite City Motor Park.

The calendar turned to July and that means heat and we found a great deal of it on a three-day swing in South Dakota. A pair for races at Brown County Speedway in Aberdeen gave me a new perspective on race announcing. The announcing booth at Brown County is an open-air booth that sits in front of most of the crowd. This offers a great unobstructed view, but with temps in the mid 90's, it created many new

ON THE ROAD WITH THE WISSOTA LATE MODEL CHALLENGE SERIES

challenges, all of which I was able to work through. It was just not something that I planned for. Some examples included brushing the dust off my notes often and having my arm stuck to my paperwork (sticky weather indeed) and not being able to hear myself talk (slightly important when trying to announce). Those minor things aside it was a great couple of days of racing as Shane Edginton won both nights and I got to see a lot of drivers that I've never seen race before. The final night of the South Dakota swing had the series stop at Casino Speedway in Watertown. I enjoyed the air-conditioned booth, and the racing was tight and exciting on the ¼ mile track. Cole Searing notched win number two of the season in his home state.

After a brief break, it was on the road again for five days, at five different tracks. The first stop was back at Ogilvie Raceway. Jimmy Mars took care of business and cruised to the win. The next night it was off to Grand Rapids Speedway, but Mother Nature had other ideas and we had to cancel the event. Wednesday night the Late Model Challenge Series rolled into Hibbing Raceway. This is a very historic facility with the classic northern red clay racing surface. Taking the win was Travis Budislovich who's name I have struggled with all season long. (Yes, even experienced announcers get tongue-tied).

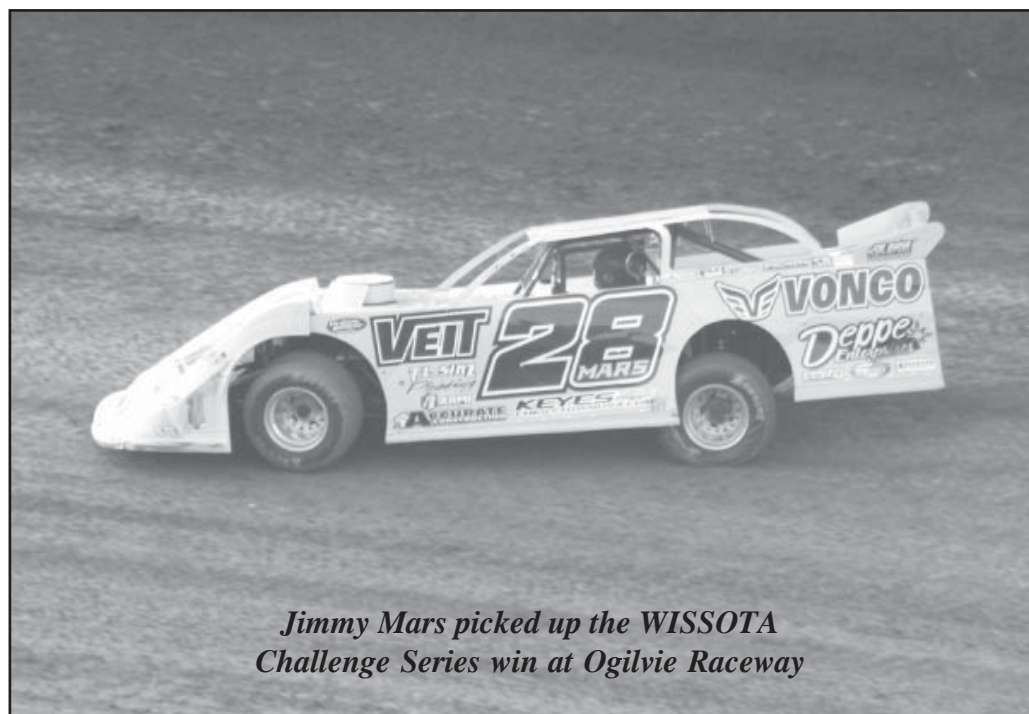
Thursday night we jumped across the border to ABC Raceway in Ashland Wisconsin. This was another great place to visit, and the track was in great shape, thanks to the all-volunteer staff that puts on the racing program. Darrell

Nelson, after having a not-so great start to the season, rallied back to take the win. The week wrapped up at Gondik Law Speedway in Superior. The big track also saw a WISSOTA Late Model Challenge Series record tying 51 cars attempt to make the 25-car starting field. When all was said and done, Jimmy Mars bookended the week of racing as he took his second win of the week and the season.

Rain would again make an appearance delaying the Mahder 55 at Red Cedar Speedway in Menominee. This event is not cancelled and has been rescheduled for Thursday September 22nd, however it will no longer be a WISSOTA Late Model Challenge Series event.

Before that, there is a four race stretch over 8 days with stops at Ogilvie, Granite City, Halvor Lines Speedway and Hibbing. This group of races will determine who will win the Championship. As of this writing, Cole Searing holds a 52-point lead over Shane Edginton. Darrell Nelson is back a bit in third, but fortunes could change after this final set of races.

If the stretch drive is anything like the way the season has been so far, it's going to be exciting until the final checkered flag. See you at the Track!



Jimmy Mars picked up the WISSOTA Challenge Series win at Ogilvie Raceway

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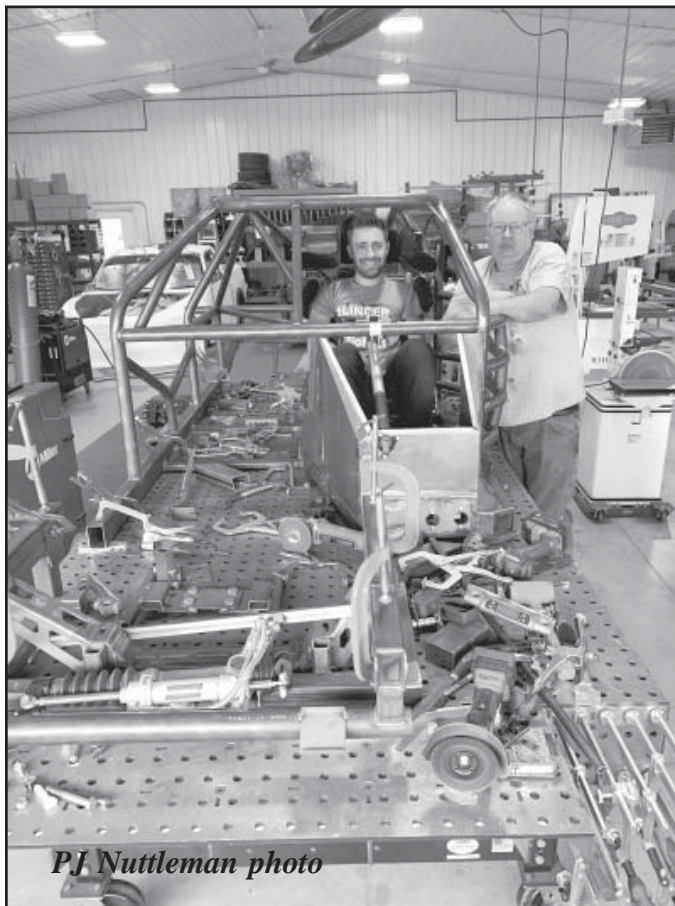
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Racing Nuggets



PJ "Jacklyn" Nuttleman

Decades of working on race cars without ear protection means my husband, Toby watches the television with the volume WAY too loud. It means I hear, "What?" whenever I ask him something. (He either really doesn't hear me or he's buying time to



PJ Nuttleman photo

come up with an answer.)

His hard of hearing situation also means he puts his phone on speaker when he takes a call. It's the only way he can hear the other person. This situation has provided me with a lot of laughs listening some of his conversations with people.

His chats with Ty Majeski are quite enjoyable as the two of them discuss set ups or changes for upcoming races. Their conversations are laced with sarcasm and jabs at one another. It's a lot like a verbal chess game, as they both try to convince the other about their ideas.

It's not my place to share what they discuss, but I'm hopeful for this final stretch of the year for them. They're selling some of the current cars they've been running and building a new one that's slated to make it's first start at the Snowball Derby in Pensacola, FL this December.

These next few weeks are going to be a mixture of chaos and excitement as they balance some big super late model races with Ty's schedule in the Camping World Truck Series.

Speaking of the Truck Series—many have been waiting to see Ty get that breakthrough first win. The talking heads on the TV all agree it's only a matter of time. It will be mighty tasty when it finally happens—not just for Ty, his crew chief Joe Shear, Jr. and that entire ThorSport team, but also for those of us who have watched his progression over the past 14 years or so.

Will he get that coveted first Truck win this month? Could it happen at Kansas—a track he's run well and finished P2 previously? Maybe it will be Bristol—wouldn't that be fitting for our local short-track hero to have that historic first win?

Majeski may get a truck win at the 53rd Annual Oktoberfest Race Weekend at La Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway this year. Toby is building his first ever full TOBYCar truck chassis, and as you might guess, Ty will be piloting it for it's maiden voyage. Toby along with Justin Zymewski and Rick Johnson, Jr. are getting this machine ready to make that debut in a scant month.

Toby and Ty were talking on the phone the

Have You Heard?



PJ Nuttleman photo

other night about it. Ty jokingly said that they should try to run every division at Fest this year. We all chuckled at that... then they started talking it out to see if it could be possible. The reality is—no, you won't see Majeski running every division at Oktoberfest. However, he will be in quite a few of them, pending a few more details getting ironed out in the next month.

The other detail we need to get ironed out is the weather. It's been really rainy lately. While we need some rain, it sure would be nice if it would land outside of race days. I'm hopeful that Mother Nature will get all of her ya-yas out the first five days of October, so she's done dropping moisture by October 6th. She's welcome to resume it on Monday, October 10th.

I'm starting to pray now for good weather at Fest now. I encourage you to do the same. Hopefully, God doesn't have a hearing problem like Toby.

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Chatty Madi



Madeline Schultz

22 cars checked into night number three of the Hopf Farms Bullring Showdown at the Plymouth Dirt Track in Plymouth, WI. Jordan Goldesberry would pick up the Osborn and Son Trucking Fast Time Award with a lap of 11.750.

Heat races were won by Jeremy Schultz, Jake Blackhurst, and Tyler Tischendorf. Tischendorf is running for Rookie of the Year and won his first career heat race with the IRA Sprints.

Kyle Schuett Joins the IRA Sprints Winner's Club

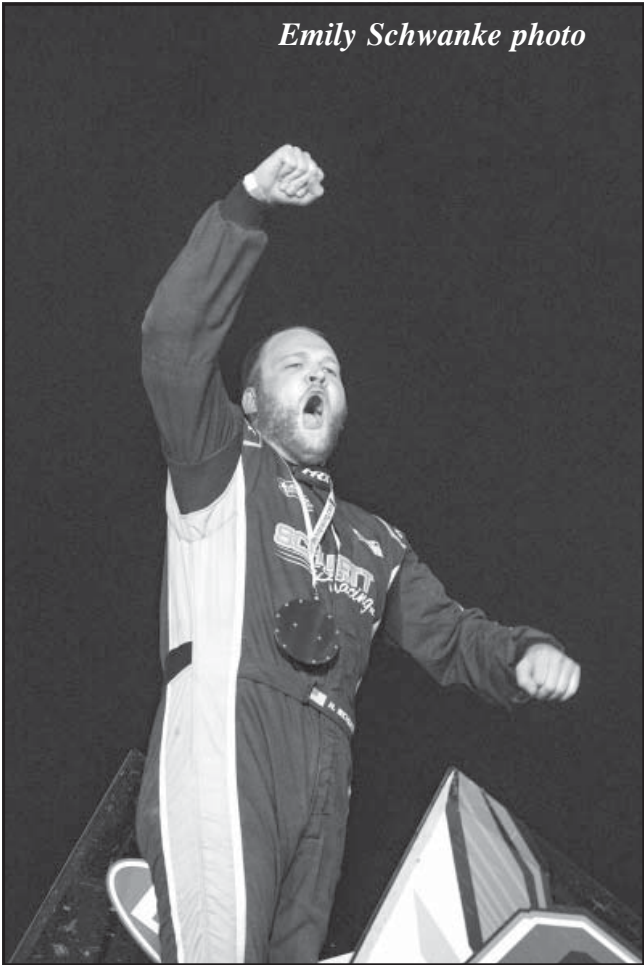
Kyle Schuett and Scotty Neitzel were on top of the charts for each of the dashes.

When we dropped the green, it was Schuett taking lap one with 2w and 26 battling behind him. For the first couple of laps, Neitzel and Tischendorf had striking distance on Schuett. The more laps Schuett raced, the larger the lead on the rest of the field he had. Neitzel, running third, got loose in corner allowing

Goldesberry in competition for a podium spot. It was Goldesberry and Tischendorf battling it out when Schlafer and Schultz came to play. Schlafer was in pursuit of another top spot this weekend as he passed Schultz to take 5th. All this before lap five, when Schuett would reach lap traffic. With six in the books, we would



draw the red flag for the Rhine Auto 39 of Jake Blackhurst in turn two. When we brought the field back to green, it was Schuett, Tischendorf, Neitzel, Goldesberry, and Schlafer. Back to green where



Neitzel and Schlafer would go low, and Tischendorf and Goldesberry went to the cushion. Goldesberry would make the move on Neitzel to momentarily take third away. Following close behind Goldesberry, Schlafer would pass as well to take 4th. Eighteen laps to go, and it was still Schuett on top, followed by Neitzel and Goldesberry. Nimee would also try to break into the top five starting from the 6th row. Ten circuits remained for Schuett as he continued to maneuver past competition and with car lengths on second and third. Behind Schuett, the 2w and the 25 were making up ground trying to catch up to the race-long leader. Six remained as Neitzel and Schlafer found themselves up to Schuett's tail tank when the 5-lap countdown began. Neitzel would be the first to try to show a nose wing with 3 laps remaining. Two left as Schlafer would make the pass on Neitzel for second with momentum to close the gap on Schuett as the white dropped. Schuett would take one more lap around Plymouth Dirt Track where he would take the checkered on his first career IRA Sprint Feature event win. Schlafer came home second, and Neitzel third. Congratulations to Schuett Racing Inc!

The IRA Sprints points battle is getting TIGHT! 2 time and defending Champion, Jake Blackhurst, is holding on to the lead by seven points over Danny Schlafer. Jake Neuman (R) is only 6 points away from Schlafer, and 13 for the lead.

Watch all the action for the Bumper to Bumper IRA Sprints on FloRacing!



Racing History



Dale P. Danielski

It's easy to see that promoting racing in the area in the early 1950s was about dodging death. Promoters determined that was what drivers and fans were after so ads for events stated as such. Enter one Satan's Bowl of Death which commenced with racing in 1950.

An article in the La Crosse Tribune read, "Races are slated for Satan's Bowl of Death, Sunday afternoon, July 16th in Cashton, WI. The race will be over a rough course with water puddles, hills, rocks and other hazards to add to the excitement." The event was to be held in the Ray Von Ruden pasture in Jersey Valley, with Gerry Neuheiser serving as race promoter overseeing action on what was to be a 1/3-mile track. A steeple chase sort of event, to hear drivers that raced there describe it, it was set up to be a death-defying race.

La Crosse, WI., area racing pioneer Harold Bentzen was there and once seeing what he was up against, almost went back home. "You'd go up around this hill, drive down at a 45-degree angle, then a real tight 90 degrees and go left. You cranked that 90, and if you didn't have it just right, feathered just right, you'd roll it over every time. I come off that thing just as tight as she'd go and hit that corner, and there was a wet spot. I turned the wheel but went through the

water and there she went. I went upside down and ended up in the brush! They hauled me away in the ambulance, I had a hole in my arm, I cracked my head and was all cut up. I should have gone home after taking one look at that lay-out! I think because it was so rough, they only had the one event there. With all the crashing going on it wasn't worth it to run. We were out for speed, you couldn't use speed there, it was all gearing and fast take offs."

Harold Bentzen's brother Clayton Bentzen was also at the race and fared a bit better. "I won that race in my #7, 1935 Ford Coupe. It paid \$50.00 and I used it to get my brother patched up from his wreck there!"



1957 aerial view of defunct Sparta Speedway

Roy "Happy" Franklin fielded a number of the cars that ran in the race. "They had a \$500 pay-off for that race and my cars won \$375.00 of it. We finished 1st, 2nd and 3rd in the feature and won the heat race."

Again, the event was more of a gimmick, a novelty event and consequently was not held thereafter. Certainly, unforgettable for those that were there who truly witnessed death defying action at Satan's Bowl of Death!

Imagine the gall of a racetrack attempting to charge a pit entry fee to competitors to race at the facility. That's exactly what the Sparta Speedway of Sparta, Wisconsin tried to do in 1951 and it didn't go

CONTINUED: AREA RACETRACK HISTORY

Satan's Bowl of Death and Sparta Speedway get into the auto racing mix

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SUNDAY, July 22nd

RAIN DATE, July 29th

Wanted: More Cars and Drivers

Admission \$1.00, tax included. Children under 12, Free.

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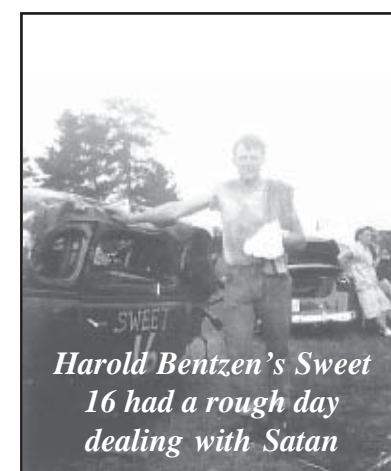
Sparta Speedway announces Grand Opening ad

over too well. The track located just East of Sparta, WI., off of highway 16, was scheduled to have its Grand Opening race on Sunday, July 22nd. It rained, so it was moved to July 29th. According to Happy Franklin, there was a catch, however. "They wanted to charge the guys bringing the race cars a \$2.50 fee plus \$1.00 admission to get in to race. We weren't going for that, so we boycotted the show. They finally broke down and decided not to charge us, so we raced. We were putting on the race, why should we pay to get in? According to Harold Bentzen, who won, "Once we got to race, we really smoked 'em. Really put on a show!"

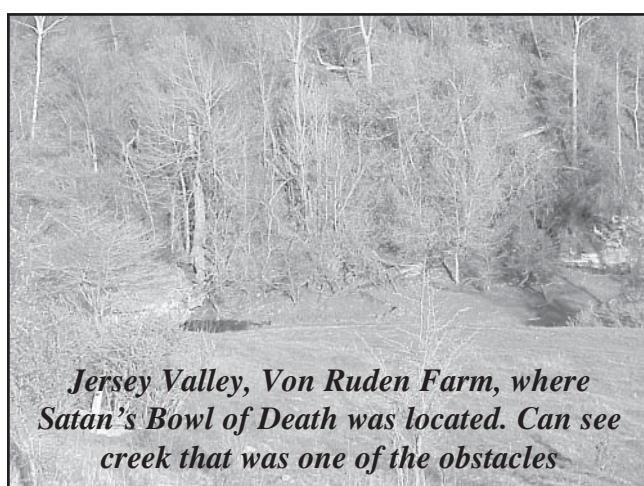
And with the issues at the track Franklin claims there were only a couple races there before they closed. Besides wanting us to pay to get in, fans were parking on the highway watching the races without paying admission. It just didn't work, they put the track too close to the highway.!"

Too bad the original logic of not charging the participants to race didn't stick. It's a valid point, why do those putting on the show have to pay to get in? It almost set a precedent at Sparta Speedway way back in 1951.

Here and there... They said it couldn't be done. A rookie driver winning a track Championship in



Harold Bentzen's Sweet 16 had a rough day dealing with Satan



Jersey Valley, Von Ruden Farm, where Satan's Bowl of Death was located. Can see creek that was one of the obstacles

Racing History continued on page 19

Racing History continued from page 19

RCHORA competition. It happened however, as our novice, 1st year racer, won the track Championship in the hobby division at Bob’s Cataract Speedway. Staying on the track while most found greener pastures off it, Danielski the squirrel, found a nut and parlayed it into the two race Championship. Had to be something in that peanut for that to happen...And, to everyone’s shock, Danielski struck again, later winning the LATE MODEL feature at State Park Speedway, Stoddard, WI., in RCHORA action. The fact the entire field crashed out on lap 5, allowing Danielski who was a lap down at the time to cruise to the win, very luckily staying on the track the last 10 laps, is irrelevant isn’t it? Wasn’t it Dick Trickle that said to finish 1st one must first finish? I’ll go along with that motto...Cole Howland after a long lay-off returned in a White car, not his usual colors and promptly won the NASCAR Late Model feature, 7/16 at Lax

Fairgrounds...Amazingly, Steve Carlson won his 1st NASCAR Late Model Feature at Lax. Fairgrounds here July 30th. What took so long? New car, a bad wreck and getting the bugs worked out ever since... A recent event at the Cresco Iowa Speedway looked like a RCHORA race won be Dale P. Danielski. Cars falling out left and right and survival determining winners...Mississippi Thunder Speedway, Fountain City, WI., action found the name Chism the one to have as Joe won the B Mod main and Jim the A Mod feature. Ryan Olson broke up the monopoly taking the LM main...And in other news, it would appear the top two in points in the Sportsmen divison at LaCrosse Fairgrounds Speedway are suspended from further competition. An after-race altercation between Bob Fort and Bill Schott in the last regular show led to the suspensions.

And finally, we would be remiss if we didn’t mention that Champions Reunion 14 will be a part of the Oktoberfest racing weekend at Lax. Fairgrounds. The Reunion, this year sponsored by long time racing

supporter John J. Mayer and his wife Sandy of Mayer Insurance, will be on Sunday, October 9th, from 11am-2pm in the turn one grandstand Hospitality Chalet. The event is open to former racing Champions along with track or Series promoters past and present. More information and signup can take place at the Champions Reunion 14 FACEBOOK event page. For additional info., contact Dale P. Danielski, dale@starmakermultimedia.com and by phone at 608-783-5125 or 608-518-2478. You must let Reunion promoter Dale P. Danielski know in advance you will be attending to be placed on a list for admittance at the main grandstand gate. Always a fun time I can’t believe we are 14 years into this thing. Rumor has it Chuck Deery will be attending as he is in the retirement stage of his life.

Photos and info by Dale. Questions, comments, opinions and other information welcome at Starmaker Multimedia 967 10th Ave N Ste A, Onalaska, WI. 54650. 608-783-5125 608-518-2478 or at dale@starmakermultimedia.com

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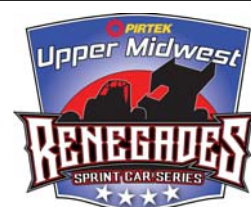
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