

THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

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THE MIDWEST'S SHORT TRACK AUTO RACING AUTHORITY

2024 Season Opening Action



Vol. 28 Issue 1 May 2024

Inside...



Opening Day



Photo Gallery

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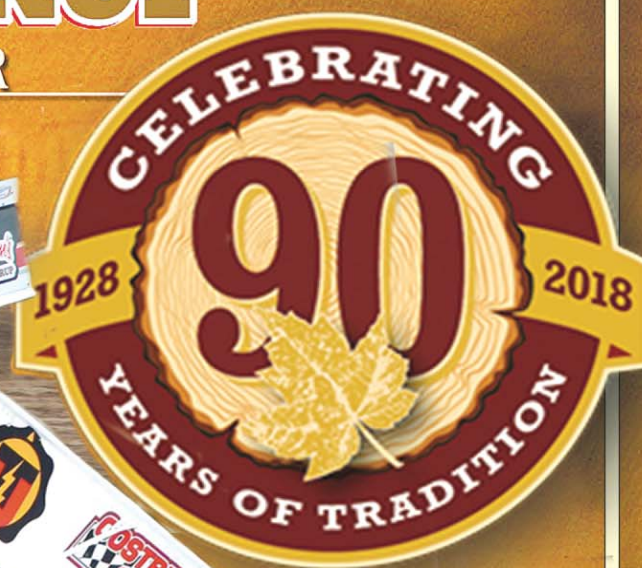
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Publisher's Note
Racing According to Plan



Dan Plan

I'm sure I've mentioned in previous columns how I'm beginning to feel old, especially now that I'm getting closer to my sixth decade on earth. The first item this year to remind me of my age now was the passing of Minnesota's very own Blackie Wangerin. Make sure to check out page 21 of this issue for more on Blackie and a few photos.

The second item to remind me that I'm not young anymore were the first two upper-Midwest

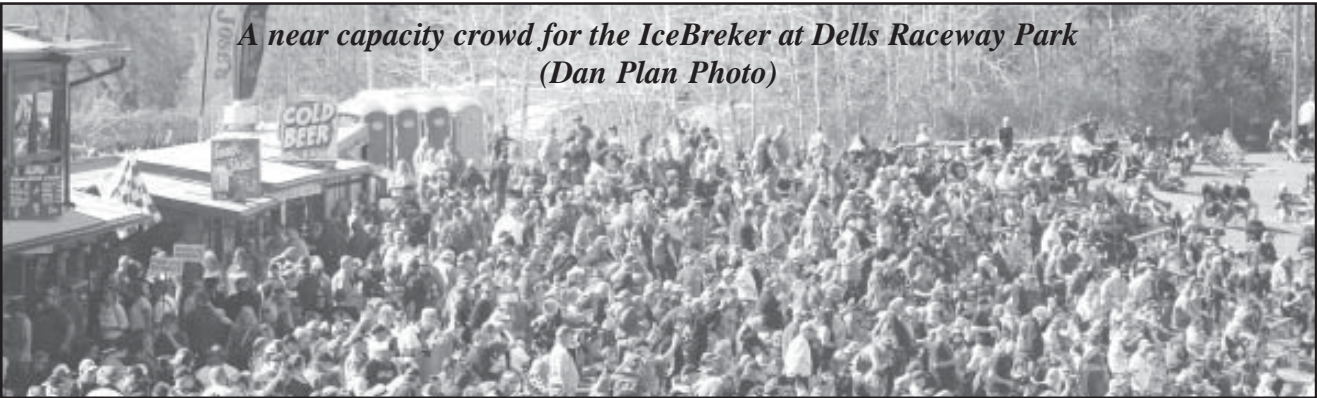
***Good Kids And
Good Crowds***

events of the season at Cedar Lake Speedway and Dells Raceway Park. The guys that started their careers during my adulthood all had their sons win on their first events of the season at The Lake and The Dells. Matthew Larson, (Brent's kid) Sammy Mars (Jimmy's kid) and Ty Fredrickson (Danny's kid) all picked up wins in the first part of April.

During the opening night at Cedar Lake Speedway, Matthew Larson doubled up winning both the WISSOTA Super Stock and USRA Limited Late Model main events. The very same night, Sammy Mars picked up his first career Cedar Lake Late Model win. Matthew didn't have an easy run of things as Larry Fitzsimmons challenged Sammy several times during the USRA Limited Late feature and he raced with many veterans in the WISSOTA Super Stock feature. Sammy had to hold off Pat Doar for his Cedar Lake Late Model win.

The following weekend, Dells Raceway Park held their annual IceBreaker for pavement Super Late Models. Ty Fredrickson was second in qualifying and raced his way to the front. Up here, we still invert starts and Ty did not start on the front row. He took the lead, lost it in a fantastic battle with Casey Johnson and Ryan Farrell and then retook the lead from Farrell

Publisher's Note continued on page 4



*A near capacity crowd for the IceBreker at Dells Raceway Park
(Dan Plan Photo)*

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THE MIDWEST
RACING CONNECTION



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OLD TIMERS

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Publishers note from page 3

on a late race restart. It was the way short track racing was meant to be.

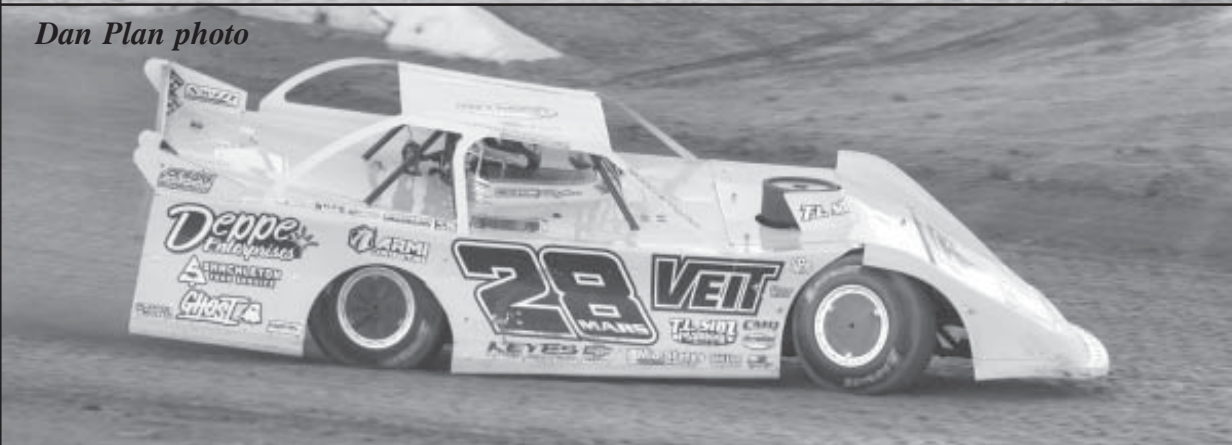
On my long drive home from the Dells, I had plenty of time to ponder about how cool it was these kids are now out on the track and winning races. While their dads still have several competitive years of racing ahead of them, it's encouraging to see the next generation of short track racers in this neck of the woods start out strong on the opening weekends of the season.

And speaking of encouraging, the crowd on hand for this year's IceBreaker at Dells Raceway Park was nothing short of fantastic. I am appreciative we still have promoters in the upper Midwest that are willing to take the risk of putting on big paying short track events. While I think most would agree the regular weekly shows are a bit of a challenge with crowds these days, the special events I've been to in the last several years in Wisconsin have had very healthy attendance numbers. That is a good thing for everyone as this next generation starts to write their own record books going forward.

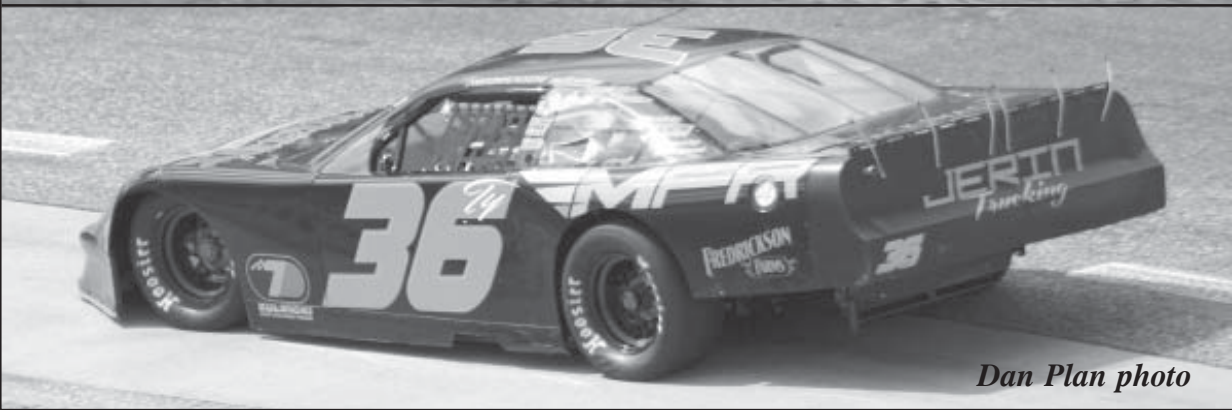
Matthew Larson (top photo) picked up 2 wins opening weekend at Cedar Lake Speedway, Sammy Mars (middle photo) picked up his first CLS Late Model win opening weekend and Ty Fredrickson (bottom photo) took the win at the Dells Raceway Park IceBreaker.



Dan Plan photo



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Dangerous Dan**Dan Margetta**

“You always get a special on Opening Day, no matter how many you go through. You look forward to it like a birthday party when you’re a kid. You think something wonderful is going to happen.”

That’s a famous baseball Opening Day quote attributed to the great Joe DiMaggio but the same could be said for season opening events at race tracks especially after a long cold winter. That describes perfectly how I felt at the Slinger Speedway’s opener, the ASA Midwest Tour Jerry Priesgen Memorial and I’m sure the great crowd at the Dells Raceway Park Ice Breaker the week earlier felt the same. Both events had pretty decent weather for once and the large contingent of race cars that showed up ramped up the excitement even more.

I wasn’t able to make it to the Dells this year but I did follow along on the live internet stream and it sure looked like a pretty good race as Casey Johnson led a bunch of laps before Ryan Farrel got his car hooked up on the long run and appeared headed for victory after a late race pass of the lead. A caution with a few laps left gave Ty Frederickson a chance and the 15-year-old phenom capitalized on the opportunity, making an outside groove pass to grab the lead and seal the victory. From what I’ve seen of him race so far, it sure looks like Ty Frederickson could be the real deal. He has an ambitious schedule planned for this season which is necessary as he is one of the Kulwicki Driver Development Program finalists and I think he has a real shot to win it. The Midwest has two other KDDP finalists as well in Max Kahler and Levon Van Der Geest which should provide plenty of stories and interest as the three for the Kulwicki Cup against four other finalists including a pretty good hot shoe from Michigan named Chase Burda.

My 2024 Midwest racing season kicked off a week after the Dells with the Slinger Speedway Opener and I made sure to get there for the Saturday practice day that preceded the main race day on Sunday. Practice day is the perfect time to catch up with the many racing friends I hadn’t seen since the curtain came down on the previous season last Sep-



tember. It’s good chance to spend some quality social time without the hassle and pressures of race day that leaves little time to just hang out. This year’s Saturday practice found temperatures in the 30’s with a biting strong wind and if it wasn’t the first time we were at the track since the off-season it would’ve been very uncomfortable. However, a lot of drivers and fans braved the cold and came out to hear the sounds and get some extra track time before the real season

kicked off. Our radio show engineer, Matt “Hang-over” Losee is my back up and right-hand man during the Slinger internet streaming broadcasts and he and his son made the trek up to practice day at Slinger as well. We decided to take the opportunity to set up the video equipment and make sure all the necessary connections were there and still worked. We even ran a new audio cable from the announcer tour to our camera deck. Everything was in place, the equipment worked, and the feed was picked up by all the TV monitors in the concession stands, the VIP suites, and the offices. We even put up a new monitor in the announcer tour so they can see what is going out over the stream. I also used the time to practice some camera work and decided to see how close I could frame the cars going around without bouncing the camera figuring if I can get the super close shots right, when the shot is pulled back to make room for live scoring, it should be easier to keep a decent frame while trying to quickly scan the track to see other action brewing. The trick is to see things developing off camera and still be able to guide the camera to it gradually without any wild camera swings. Of course that camera “practice time” was going out to all the TVs around the track and people in attendance enjoyed watching the “coverage”. I wasn’t planning on being on the roof long because I wasn’t really prepared for the cold windy weather and didn’t bring gloves, etc. I stayed up there until I couldn’t feel my fingers anymore before pulling the plug on the show to the dismay of the audience.

Sunday morning was “go time” for the 2024 Slinger season as the teams began rolling into the pits early for the ASA Midwest Tour Jerry Priesgen Memorial. Jerry Priesgen was the Slinger Competition Director and a very good friend who we lost about a year ago in a traffic accident so it was very moving to see the season-opening race held in his honor. I got to the track early as well as we did our LTN radio show from the track and then I was asked to be a part of the internet stream broadcast working one of the roof

Ty Fredrickson following his first Super Late Model win in the IceBreaker 100 at Dells Raceway Park

Doug Hornickel photo



Dangerous Dan continued on page 6

Dangerous Dan continued from page 5

cameras. A lot goes into setting up those internet streams and I’ve had the opportunity to work with the Tracktv.com guys for quite a few races. They’re a good group to work with and they usually work the opener as it’s a combined Midwest Tour and Slinger Elite Eight Series race while the rest of the Slinger season I’ll work with the RacingAmerica crew. One of the hardest things to get dialed in is the audio believe it or not as one would think it would just involve plugging in a cord. Lots of things cause interference with the audio feed and they have to be dialed out before the show which takes up a lot of valuable time. The multi-camera shows are more complex than the weekly events as they involve broadcast announcers, a pit reporter, the track PA, usually two roof cameras, a hand camera on the infield, a speed shot, in-car cameras, and maybe a drone. I really enjoy going back and watching the completed events to see how they look to the viewer as I already know what it was like behind the scenes.

A total of 35 cars signed in for the Jerry Priesgen Memorial and qualifying was extremely tight which is normal for Slinger. The top sixteen qualifiers made it in on time and then two last chance qualifying races advanced two more cars from each before the final four spots were filled by series and track provisionals. Qualifying was so tight the two fastest cars of Alex Prunty and Kulwicki Development Driver Program finalist Levon Van Der Geest turned identical lap times right down to the one-thousandth of a second



Doug Hornickel photo

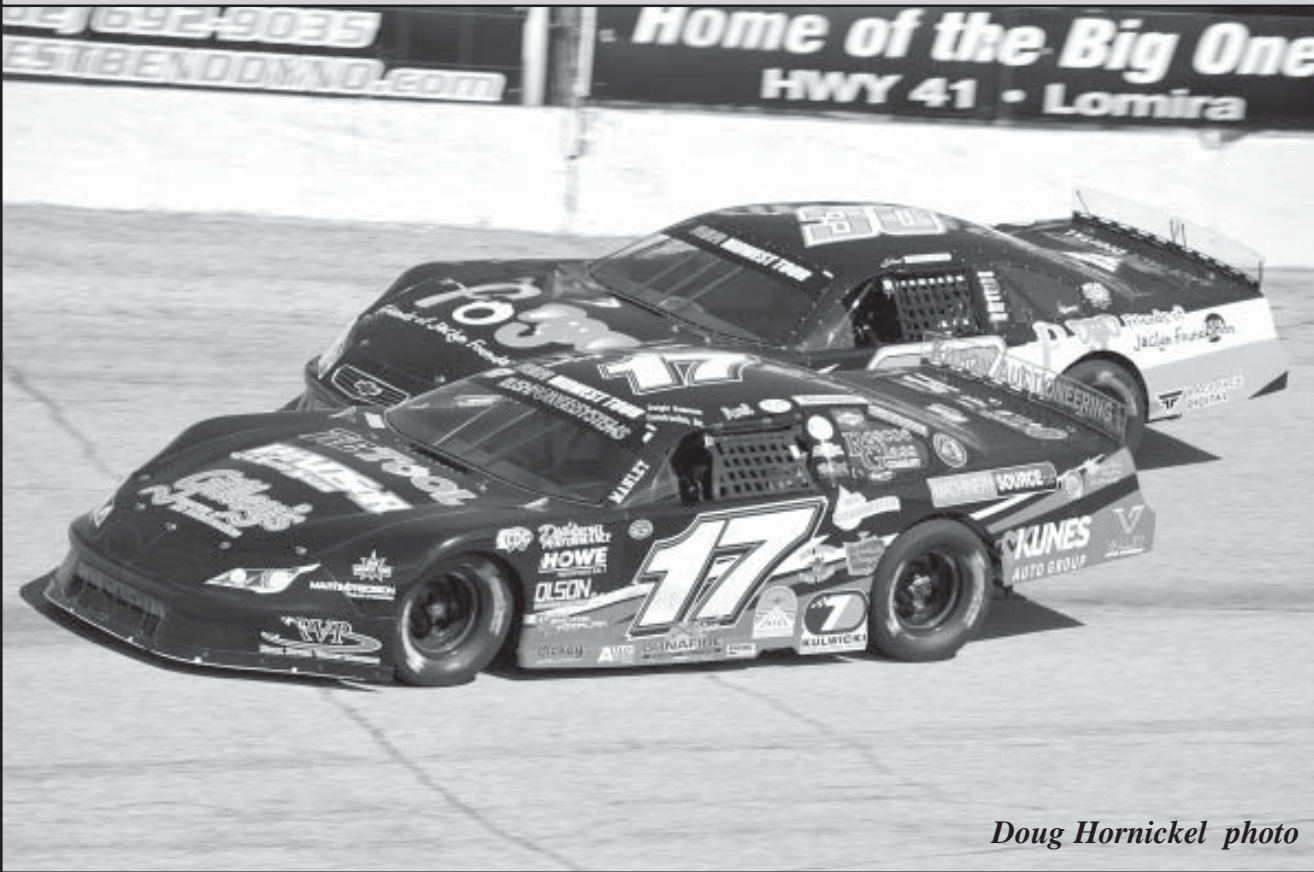
NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series driver Ty Majeski picked up the main event win in the combined Midwest Tour/Slinger Speedway season opening event

at 11.250 seconds. Alex Prunty set the mark first so he was awarded fast time and Ty Fredrickson was the final car to qualify and he timed his way in. Ryan

DeStefano and Gabe Sommers advanced through the first qualifying race and Dennis Prunty and Nick Egan were the cars to make the main from the second one. When the main event got under way Max Kahler, another Kulwicki Development Driver Program finalist, led the opening laps while heavy favorite Ty Majeski quickly worked his way to second after staring fourth. Majeski was able to grab the lead from Kahler following a lap 20 restart and once out front, he simply pounded the field into submission. The final 3/4s of the race ran caution free and Majeski pulled out to a five second plus lead while Kahler tried to fend off Luke Fenhaus for second. Despite sustaining some hood damage while working lapped traffic, Majeski was able to drive to the victory while Kahler held on for second. Fenhaus edged Alex Prunty for third while Derek Kraus finished fifth.

All in all it was a great way to kick off the Midwest racing season for 2024 and I am already looking forward to the next ASA Midwest Tour race, the Joe Shear Classic at Madison on May 5th and Slinger’s Keith’s Marina Race Against Cancer on May 19th. We’re off and running and it will be hammer down until September so I hope to see all of you at the tracks along the way.

Kulwicki Development Driver Program finalist Max Kahler lead the opening laps of the Jerry Prieigen Memorial event at Slinger Super Speedway



Doug Hornickel photo

Racing History



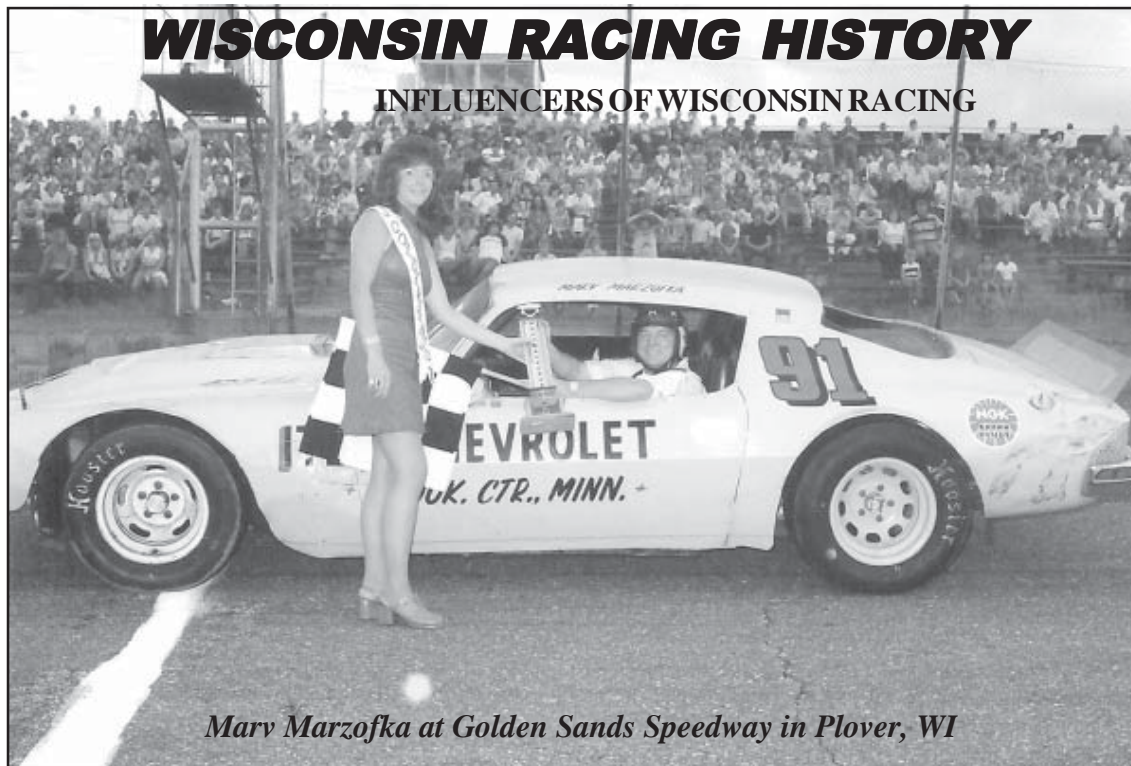
Dale P. Danielski

IN CONVERSATION WITH MARV MARZOFKA: ONE OF WISCONSIN RACING'S FINEST ROUND TWO

It soon became officially, a trio of fast Rudolph, WI., racers as Tom Reffner would get in the swing of things along with Marv and Dick. Marzofka was accustomed to winning races and championships and that continued into the 1970s. All three were top notch competitors winning wherever they went more often than not. Sometimes things didn't go as planned and Marv has recollection of that.

"Tom was at West Salem when we were racing the pony cars, he had a Mustang, and he and Dick got in it. Dick ended up going over the wall and Tom was on top of the wall, I saw the wreck and I just stopped. Tom was walking across the track and he said, boy that was a pretty wild thing. We looked and saw someone's fuel cell on the track, and Tom says, that's mine! I knew it was his because he put everything together with threaded rod. Tom said Dick put him in the wall and Dick said Tom did it, so I don't know who caused it."

Reffner actually got started racing running an Oldsmobile. According to Marzofka, Reffner was rough. "Tom was the meanest SOB on the racetrack. He didn't pass anybody, he'd smash 'em up off the track. Dick and I had to tone him down, I said you're going to get us all kicked out, everybody is pissed at us. We said you can't do that, Tommy, so he said OK, I won't. He went right out and did the same damn thing. He'd catch up to somebody and Bam! they'd go flying. He was a wild man. He did change later though. Dick and I said he was the best driver on the race track, absolutely the best. He was the only one of us that could drive as good as he did, with one hand out the window directing traffic, or shaking his fist and going as fast as he was.



Marv Marzofka at Golden Sands Speedway in Plover, WI

Though there were differences in those early days, Marv says it all turned out OK. "Dick and Tom and I got past all that. We were always the best of friends, like the way we were before we even turned a wheel. I think in the 25 years racing we won over 2000 races."

With high banked, high speed tracks built, some of the rough and tough racing did come to an end. Promotion was at an all time high also. "All those guys, Benson and Johnson, (Dells race track) Larry Weirs, (Lacrosse Interstate, Wis. Dells) how could you have any people better than that. Even Sam Bart's, people thought he was an a***hole, but you have to give him so much credit, he went out on a limb for the racers. It was for himself, but for the racers too. Golden Sands Speedway, what he did at the Madison track and other tracks he ran. He gave us a lot of places to race. His downfall, was he was a show off. He was making money, we were all making money, but he had to show us, opening the trunk of his Cadillac, how much money he had, big pile of money, Sometimes there'd be a 1,000 people on the hill and he'd show us all that money he had where you'd think there were 5,000 people there. It wasn't true and people got mad because they thought he should pay more. All that showing off got him in trouble."

Sam had a used car lot in Wausau, he said, Marv, I have three vans here, two aren't in very good shape, the one good one has a transmission out of it. Is there some way you can fix that? I said get the transmission out and bring it to me I'll fix it up. I had it for a month, finally got it done and told him to meet me. I told him wear something fancy so I know it's you. He came with this fancy, flashy suit on which as it turns out was how you remembered Sam Bart's, always showing off. Of course, Tom and I really had to kiss his ass, after Walbeck (Marlin) had punched him out. Sam mouthed off something about Marlin's wife and Walbeck popped him. Sam was going to sue him and bar him from the track. Sam got hard on us all over it so we met with him. We already had the

CWRA formed, and I wasn't a very good negotiator. We met Sam and said we want the lawsuit dropped. Because of Tom and I he did, had to sweet talk him how it would be OK, we'll keep racing for you, but if he hadn't, who knows how racing might have been. He bought us a steak, so he must have been pretty happy how it went."

It seemed Bartus was always skimping on things with his tracks. It all came to a head when drivers (CWRA officials) decided not to race until insurance and safety issues were corrected. "We couldn't get insurance unless the track had an ambulance. Sam had one but it didn't run. It wasn't equipped either. It didn't even have a band aid on board. One of my crew cut himself and went to the ambulance to get one. They didn't have one! "With those issues not addressed, the Club decided not to race for Sam at Golden Sands Speedway, and they didn't for the balance of the 1969 season.

Sponsorship was never easy to come by for racers and the Super America gas station chain emerged as one of the best deals ever. Marv Marzofka was not a recipient of that and others didn't always go the way anticipated. "Dick wasn't even going to be in on that deal. They talked to Tom first, they didn't have Dick in mind at all, it was for Tom and John Boegeman. Dick wondered what they were talking about and Tom said, well you could use Dick too. Tom really helped that deal and he didn't have to. There was some friction with Dick getting some sponsors that we didn't get. Dick got the deal with Charlie Raymond, (Trickle sponsor) who owned motels and other things, and that really hurt Tom and I because they would spend any money Dick needed, and we didn't get any of that. Dick would be looking at tires, and one of the kids would say, well, Marv's got you beat, and they'd get Dick tires so he could win. They came around and were buying Dick big

Racing History continued on page 8

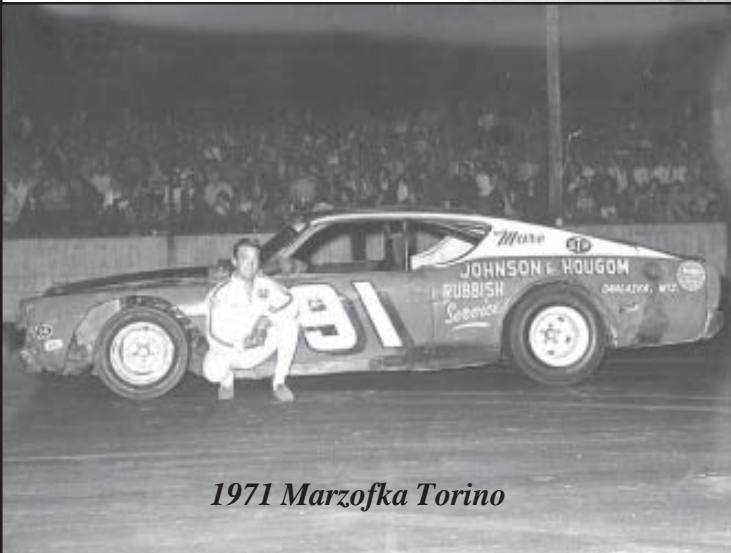
Racing History from page 7

buck motors and Tom and I were scratching”.

The evolution of the race car was definitely taking place. “In 1982, I was the only one that had a full perimeter roll cage, on a Ford frame. That was all my own built deal. Everyone else had bought ten Bemcos (Bill Bembinster Chassis’) and whoever was building fabricated chassis then. They all had hotdog stuff and I still had stuff I made myself. I could get a



Marv Marzofka Ford



1971 Marzofka Torino



Marv at State Park Speedway

degree bump steer which was really important, the other guys were always having to adjust that. I had a design that made the left front tire lean into the corner which really helped. Bemco didn’t have that in their cars. Bill Bembinster built Jim Back that Bemco car, in 1973. Bembinster told him he had to have new tires on every night. Well, we couldn’t do that. I’d buy new tires at West Salem for time trials and put old ones on for the racing. I’d make more money because I would set fast time and get that money. I would put those new tires on to run Wausau, and pick out the best of what I had for the Dells, and Plover. I pretty much had my way at Dells, I didn’t need to put tires on every night. I never put new tires on at Kaukauna. I hated the track and didn’t want to spend the money. I wished I would have because I ran good anyway. Most of the guys would shoe up with all new tires, because it was a big race. I figured I’m going to finish 3rd or 4th, even if I don’t put new tires on, make \$750 using up my old shit and the guy with new tires in front would make \$1,200. I just couldn’t justify maybe finishing better with spending that extra money.”

So much of racing became more and more about money and tires were the biggest culprit.

“I couldn’t spend all that money. When we brought up those Indy tires from Indiana in 1971, I won a lot. But I spent \$11,000 that year to do it. At the end of the year I thought I had all this money, but it was spent on tires. We were spending \$150.00 for a used tire. It was a wider tire and since we didn’t have a rule on tire width we ran those. They were wider and lighter. Man, the gripping power!”

The wider tire worked particularly well against Modified race drivers which was another Sam Bartus promotion, pitting those cars against the Late Models. “That really helped us compete against those guys. Their cars were so much lighter and they ran alcohol

fuel, so we had to find something to get an advantage. The wide tire was it.” Of course, the promotion was very popular with fans. “It was really hard to race with those guys. They’d take off, squirt down the straightaway and slam on the brakes in the corner. They didn’t handle, so what they gained on the straight, they gave back in the corner. Running alcohol, that was a bitch racing with those guys. I cried the whole time, my eyes would burn from the fumes coming out of those cars. But the fans just loved it, that big blue flame coming out the side, it was a show.”

Of course, engine

costs and availability of so many different ones to choose from, expenses continued to escalate. “We were talking about that awhile ago, and it was if you buy three engines it’s \$100,000, otherwise it’s \$36,000 apiece. Everyone can see guys can’t afford that, so you have 8, 10, 12 fields of cars at these tracks.” With that, more reminiscing is in order from back in the days you could make money racing. Who better to talk about that than the colorful, Moose Peterson. “Mosey was a hard guy to race for. Guys like Winkleman, Drinkwine, they wouldn’t let you pass ‘em. They’d run into you or run you right off the track. Mosey would say, make that son of a bitch work, take him out! I told Moose, I have to finish the race to win it, I won’t do that. He says, just once for me take that sob out. I didn’t do it, but I’d still win and he’d be all smiles and happy bragging me up after the races.” Sadly, Moose with that demeanor, met his untimely death riding a motorcycle. “He wanted to buy one, couldn’t get a deal on one, so he bought five! After they bought them they were on there way back, stopped at a bar and got drunk. Moose tore out of there and slipped off the new pavement on the road and hit a tree. Killed him immediately, broke his neck.”

It was common back in the day for the three racers to swap race cars periodically throughout the year. One such incidence was Dick asking Marv to race his Fairlane at Milwaukee in a USAC race. ‘I told Dick, I’ve never been in your car. I met him at the track and sure enough had problems right away. I didn’t even get to make a lap, so I didn’t know if I could even get in the seat. They got the car running, I got in the seat, and I had the steering wheel right up to my chest. I couldn’t push on the gas, or get over to the brake, because my knees were under the dash. I went out and timed in anyway, went into one way faster than I should have, because I couldn’t get off the gas, but I hung on and did get into the show. It didn’t go too well and I didn’t finish because I had to turn the car over to Dick, because he already burned his up, the Torino, earlier in the race. He didn’t finish the race with the Fairland either. The reason Dick was even there running USAC, besides the short tracks, was for the money. “Dick was dead broke after he bought the Torino to run USAC. He had been running the Fairlane in USAC, but the only money he had was the money I was making for him with the other car.”

As time went on Marzofka continued his championship winning ways by finishing races and before all was said and done, he had won over 30 at the various tracks. He miraculously won 11 in a three year period in the late 1970s. The sport continued to evolve and many changes in chassis, engines and cars were going to take place. That will be the topic when we return to our conversation with One of the best ever to sit in a race car, Marv Marzofka.

On July 15th, 1971 Marv Marzofka won the 20 lap Feature at Wausau’s State Park Speedway.
On July 31st, 1971, Marv Marzofka won the

Racing History continued on page 8

Racing History from page 8

Feature race at Dells Motor Speedway. Following Marzofka at the finish were Jim Sauter, Jim Back, Bill Retallick and Dave Field. On August 1st, 1971, Marv Marzofka won the Feature race at Golden Sands Speedway. Following Marzofka at the finish were Jim Sauter, Jim Back, Bill Wirtz and Ron Beyer.

On August 25th, 1971, Marv Marzofka won the Feature at La Crosse Interstate Speedway. Jim Sauter and Larry Behrens were 2nd and 3rd. On June 18th, 1972, Marv Marzofka won the Feature race at Golden Sands Speedway. Marzofka was followed to the finish by Tom Reffner, Dick Trickle, Jim Sauter, Jim Back, John Rank and Larry Detjens. On July 22nd, 1973, it was Marv Marzofka winning the Feature race at Golden Sands Speedway. Jim Sauter, Neil Callahan, Pete Mahlum, Jim Back, Larry Detjens, Ron Beyer, Harry Bahr, Jim Hornung, Fluff Furo and Jim Courtney followed. On May 26th, 1974, Marv Marzofka won the 1st 50 lap Feature at Golden Sands Speedway. Tom Reffner, Bob Judoka, Dave Field, Larry Detjens, Rich Somers, Neil Callahan, Jim Sauter, Paul Smith, Pete Mahlum and Bob Abets were next. On June 21st, 1975, Marv Marzofka won the Feature at Dells Motor Speedway. Doug Strasburg, Jim Back, Larry Detjens, Tony Strop and Larry Detjens trailed. On May 20th, 1976, Marv Marzofka won the 30 lap Feature at State Park Speedway. Marzofka was followed at the finish by Dick Trickle, Tom Reffner Mike Miller and Jim Bohmsach. Marv Marzofka was the victor in the 30 lap Feature on July 24th, 1977, at Golden Sands Speedway. Larry Detjens, Mike Miller, Jim Bohmsach and Tom Reffner followed him to the finish.

Here and there...On a sad note long time racer and car owner, La Verne Randal passed away here on April 17th. Laverne was successful behind the wheel and had some very noteworthy years with Steve Carlson as his driver. Laverne was a regular at the racing reunions I promoted and always had a great story to tell.

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

B-Mod

Invitational

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and the Rice County Fair**

July 17th

as part of the Fair.
at the Rice County Fairgrounds

Racing Classes IMCA SPORT MODS / WISSOTA MIDWEST MODS (FEATURE CLASS)

Rice County Fairgrounds

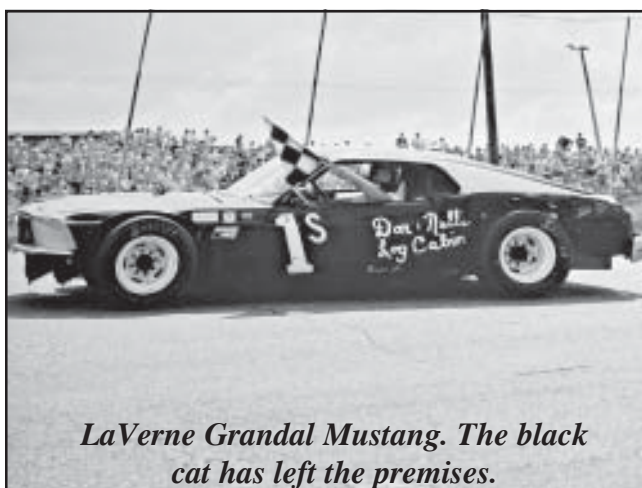
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Support Classes Will Be
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LaVerne Grandal Mustang. The black cat has left the premises.

Coming up in the next issue of

THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

Special event coverage from across the upper-Midwest



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2024 Dick Trickle Memorial Celebration

(final celebration hosted by Memorial Board)

Date:

May 19, 2024
12:00 pm – 5:00 pm
Rudolph Community Park, Rudolph, WI

Music:

Live music will be provided by the band Ladybird from Milwaukee, WI. Josh Rardin, bass player, has been a Dick Trickle fan since he was a young kid. The band featured a picture of Josh and Dick on their January 2023 album cover. The band is donating their performance for the celebration.

Beverages:

Wisconsin Rapids Lions Club

Food:

Chat-R-Box Café returning with a great menu

Live Auction

Items:

TWO – 2014 Groundbreaking Celebration Custom Shovels (autographed)
(a third shovel to be auctioned online at a later date)
Front Nose Piece from Dick Trickle Tribute Car, driven by Rich Bickle in 2023 Oktoberfest (Rich to autograph) - (donated by Conrad Peterson)
Goodyear Racing Eagle from one of Dick’s race cars autographed by Dick (donated by Terry Burnham)
Possibly a couple more items...

There will be **NO SILENT AUCTION** (please do not bring items for a silent auction)

50/50 Raffle:

Bring cash for tickets and a chance to win!

Donations:

Granite inscription walls are complete
Picture Wall dedications, just a few available
Porous Pave Project – resealing of the porous pave is scheduled for this summer. It’s an estimated \$6,000.00 expenditure which we plan to use proceeds and donations received from the celebration for the project. All past, present, and future donations are greatly appreciated.

Board

Members:

We have announced that this will be the final celebration hosted by our Memorial Board. We hope to have a great attendance and we’ll do our best to meet and greet as many of you as we can. Bring your families, friends, chairs, and your Dick Trickle stories to share.

TRICKLE

99

SATURDAY JUNE 1ST



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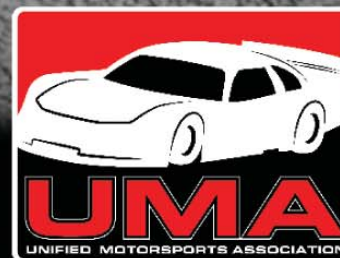
PLUS



Spectator Gates: 3:00PM

Qualifying: 4:30PM

Racing: 6:00PM



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THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

Photo Gallery



*Jon Lemke and Pete Moore battle for the lead in 602 Late Model action
(Doug Hornickel photo)*



*Farrell, Fredrickson and Johnson fight for the IceBreaker win
(Doug Hornickel photo)*



*Chester Ace was the Midwest Truck Series IceBreaker winner
(Junior Jackson photo)*



*Ty Majeski at the Circuit of Americas in Austin Texas
(Dan Plan photo)*



*Joe Neisius leaving the left front at home at Cedar Lake Speedway
(Dan Plan photo)*



*Rich Bickle Jr. is back in action for the 2024 season
(Kyle Kingman photo)*

MULTI-DAY NATIONAL EVENTS

THE LEGENDARY OPENER

THUR - SAT, APRIL 18-20

25TH ANNUAL

MASTERS EVENT

USMTS MODIFIEDS, CLS LMS & USRA LMS

THUR - SAT, JUNE 13-15

10TH ANNUAL

WORLD OF OUTLAWS SPRINT CAR SHOWDOWN

HUGE FIREWORKS DISPLAY

FRI - SAT, JUNE 28 & 29

37TH ANNUAL

USA NATIONALS

\$50,000 TO WIN WOO LATE MODELS

THUR - SAT, AUGUST 1-3

19TH ANNUAL

LEGENDARY 100

WED - SAT, SEPTEMBER 11-14

SPRINT CAR EVENTS

SPRING OPEN WHEEL SPECTACULAR

IRA OUTLAW 410 SPRINT CARS, UMSS WINGED SPRINT CARS, UMSS TRADITIONAL SPRINT CARS, & VINTAGE CARS!

SAT, MAY 4

10TH ANNUAL

WORLD OF OUTLAWS SPRINT CAR SHOWDOWN

FRIDAY HUGE FIREWORKS DISPLAY

FRI - SAT, JUNE 28 & 29

24TH ANNUAL

JERRY RICHERT MEMORIAL

410 OUTLAW SPRINT CARS

SAT, SEPTEMBER 7

RACING AT EACH CLS DASH RACES

UMSS TRADITIONAL / WINGED SPRINT CARS

CAN'T MISS SPECIALS

SCHOOL BUS SPECIAL

MW MODIFIEDS & SUPER STOCKS

SAT, MAY 11 (RAINDATE OF MAY 18)

FREE GRANDSTAND ADMISSION

PACK THE TRACK NIGHT & COOK MEMORIAL

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USRA LATE MODELS, UMSS TRADITIONAL

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RAIN DATE: SAT, MAY 18

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2:00 PM Start!



FRONT GATES 12:30 PM - QUALIFYING 12:30 PM - **RACING 2:00 PM** - LACROSSESPEEDWAY.COM - 608-786-1525



SUNDAY NIGHTS

Gates: 4:00 p.m. Opening Ceremonies: 6:00 p.m.

SUN MAY 19

ANGELL PARK SEASON OPENER

410 SPRINT CARS, MIDGETS
AND LEGENDS



DAHLKE FAMILY NIGHT

SUN JUN 2

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FRIDAY NIGHTS

Gates: 6:00 p.m. Qual: 6:15 p.m. Racing 7:30 p.m.

FRI MAY 17

FRIDAY NIGHT SEASON OPENER



\$2 BUSCH LIGHT NIGHT!



FRI MAY 24

LATE MODEL SPECIAL EVENT



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Going in Circles



Charlie Spry

Well, here we go again. Last month I talked about the closing of the Rockford Speedway. The news this month is now of another track possibly closing down, State Park Speedway near Wausau, Wisconsin.

In a meeting in early April the Wimmer family made it be known that this would be their last season running the race track, and also said that it is highly unlikely that racing will continue here beyond 2024. While there still may be hope of racing continuing on, that statement alone makes this highly unlikely. We can always hope, however.

This track has a vast history, much like Rockford. SPS first opened up as a dirt track in the early 1950's. It was taken over by Phil Bickley in 1970 and paved. While Phil and Helen Bickley ran the track it proved to be very successful. During its heyday of

operation such drivers as Dave Marcis, Dick Trickle, Tom Reffner, Jim Back, Mike Miller, Larry Detjens and so many more ran here weekly and won a lot!

Later on, another generation took over and did a lot of winning. Notably Mark Mackesy, Wayne Brietenfeldt, Kirby Kurth, Wayne Lodholz and Lyle Nowak became top dogs in the late models. Finally, in recent years it was young guns such as Justin Mondeik, Brock Heinrich and others who were the ones to beat. The Bickley's operated the track through 2005, then Todd Handrick kind of saved the track from closing back in 2006, when nobody wanted to run it. In 2010 the Wimmer family took over and made a whole slew of improvements and once again kept racing going when it did not look good.

While the late models usually had top billing, the other divisions also put on some great racing. Through the years the Bomber/Pure Stocks always put on some great racing. In the 1980's and 1990's there were a ton of these cars racing here, as Tomahawk also raced the same division. In recent years the car count dropped down quite a bit. Some nights there were only about six cars present. However, you did not want to go to the concession stand during this time, as these six cars would put on unbelievable racing. The kind of racing that you expect at a smaller track like this. Tracks with much higher counts sometimes paled in comparison to the racing these folks put on.

Also the mini-stocks and later Bandit classes put on great racing. In the Mini-stocks and Mini-mods one driver stands out. Dale Louze began racing here in the Bomber/enduro class, but moved on to the four cylinder racers where he became a steady presence, doing a good share of winning races along the way. Adam Eckes, George Seliger, Chad Dietsche and

others ran well and did a lot of winning. The Lietz family, Dad John and Son's Jim and Rich all have done a lot of racing here and have always supported the track in a big way.

On a personal note, I remember my first time attending a race here was for the second annual Larry Detjens Memorial back in the early 1980's. Although it is a long ways from home, it has always been a track that I loved going to and also competing on. I remember wanting to race there when I got a bit better

Bandit class car to race. It still was not up to what was being raced there at the time but closer. One night in 2006 I talked with announcer Curt Keene, who thought that the drivers would be fine with me, an unknown, racing with them. Curt took me around to talk with drivers Chad Dietsche, Dale Louze, and I think Jeff Spatz, and all were receptive. So, one day I took the long trip up with race car in tow.

At that time I had never towed farther from home than Columbus 151 and was a little apprehensive. My friend Mark Muller drove my truck and hauler up as I sat there fidgeting, getting nervous about racing at a new track.

We got to the track very early, and I remember asking Dave Lashua, who was racing a late model at the time, when I should go out for practice. He shocked me by saying, "we are going out right now, so you can get ready." I was surprised, and said, "But the late models are going out now!" He replied by saying, "That's Ok, you can go out with us. It's not a problem." Geez....I had never been on the track with the late models before but went out and got the heck out of the way. That is the way things were. Laid-back. I loved it!

I had fun that night. I remember in the driver's meeting that Todd Handrick told everyone, "We have a new guy here tonight. Let's race good and not send him home in a basket." No worries, everyone was fantastic. So much so, that I came back many more times over the years. In 2008 I finished 8th in Mini-Stock points. Great memories, and along the way I have met so many really great people. Both my wife and I have always been treated very well by everyone here, and I really appreciate that. The Bickley's, Todd Handrick, the Wimmer's, Curt Keene and everyone at the pit gate and concession stands, as well as all of the racers. Thank you! Whenever I raced here, someone would always be around to help if needed. One day it was about 100 degrees out and I needed to change tires. Young Jim Lietz came over and helped, actually DID it while I wiped away sweat. This would leave to a good friendship with this family.

I had a chance to meet and become friends with another legend from the area, "Grandpa Bob" Dalsky, who has a few good stories of racing through the years. I even had a chance to race with Bob a few times. Another one that comes to mind is Jim Schara and his Daughter, Amanda Rowe. Amanda still races, and her Son has now started. Jim raced with me back when I raced here and is a lot of fun to talk with. I look forward to that every time I come here.

When all is said and done, I hope something comes up that the track is able to operate after 2024. Given the way things are I do not really expect it. I guess I will keep buying lottery tickets!

Maybe next month I will finally get to some races and have a more upbeat column!



Charlie with his car during his first time racing at State Park Speedway in Wausau, Wisc.

Racing Nuggets

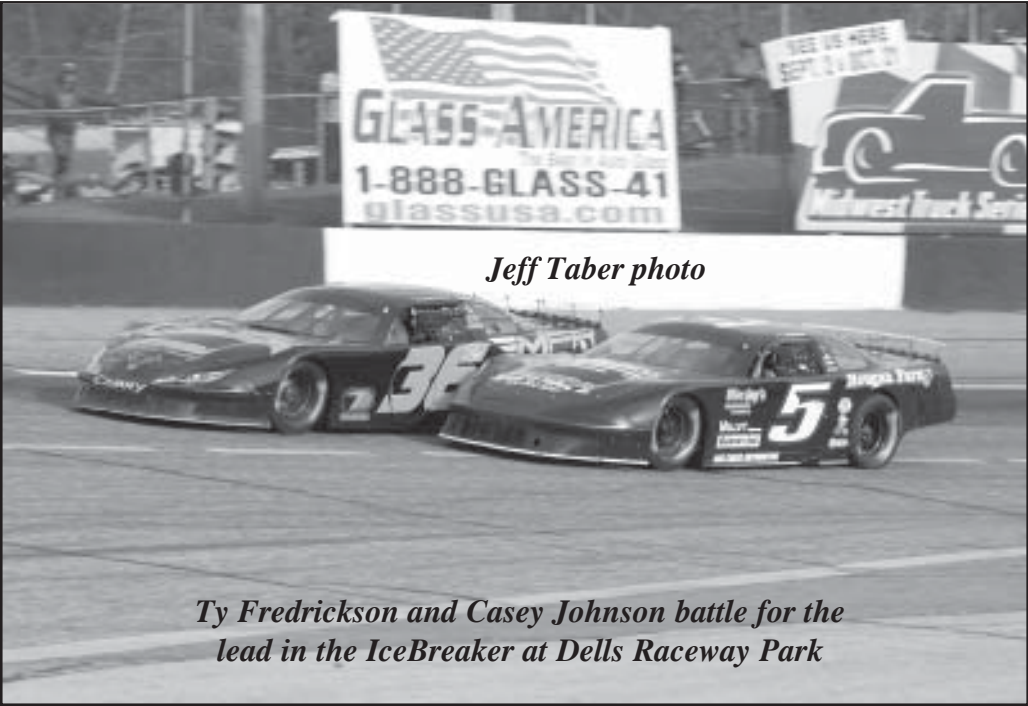


PJ "Jacklyn" Nuttleman

I'm so encouraged by the car counts we've seen to kick off the 2024 super late model season in the Midwest. There was seemingly an undercurrent of doom and gloom as last season was winding down, but I think cooler heads prevailed. Additionally, the powers that be have put a LOT of effort in to help get things aligned with rules across the Midwest.

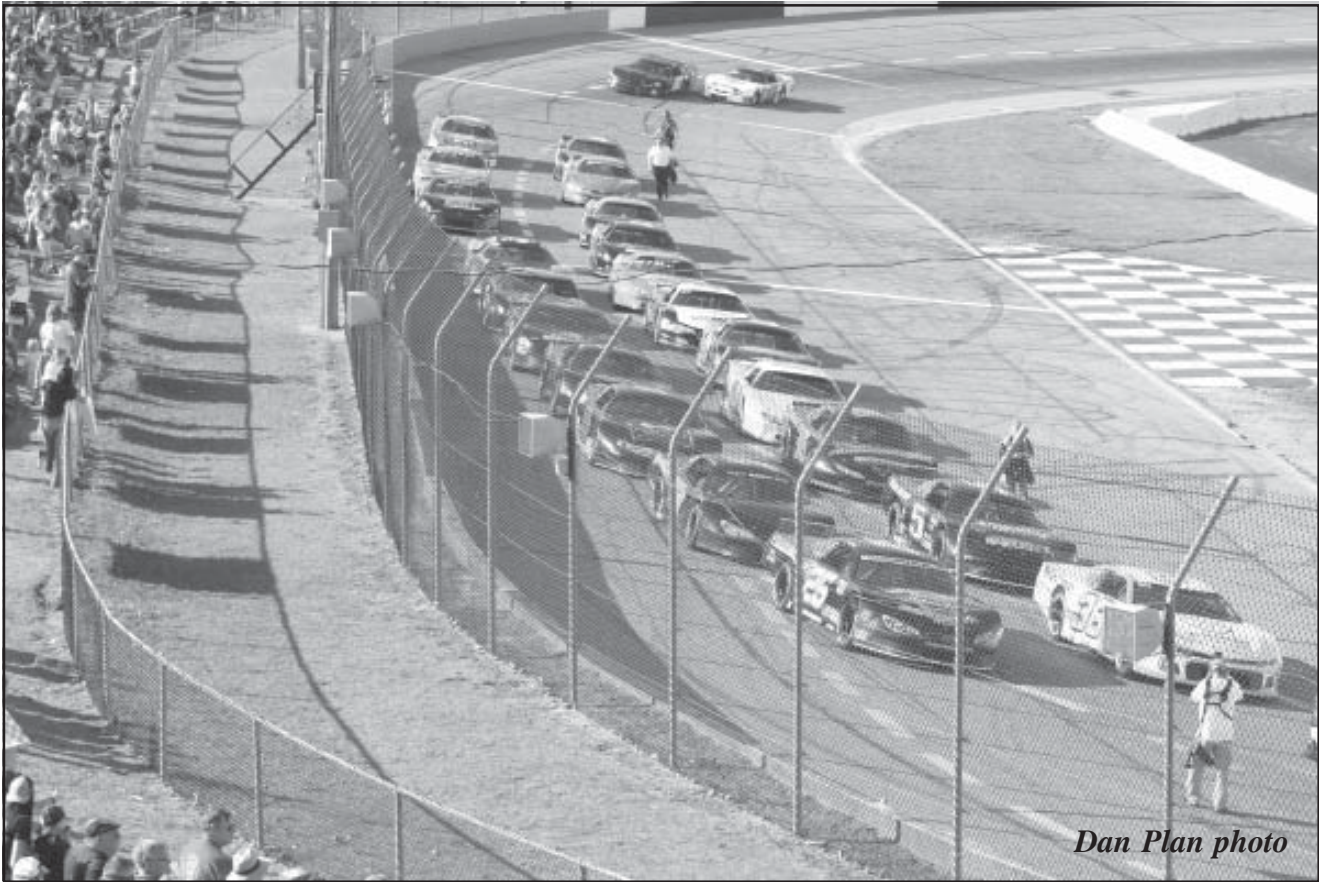
I imagine there will be more changes as things evolve, but let's face it, trying to get everyone on the same page is like herding cats. You have to start somewhere and at least this process has begun in good faith. It should lend itself to keeping the groundswell of support rolling for drivers to visit multiple tracks—whether for special events or a full season.

Dells Raceway Park kicked things off with the Icebreaker 100, boasting a car count of 35 who



Ty Fredrickson and Casey Johnson battle for the lead in the IceBreaker at Dells Raceway Park

Green Flag Drops



Dan Plan photo

clocked in for qualifying. Gabe Sommers set the fast time and the field was filled with a great mixture of drivers. Talent peppered across a wide swath of age and experience, ranging from the 15-year-old rookie, Ty Fredrickson to the legendary wheeler back (again) from retirement, Rich Bickle.

Fredrickson, the son of Dan Fredrickson, was the ultimate winner of the event after a spirited battle with Ryan Farrell and Casey Johnson. It was his first visit to Victory Lane in a super late model and an excellent way to set the stage for his rookie season.

Slinger Speedway's season opener two weeks later featured the ASA Midwest Tour's first stop in 2024. There were 35 cars vying to make the main event. Three of Wisconsin's drivers who have ventured onto the big, national stage were back in action at this event: Ty Majeski, Derek Kraus, and Luke Fenhaus. I have to say, it delights me to be able to see the passion for the short track roots continuing to be important to these guys as they chase their racing

dreams in the upper levels.

Qualifying at Slinger was whisker close for the top spot... more like whisker-identical. Alex Prunty and Levon VanDerGeest both stopped the clock at 11.205 seconds for their best circuit around the "World's Fastest 1/4-Mile." Because Prunty did it first, he was officially credited with the top spot.

Brad Mueller brought a "throwback scheme" for this event—a deep blue with fluorescent yellow lettering (Déjà Blu). Truth be told, that was the one I voted for on his Facebook page when he floated the vote for a throwback. The look was from two decades ago.

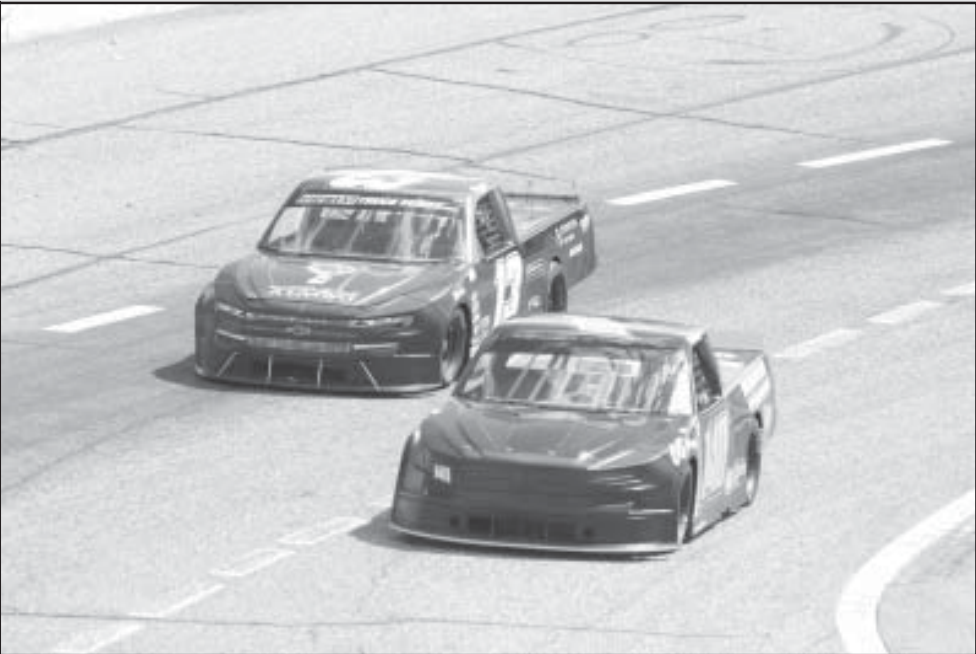
You know you're old when you vividly remember "throwbacks," like they were just a few years ago. You also know you're old when you think 20 years ago was just a few years ago.

Majeski ended up taking the super late model victory at Slinger by 6-seconds over second place finisher, Max Kahler.

I'm excited for this season of racing. The car counts are looking solid and there are a LOT of great storylines and characters to keep an eye on all year. I'm also looking forward to bringing more of these characters onto the Racing Nuggets Podcast this season. I'm proud to say that many of those mentioned in this column have already been on the podcast with Dan Plan and me.

If you haven't had a chance to watch or listen to any of the episodes, I invite you to check it out on YouTube or wherever you download your podcasts. We are truly blessed in the Midwest with some of the most colorful and entertaining racers in the country.

The Midwest Truck Series



The Midwest Truck Series was founded in 2011. The series was based on cost savings in mind while allowing racers who wish to travel to chase their dreams. What has been created is a blend of veterans who wish to travel and young up and coming racers looking to hone their skills. The Midwest Truck Series is like a regional series of what ARCA Racing used to be, veteran racers going up against younger drivers. The Trucks all have a GM 602 crate engine under the hood and run a Five Star template body, with the option to run a Chevy Silverado, Ford F150, Dodge RAM, or a Toyota Tundra.

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UMSS High Roller Series



The Upper Midwest Sprintcar Series (UMSS) continues to expand their footprint. For the 2024 season they are adding a traveling series known as the High Roller Series. The Winged Sprints will follow regular series rules, but the Traditional Sprints will allow “open” motor rules.



The Dakota Garage

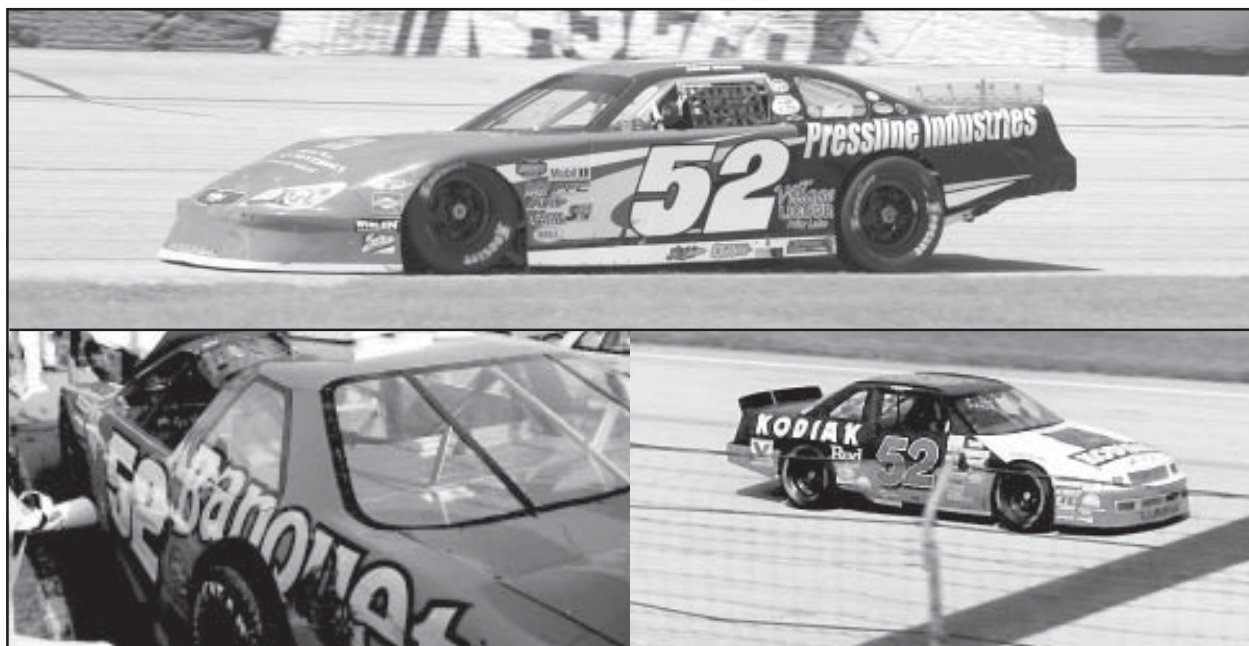


The IMCA Old Timers, along with Joey Miller of Country Joe Homes and the Dakota County Fair are building a 50x50 foot building to house all of the historical memorabilia that has been donated to the IMCA Old Timers. The new building will display the group's historical racing artifacts. The group is actively seeking donations to fund this project and they are a non-profit organization. Additional information can be found on their website at www.imcaoldtimers.com.

The Story Behind The Number - Chad Walen

by Dan Plan

For many years, I incorrectly assumed that Chad Walen's race car number was based off a version of his Uncle Mel's race car number. Mel Walen raced throughout the Midwest from the 1970's through the 1990's and used the number 25. I thought Chad just reversed the number to come up with 52. Turns out there were several reasons he utilized the number 52. Here is how Chad explained choosing his number: "Little known facts about how I choose my number. #1. Ken Schrader is one of the biggest reasons my number is 52. I met him at Hawkeye downs about 1987-89 and he had a big influence on me. #2. Butch Miller was one of my favorites racing against Mel. #3. It's the opposite number of Mel. I didn't want his number as I wanted people to know the difference."



Dells Raceway Park & Slinger Super Speedway Action

Doug Hornickel photos

Here a just a few of the action shots taken by Doug Hornickel during the IceBreaker 100 at Dells Raceway Park and the Jerry “Bear” Priesgen Memorial 100 at Slinger Super Speedway.



Blackie Wangerin 1935 - 2024

by Dan Plan

Four years ago, I had the opportunity to meet Blackie Wangerin in person during Speedweeks through my good friend Skip Pollak. Blackie was one of very few drivers from Minnesota that ran NASCAR Cup series races. On the day I met Blackie, he signed autographs on the beach,

chatted with the Wood Brothers, and drove his very first race car from Raceway Park in Shakopee down the beach in Daytona. The next day he had his very last Thunderbird on display at the big track.

Back in the early 1980's there were so many cars entered in the Daytona 500, they ran a consola-

tion race on Friday after the Twin 125's on Thursday. Blackie rolled his Thunderbird into victory lane at Daytona in 1983. It was a big day for Minnesota race fans. Blackie passed away early in the month of April 2024 at his Daytona winter home. God Speed Blackie.



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