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Publisher's Note
Racing According to Plan



Dan Plan

My October column was titled “The Most Wonderful Time of the Year.” I’m here to tell you this phrase held true once again this year. I didn’t attend as many October races as I have in years past, but the two I went to were both fantastic shows. As I’ve mentioned, several times in the past, this time of year is when many short track drivers venture away from their home track and see how they stack up against the rest of the competitors in the Upper-Midwest. I enjoy watching drivers from the tracks I frequent the most head out of town and try their luck at another track. It reminds me of the old ABC Wide World of Sports phrase; it’s the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat.

My first October event was the

It's Still The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

annual Oktoberfest Race Weekend at LaCrosse Fairgrounds Speedway in God’s Country of West Salem, Wisconsin. Oktoberfest has a special meaning for me as it is the first season ending special event I can remember attending with my parents many, many years ago. The first picture I have is from the 1977 event. Even as an 11-year-old kid, I thought it was cool to see drivers from Minnesota pick up wins at Oktoberfest. Now, as I’m fast approaching 60-years-old, I still think it’s pretty damn cool to see Minnesota drivers make their way to victory lane. In all honesty, it doesn’t matter if it’s a heat race, B-feature or main event. It’s cool to see. It’s also heartbreaking to see somebody doing well and have something go wrong to end their weekend.

Oktoberfest once again represented the hashtag of #FestIsBest. The weather was phenomenal all

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Kim Kemperman photo



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THE MIDWEST
RACING CONNECTION



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weekend, hanging out with friends before and after the races, and 4 days of great racing on the track.

My second October short track event was the 14th Annual Topless Nationals at Ogilvie Raceway. This is another good one, and it's close to home. I was only able to attend the Friday night portion of the Topless Nationals 2-day show but saw enough racing in one night to last me through the rest of the week-end. The neat thing about this event is they cater to the kids and the adults. The kids have the opportunity to trick-or-treat Saturday afternoon before the show. The adults get a couple of opportunities to participate, with the costume contest along with a bonfire and band in the pits on Friday night, along with donations to the Susan G. Koman breast cancer awareness program throughout the course of the weekend.

I always enjoy to opportunity to attend the Topless show at Ogilvie, as the cars look really cool without the roofs on. You can see the drivers wheelin' them things through the corner, and any "animation" they may show to another driver under caution. It's a win-win for the fans having the roofs off of the cars.

It truly was The Most Wonderful Time of the Year.



Dan Plan photo



Shawn Swanstrom photo



Dan Plan photo



Bruce Nuttleman photo

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Going in Circles



Charlie Spry

One of my last races of the year was at the annual Bahama Brackets in mid-October. As most know, the Rockford Speedway hosted this unusual event from the start, some 30+ years ago. With that track now closed down, the Deery family worked with the Grundy County track to insure the continuance of this show. And continue it they did!

With few rules other than safety, many a race vehicle has been saved from oblivion by shows such as this, where a vehicle may not fit into any tracks' division or rules but is just fine to race here.

John Culp has one of those vehicles. His race truck is a victim of changing track rules and divisions near his Athens, Michigan home. But it and he can still race.

He was racing in a truck series near his home with his truck, in which the division was kind of like

the current Mid-Am series. When this went away, he had few places to race. "The truck was not really worth selling, I would never get much for it, so I just decided to keep it and run a few shows here and there with it and have fun," Stated John.

John has been a bracket regular for the past three years, with some bad luck and some good runs as well. He also runs a show called the Super Shoe at Kalamazoo, Mich.

As for John himself, he got his start in racing back in 1995 when sixteen years old in an enduro at Galesburg. He has since raced at many tracks in Michigan, including Whittemore, Berlin, Spartan, M40, Kalamazoo, Galesburg, Springport, and Owosso. Indiana tracks included Angola, New Paris, and Winchester. After racing in the truck series (shorttracktrucks.com challenge series), he raced at a few more tracks as well as some of the aforementioned. He enjoys racing when he feels like it and tries not to get in wrecks, as he said, "I have no time to work on it with family and other commitments, so I need to keep it together."

The truck itself features a 360 engine with no serious high dollar parts inside. The chassis itself is based on a 1980's Monte Carlo. The body is a 1997 Chevy with a Ford nose. "Probably the highest dollar piece on the truck is the transmission. It is a Falcon," Noted John. This is a two speed transmission with an internal clutch.

John has also added two new tracks that he had

not raced on before, both Rockford and Grundy now.

Enjoyed talking with Brothers John and Joe Ostermann, who made the long haul from up by the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Some may remember that John won a bracket last year after an epic battle with Zack Orts. This year John had steering issues with his truck and sat the show out after that. However, Joe took his car out there and proceeded to win the AAA bracket, keeping the wins in the family.

John Ostermann is a familiar name, as he stated that he has been racing for forty years, often in Super Late Models. "I have raced against many different drivers, including Dick Trickle, Ken Schrader, Rusty Wallace, Scott Hansen, and I even drove Michael Waltrip's car one night at Sauk Centre, Minnesota."

John got his start in racing at age 15, as he kind of grew up around the sport, which got him interested at a young age. Norway has usually been his home track, but he has really raced all over the place.

When asked if he had ever raced at Grundy before, he stated, "No, the last time I was here was when I was pitting for Kevin Cywinski back in 1995, when our team won the ARTGO championship."

John still likes to race, but is more relaxed about it than ever, saying, "I am at the point where I don't really get too worried about how I do or how often I race." With that being said, he has plenty on his plate, as he has now been the President of the Norway, Mich. Speedway for about twenty years, has his own business (141 Automotive), and has also been instrumental in getting the Escanaba, Michigan, track back up and running.

If that hasn't been enough, also consider that he was an auto mechanics teacher and head basketball coach at Goodman/Armstrong Creek/Stephenson High School for thirty-one years.

As for his track promoting, John believes in trying to make racing affordable in lower classes, especially, so that young people can get involved early on. "We were likely one of the first tracks to develop a very basic, stock four cylinder class many years ago. The goal was to make it so that a high school kid or really, anyone, could go out and start racing without even owning a welder. It worked very well, and before long we had huge fields of cars."

As for his racing history and successes, they have been many, as he still races a Super Late, and also has two championships as a driver and four as a car owner.

We plan on visiting Norway and a couple of other tracks up that way in 2025.

Danny Deutsch had his car present once again. With the lower banking of this track, he did not have the opportunity to do his wheels in the air exhibition of racing like on the high banks of Rockford. He got



Charlie Spry photo

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bumped up to the A bracket on Saturday night when he broke out of his heat race in the AA bracket while running second. His only prior racing at this track? “One time many years ago in a street stock.”

Phil Malouf drove a four cylinder in the B bracket, a car with a previous bracket win under its belt. “Nikki Coulthurst won one of the brackets a few years ago, then the car sat around for awhile and I bought it and re-did it,” Said Phil. Phil now has many years of racing under his belt and operates the Midwest Dash Series for mod four type cars. his racing interest all began as a youngster when he began hanging around and helping late model racer Lyle Nowak. Phil even took Lyle’s number, 32, when he began.

My vote for the racer of the weekend goes out to Sixer racer Seth Rowe. Seth kept breaking out of his bracket and found himself racing in the feature with much, much more full bore race cars with V8 power and much more sophisticated suspensions. He ended up finishing 15th in the AA feature, an amazing performance for someone in a stock 6 cylinder race car. He just kept making laps and staying out of trouble. Well done!

The A bracket feature winner was Dave Edwards, a driver who has raced at many of these shows, and even races weekly at Madison in a division with a breakout rule, so once again, someone who knows the way around this kind of racing.

The AA feature was a caution filled affair, starting off on the wrong foot with three cautions before the race really got going. The marathon affair ended with Dan Calhoun surviving to get the win.

The AA feature was worth the admission price

Charlie Spry photo



all by itself. Hawkeye Downs racer Adam Petrzelka looked to be having his way with the field, getting out to a huge lead and cruising, backing off early for the turns to make sure that he did not breakout. The aforementioned John Culp came on strong, and a late caution set the stage for a dramatic finish. If only we had known! On the last lap, Mr.Culp drew even with

Mr. Petrzelka, and as the pair raced to the finish made slight contact, sending them both nearly sideways. It appeared that Culp had barely taken the win over Petrzelka, but the dreaded breakout came into play, as both drivers had broken out on

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the final lap, with third running Joe Ostermann claiming the win in dramatic fashion. He races in a similar breakout division at Norway Speedway, so once again, his experience in this type of racing showed. For the other pair, all of us would do the same. last lap, racing hard for the win, you are going to go all out. No losers here. John Culp was philosophical about it afterward, saying, “It’s all part of the game. We are already planning on next year here.”

Joe is also a Brother to John, who you can read about above. Joe can now claim a bracket win along with his Brother. Bragging rights now are even! Two Brothers winning a bracket in consecutive years is a pretty cool thing.

The two four cylinder brackets, the “B” and “BB” were both won by the same driver, Grundy regular Ryan Lagastee. Both were very competitive and relatively trouble-free races, and with the wind getting to the fans, many were not there to see two very good races.

Car count was decent, and I think this will continue to grow here, just like it did at Rockford.



Kim Kemperman photo







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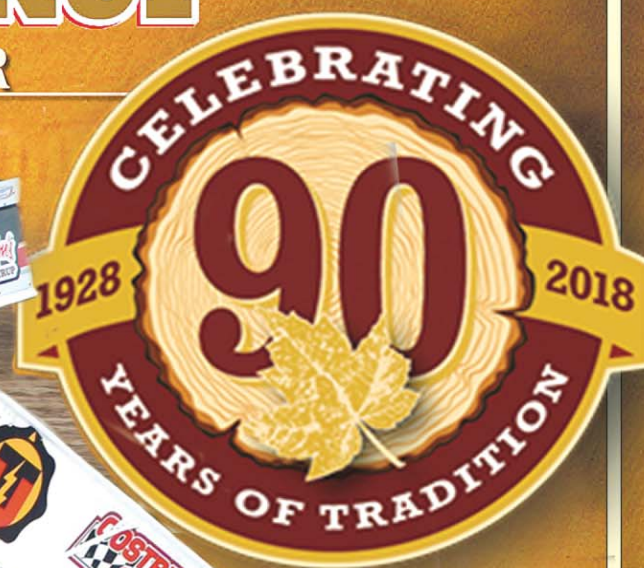
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Photo Gallery



*Penn Sauter in victory lane at Oktoberfest
(Brewster Baker photo)*



*Johnny Sauter in victory lane at Oktoberfest
(Brewster Baker photo)*



*Topless Late Model action at Ogilvie Raceway
(Shawn Swanstrom photo)*



*Pat Doar won the Late Model portion of the Topless Nationals
(Shawn Swanstrom photo)*



*Skylar Holzhausen picked up the LaCrosse track championship
(Junior Jackson photo)*



*Jacob Goede finished 3rd in NASCAR Home Track points
(Junior Jackson photo)*

THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

Photo Gallery



*The Cyber Twuck during The Bahama Brackets at Grundy
(Charlie Spry photo)*



*Ty Majeski and "The Hammer" in victory lane at Oktoberfest
(Ryan Nuttleman photo)*



*Andrew Morrissey and Dahlton Zehr wreck during Oktoberfest
(Doug Hornickel photo)*



*Hall of Fame inductee Lance Matthees in 2009 at Deer Creek
(Dale P. Danielski photo)*



*Justin Mondiek and Jonathan Eilen at Oktoberfest
(Doug Hornickel photo)*



*Johnny Sauter and Michael Hinde at Oktoberfest
(Doug Hornickel photo)*



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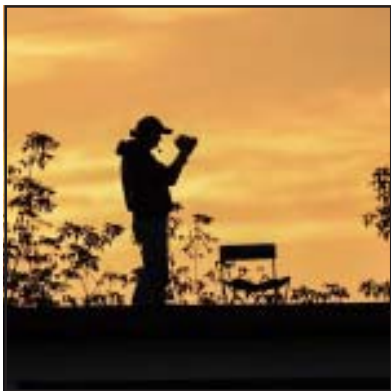


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Dangerous Dan



Dan Margetta

Just like that, the 2024 racing season in the Upper Midwest has come to an end and it sure felt the month of October whizzed by faster than the summer months. Usually by this time of the year, we’re ready for a break but with the weather cooperating for all but one of the race weekends this month, it sure made it hard to accept that “next week” isn’t until next April.

I actually began October far away from a racetrack in a stick and ball setting as I spent opening night of Oktoberfest Race Weekend at La Crosse getting my heart broken with about 40,000 other Milwaukee Brewer fans in the ninth inning of the deciding game of the Wild Card Series. The Brewers post season uncertainty meant I couldn’t commit to running a camera at Oktoberfest and I got there in time to see Friday night’s action highlighted by the Dick Trickle 99. The opportunity to run a camera was there but I passed as I promised Oktoberfest Race



Gabe Sommers (15) and Ty Majeski (91) batte for position at Oktoberfest. Majeski would go on to win the race, while Sommers secured the ASA Midwest Tour Championship
(Doug Hornickel photo)

Weekend wasn’t going to be a “work” weekend and besides I hadn’t just socialized at a racetrack in years. It sure felt different going strictly as a fan for a change and I guess you kind of take for granted just how many people you know in this racing deal as I just stood in one spot all night but always had someone to talk to. Whether it was new folks I just met or long-time friends I had known for years, a steady stream of racers and fans from Slinger, Madison, The Dells, Kaukauna, Rockford, State Park, Golden Sands, and La Crosse made the night go by very quickly. The racing action sure didn’t disappoint either as Ty Fredrickson won the first segment of the Trickle 99 and Casey Johnson scored the victory in the second

leg. Fredrickson won the final segment and the Trickle 99 overall while the La Crosse late model double features were pretty racy as well with Nick Barstad and Skyler Holzhausen taking the victories. Holzhausen’s win also netted him the 2024 La Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway championship. When the racing was over, the fun continued as we headed to the barn for some good music

and more socializing before making a quick incognito appearance at the Flamingo. Late nights and early mornings are kind of the standard at Oktoberfest Race Weekend and Saturday morning the fun continued as we made the traditional trip to Krome’s in West Salem. I hadn’t gone on the morning bar trip in about four years as normally I would have to be at the track and up on the camera platform early and the change of scenery opened up another opportunity to make new friends. After taking the yearly “Fest” selfie with P.J. Nuttleman and Dan Plan we hung out with the large Minnesota racing contingent that was well represented at the bar. It’s always fun to meet new people and get new perspectives on things and it sure felt that after having so many of their tracks go to limited schedules, the Minnesota crowd really appreciated what we have going on here on the East side of the Mississippi. It really made you think that sometimes with all the complaining you hear we really do take for granted all the opportunities and places we have to race in Wisconsin and maybe in the big picture the “issues” aren’t all that major. After staying way later than we planned, we did make it to the track for the racing action and the busiest night of Fest. Just between us friends, we did miss the opening heat races, but were there in plenty of time for all the feature action. Once again, the nice weather brought out a big crowd and it was catching up with more old

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Dangerous Dan continued from page 14

friends while enjoying some great racing. Davey Pennel was the winner of the Midwest Dash feature and Ron Vandermier Jr. took the victory in the Mid-American Stock Car Series main event. Randy Sargent scored a popular win in the Big 8 Late Model Series feature while Michael Bilderback won the championship. Chester Ace and James Swan put on the best race of the night in the Midwest Truck Series headliner before Ace pulled out the close victory. Brandon Reichenberger won the Truck Series championship. Sunday morning we did our LTN Hour radio program from the Toby Nuttleman shop because it was close to the race track and had a good internet connection. After the radio show was done, the final day of racing at Fest had the ASA Midwest Tour Oktoberfest 200 as the headliner which was won once again by Ty Majeski while Gabe Sommers was crowned the 2024 ASA Midwest Tour Champion. James Swan won the Cratetoberfest feature.

The weekend after Oktoberfest Race Weekend, I decided to go to Jefferson Speedway for their rescheduled Wisconsin State Championships. I couldn't make the Friday night action but was able to go for Saturday's program. Mother Nature proved to be a tease as what looked like a perfect day weather wise quickly turned as soon as I got to the track as rain began to fall. It was one of those annoying rains where as soon as the track got dry, it would rain again and the track crew would have to start all over. The Jefferson officials were adamant they were going to race that night even as lightning, thunder, and even hail appeared over the track. I almost gave up and left but as luck would have it, I ran into Matt Vaade before exiting and after spending about an hour talking I figured I was now in it for the long haul and would ride it out no matter how long the night turned out to be. The Jefferson track crew and fans proved just how dedicated the racing community is in Wisconsin and the racing action finally began just before 9:00 pm. The full program was completed and Kolton Guralski captured his biggest win in the first late model feature while Evan Hassler survived a green-white-checkered battle with Casey Johnson to win the twin bill. The features were completed just after 1:00 AM and I decided to head out before the final two non-feature races. I would later regret that decision as the final race for the late model non-feature drivers was won

The Alive For Five championship came down to an exciting battle between Ty Fredrickson and Gabe Sommers. Sommers ended up with the title.
(Bruce Nuttleman photo)



by Jerry Eckhardt and I'll probably always kick myself for not staying to see that in person.

The following weekend it was back to work for the Falloween 150 at Dells Raceway Park and the final race of the Wisconsin racing season. The "vacation" was over and I was back behind a camera working with the Track TV guys and once again it was a fun experience. The Track TV and Midwest Tour TV crews are pretty much the same group and they really are a lot of fun to work with. A really strong field of super late models turned out for the Falloween race and Luke Fenhaus was the dominant winner of the 150-lap feature. The big story of the day was the close battle for the Alive for Five Series championship between Gabe Sommers and Ty Fredrickson. The two were close enough in points that whoever finished ahead of the other was going to win the championship. During the second half of the main event, they battled pretty hard for what was third place at the time before getting together which resulted in them both wrecking on the frontstretch. Both cars were severely damaged and the Sommers crew was able to piece their car back together enough to make a few more laps and capture the championship.

The incident lit quite a firestorm on social media as it showcased the fine limit between what's considered hard racing and what is over the line. When you have the competition level we have up here, that limit is approached all season long and inevitably at times we are going to have situations like this. Once you move aside all the social media bloviating and look at the situation with calmer eyes, lessons are usually learned by all involved and that tall competition level is elevated even higher. It's one of the reasons we have so many good drivers up here and can enjoy so many top level events.

And with that, the 2024 racing season in the Upper Midwest is over and everyone now turns to some of the specials down South. Whether we cheered for or rooted against them, we will all as Wisconsin race fans back the local drivers heading South for events such as the All American 400 in Nashville or the Bigley Memorial at the Freedom Factory and of course the Snowball Derby in Pensacola. Hopefully some good runs by "our" drivers at those events will make the off-season go by quickly and as local schedules get released we will all once again make our plans to gather at the race track next Spring.

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Talkin' Racin'
with Jason



Jason D. Searcy

Elko Speedway (MN) just concluded its 59th race season, here is a season ending recap. ELKO hosted 10 events in 2024, 8 Eve of Destruction nights that also included School bus racing, Spectator Drags, Monster Trucks etc in addition to double feature races in each of the 5 divisions. One Eve of Destruction night was rained out. The NASCAR ARCA Menards series returned to ELKO for the 10th time in 2024. 17 year old Minnesota native William Sawalich won the race in dramatic fashion, after being spun mid-race, Sawalich raced up through the field and took the lead coming to the white flag, he then held his ground on the high side as two competitors drove under him coming to the checkers. It was the second closest finish in ARCA



racing history as Sawalich beat Lavar Scott by 0.011 seconds and Kris Wright by 0.043 seconds sliding across the finish line. The NASCAR sanctioned divisions at ELKO each raced one feature that night as well.

The ASA Midwest Tour Super Late Model series returned to ELKO for the first time in 7 years with the 12th Thunderstruck93 event in memory of Dan Ryan. Justin Mondiek from Gleason (WI) won the race just two days after making his NASCAR Truck series debut at Bristol Motor Speedway. Levon VanDerGeest finished runner-up and 9-time Elko Speedway Champion Donny Reuvers finished third. All local divisions raced double features that night.

Jake Ryan won the Interim HealthCare Staffing Late Model division title, it was his second title at ELKO after winning the Big 8 division title in 2012. 27 different drivers raced in the Late Model division at ELKO in 2024. That is down from an average of 33.5 the previous four years. 10 different drivers scored a win in 2024; Jake Ryan and Jacob Goede each had four wins, Steve Anderson Jr had 3 wins, Ryan Varner had 2 wins. Chad Walen, Jeremy Wolff, Chris Marek, Owin Giles, Michael Ostdiek and Hunter Paine had the other Late Model wins in 2024.

Brent Kane had a dominating season in the Thunder Car division at Elko Speedway in 2024. He scored an amazing 13 wins out of 19 races this year, he won at least one race during every race night in 2024 and never once finished out of the "Top 5" positions in any race. It was the fifth Thunder Car title for Kane at ELKO in his 25th year of racing.

18 different cars earned points in the Thunder Car division in 2024 which is down from 21.25 which was the average of the previous four years. 7 different drivers won a feature event, Kane had 13 wins and the other six each had one win. Julie Jorgenson, Jimmy O'meara, Adam Wiebusch, Taylor Goldman, Ben Gannon and Eric Montour were the other winners at ELKO.



The Power Stock division was won by Julie Jorgenson for the second consecutive time, she is the first woman to have won multiple titles in the 59 year history of Elko Speedway.

24 different drivers raced in the Power Stock division at ELKO in 2024, which is the exact average that has raced the previous four years. 7 different drivers won a feature race. Mike Stoer had the most wins with 6, it was the third consecutive year that he has the most wins in the division. Jesse Fischer had 4 wins, Jimmie and Julie Jorgenson both had 3 wins, followed by Clayton Dohrner, Donovan Michaud and Grant Brown who each had 1 win this year.

The Legends division was won by Baiden Heskett, he also won the title at ELKO in 2018. A whopping 44 different drivers raced at Elko Speedway in 2024 which is up from 38 which was the average of the previous four years. Only 5 drivers scored a win this year led by Ayrton Brockhouse and Baiden Heskett who each had 6 wins, Tristan Swanson had 4 wins, Ayden Brockhouse and Robby Carter each had 1 win in 2024.

The Bando division was won by Colton Roe Pershall; it was his first title at Elko Speedway. 27 different drivers raced at ELKO in 2024, the same as last year but way up from the average of the last four years which was 19 racers. 8 different drivers won a feature event this year led by TJ Moon and Christopher Flynn who each had 4 wins, Colton Roe Pershall and Bentley Thompson both had 3 wins, Mason Westphall, Mindy Lee, Frank Jirik and Oliver Weinkauff each had 1 win at ELKO in 2024.

Thank you everyone for your support, the 2024 season was my 12th year announcing at Elko Speedway, this year provided numerous memorable moments at the track. It was also nice to revive the Speed Talk show that Dean Reller and I did for 12 years on KRWC radio, this time we did the show on Facebook and YouTube you can watch that and hear the interviews I did with ELKO drivers at [Racefansradio.blogspot.com](https://www.racefansradio.blogspot.com)

I'll see you at the track Memorial weekend 2025 at ELKO!



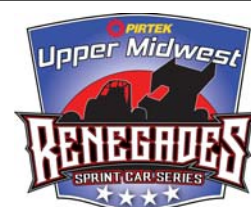
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Lance Matthees

by Dan Plan



These days, Lance Matthees doesn't seem that much older than me, but he's been racing for as long as I can remember. The first time I recall watching Lance race was probably in the late 1970's or early 1980's and he was sponsored by The Nasty Habit Pub. I always thought that was a cool sponsor name. I'm guessing he was pretty young in those days and Lance has gone on to gain many accomplishments throughout his racing career. My favorite moment was just a few years ago during the USA Nationals at Cedar Lake Speedway when Lance picked up a heat race win with the World of Outlaws Late Models. The crowd on the backstretch went absolutely crazy with excitement. I honestly thought the younger race fans didn't know who Lance Matthees was, but they proved me wrong. It was truly one of those feel-good moments. Congratulations to Lance and his family on his induction into the National Dirt Track Hall of Fame. The wins/championships listed below were compiled by long-time announcer/race fan Todd Narveson.

1986 WISSOTA National Champion

2008 & 2009 WISSOTA Late Model Challenge Series Champion (8-feature wins in the series.)

2011 WISSOTA 100 Champion at Huron

2-Wins Corn Belt Clash Series (2010 at West Union, IA and 2011 at Elko, MN)

1-WDRL Series win at Deer Creek in 2006

2-wins WISSOTA Rumble Series in 2008

1984 Yankee Dirt Track Classic Champion at Hawkeye Downs Speedway in Cedar Rapids, IA

7-wins at Fox Ridge Speedway in Arcadia, WI

45-wins at Cedar Lake Speedway in New Richmond, WI

24-Wins at Deer Creek Speedway in Spring Valley, MN (first all-time in Late Model wins)

25-wins at the Dodge County Speedway in Kasson, MN (Second in all time Late Model wins) Three-time track champion in 1978, 1982 and 1986.



*Photos by Dale P. Danielski, Stan
Meissner, Todd Narveson and Dan Plan*



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