

THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

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THE MIDWEST'S SHORT TRACK AUTO RACING AUTHORITY

Doughty Doubles Up



Breakthrough For Kraus



June 2025

Inside...



37 Years Later



A New Era Begins



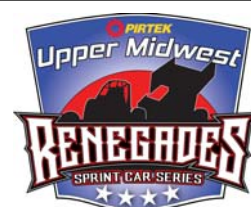
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Publisher's Note
Racing According to Plan



Dan Plan

The more time you spend around short track racing, the more you realize there are people behind the scenes that make the show go on. The people in

**Behind the
Scenes**

the pit area typically know who these people are, but the fans in the stands may not know who they are. These people are the ones who do what it takes to make the show go on, regardless of the job. One of these people I've had the pleasure of talking to over the last few years is Steve Connors. I've seen Steve do things such as being a chauffeur for VIP's, fixing a broken recoil on a Briggs & Stratton motor and even emptying garbage cans in the camping area. There are many short tracks that have the "Steve's" of the world, but they rarely get the recognition they deserve. The people that are out front, like the promoters or announcers, get the recognition, but these guys (and gals) rarely get accolades. I'm going to take this opportunity to give a shout out to Steve and the other "Steve's" of the short track world.

And speaking of people behind the scenes, Ray Loughan recently retired from LaCrosse Fairgrounds

Publisher's Note continued on page 4



The Midwest
RACING
Connection
June 2025

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THE MIDWEST
RACING CONNECTION

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Racing

Publishers note from page 3

Speedway after the 2025 season opening event. I only have the opportunity to see Ray a couple times each year. My first encounter with Ray was several years ago. I was taking pictures in an unapproved area. On this particular day, during the season opening event in West Salem, Ray pulled up in his golf kart and rightfully chastised me for being in an unsafe location. I was in no position to argue, because I had stepped over the bounds. The nice thing about Ray was he took me aside, had me sit in his golf cart and drove me around the infield showing me to several places to take pictures in safe locations. That's a good guy. Ray was so appreciated at LaCrosse Fairgrounds Speedway, they had free beer in the pits to commemorate his numerous years at LaCrosse. Lord knows I'm not the kind of guy to turn down free beer, but I had a 2.5 hour drive home on this day and skipped out early. Congratulations Ray.



Sharon Johnson photo



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Racing Nuggets



PJ "Jacklyn" Nuttleman

Every race season is sprinkled with some feel-good moments, and we recently experienced one of them at the ASA STARS Tour race at Newport Speedway in Tennessee. Derek Kraus flexed some Midwest muscle picking up his first STARS Tour super late model win.

Newport Speedway has a lot of similarities to Slinger Speedway. Kraus shared that “the straight-aways are a bit longer, but the turns are identical to Slinger.” A fact that might explain why Kraus and his team unloaded with a solid race trim for the event. They were able to practice a little before having to head to Charlotte for NASCAR Cup obligations. Having those obligations meant missing qualifying for the STARS race at Newport, so he had to start at the back of the field.

Kraus and his family team from Stratford, WI, have committed to running the entire ASA STARS Tour. Crisscrossing the country with a smaller team



can be a big endeavor, especially with commitments in NASCAR that range from simulator work to occasional opportunities behind the wheel. That simulator work is what led to and helped open the door for the NASCAR Cup opportunity he had on the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend.

Fresh on the heels of that ASA STARS Tour win, Kraus boogied to Charlotte to pilot the #44 NASCAR Cup car for NY Racing in the Coca-Cola 600. It was an experience; he said was useful to be able to race in such a lengthy event with plenty of green flag pit stops. And the pre-race atmosphere was “pretty cool” to be a part of.

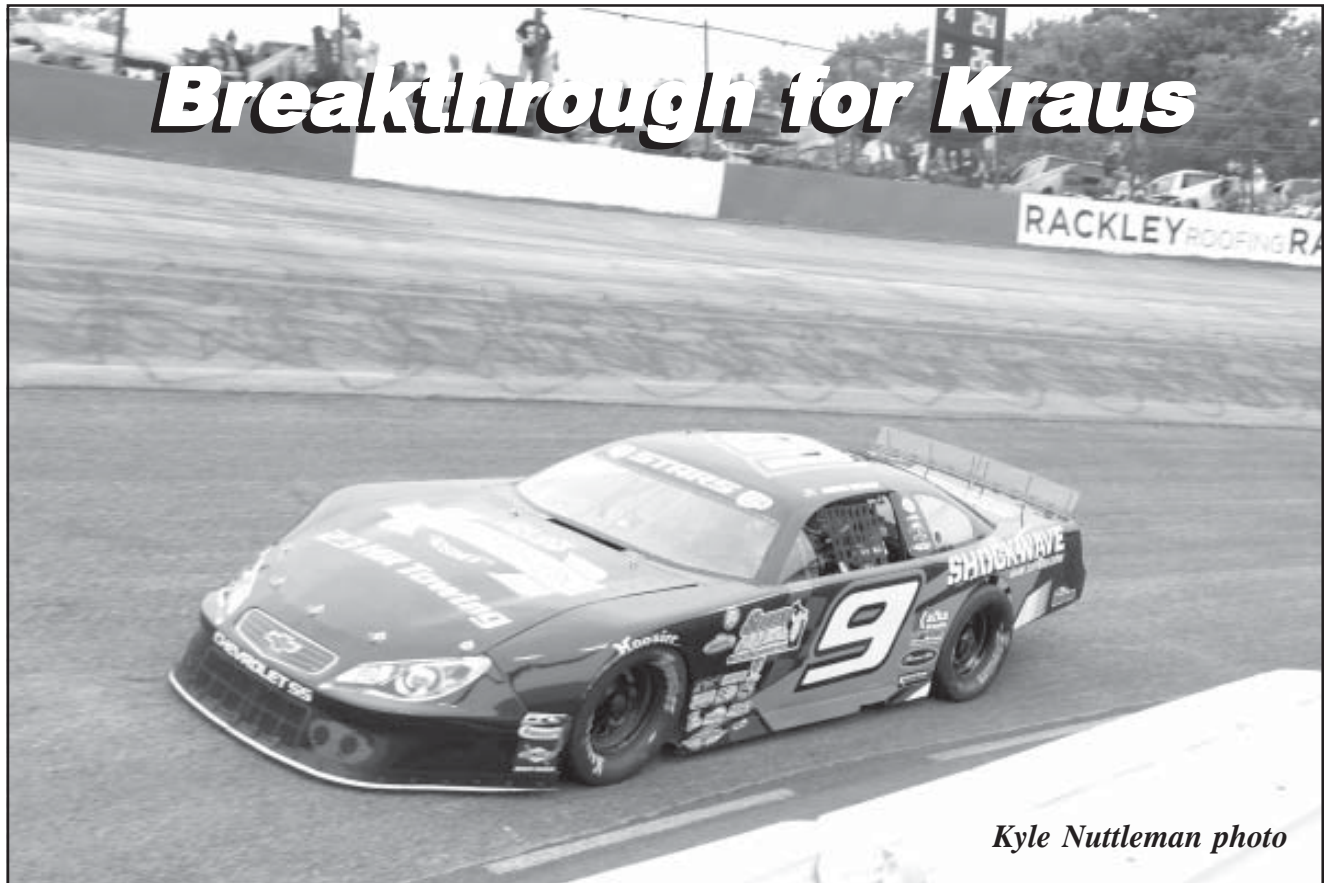
I saw several pictures on social media with Derek waving to the crowd as he crossed the stage during driver introductions; some were of the Jumbotron screen, which is awesome to see a local racer on that big stage in the top series.

One of the most poignant parts of this NASCAR Cup race is that they pair each driver with a fallen military member, who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. That military member’s name is emblazoned across the upper windshield of the race car. Kraus had the name of Army Sergeant Brett Gorniewicz on his car. Gorniewicz was from Alden, NY. He was killed on November 3, 2012, along with two fellow soldiers, when a roadside bomb went off during a route clearance mission in Afghanistan. He was only 27.

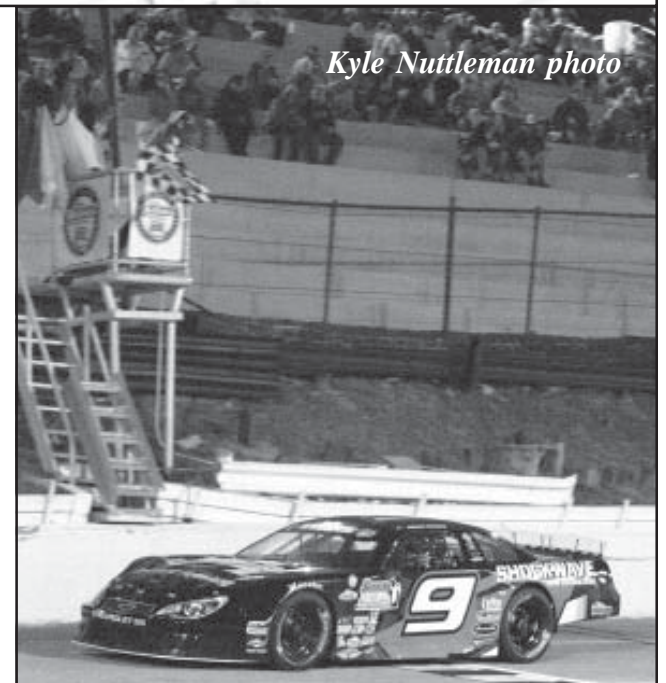
Kraus is currently four years younger than that today—born a mere 10 days before the 9-11 attacks. He said it was an honor to have Sergeant Gorniewicz’s name on the car and to be able to meet his parents before the race. They gave him a commemorative coin, which Kraus carried in his fire suit pocket for all 600 miles.

While Kraus didn’t grab any headlines in that race, crossing the line 32nd—he still finished ahead of

Breakthrough for Kraus



Kyle Nuttleman photo



Kyle Nuttleman photo

former series champions Kyle Larson and Ryan Blaney, so there’s that. But in all seriousness, he DID run the grueling event to completion and kept the NY Racing team’s car in one piece, which is a hell of an accomplishment. One that much of his family was able to witness in person, as they were all there after celebrating the ASA STARS race win.

One of the most endearing things about the Kraus super late team is that the entire family is deeply engaged in the operation. You will always see Derek’s dad, Mark, at every race. Whenever possible—and it’s quite often—his mom, Kathy, and sister, Lauren, who is currently doing an internship with Hendricks Motorsports, will be there too. His grandparents also make the trek to every possible race. You can be sure there was a tremendous

Racing Nuggets continued on page 6

Racing Nuggets from page 5

celebration after Derek handily won that ASA STARS race.

“We celebrated a little bit, but then we knew we had to get some rest before the Cup race the next day,” he shared.

If you watched the stream of the Newport race, in the post-race interview, you could hear his voice cracking with emotion as he explained just how much the win means to his family team. It meant a lot to all of us back here in the upper Midwest who have been following his career since he started turning laps as a kid.

He's not a kid anymore, despite his smaller stature. He has a lot more experience now and a full schedule to continue showcasing his skills. Kraus is looking forward to the ASA STARS Tour "Wisconsin Swing," with events at Madison International Speedway on Friday, June 13th, and Slinger on Sunday, June 15th. Who knows? Perhaps holiday weekends are going to be Kraus's thing? Lord knows he will be carrying tremendous confidence and momentum into that Father's Day Weekend Double-Dip of ASA STARS action.



Kyle Nuttleman photo

BIG 8 Late Models

2025 SCHEDULE



Hoosier
RACING TIRE



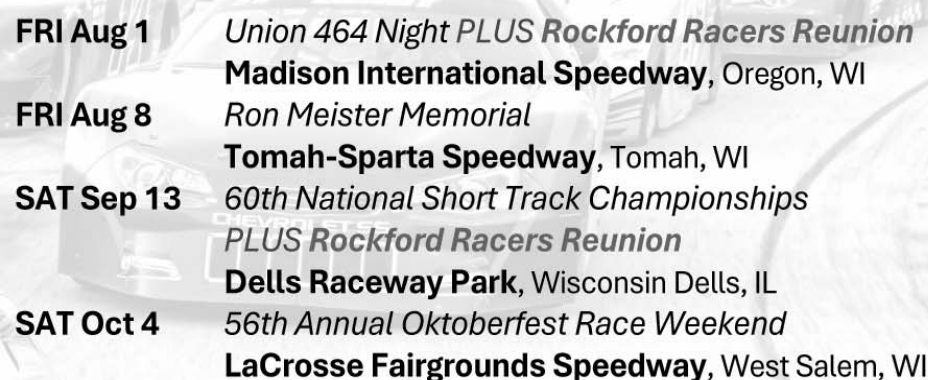
SAT Apr 26 *48th Spring Classic*
Grundy County Speedway, Morris, IL

FRI May 23 *Big 8 Late Model Special*
Madison International Speedway, Oregon, WI

FRI Jun 6 *Clash at the Downs XI*
Hawkeye Downs Speedway, Cedar Rapids, IA

SAT Jun 28 *Chicagoland Showdown*
*PLUS Midnight Ride & **Rockford Racers Reunion***
Grundy County Speedway, Morris, IL

FRI Jul 18 *Legends.Direct Classic*
Hawkeye Downs Speedway, Cedar Rapids, IA



FRI Aug 1 *Union 464 Night PLUS **Rockford Racers Reunion***
Madison International Speedway, Oregon, WI

FRI Aug 8 *Ron Meister Memorial*
Tomah-Sparta Speedway, Tomah, WI

SAT Sep 13 *60th National Short Track Championships*
*PLUS **Rockford Racers Reunion***
Dells Raceway Park, Wisconsin Dells, IL

SAT Oct 4 *56th Annual Oktoberfest Race Weekend*
LaCrosse Fairgrounds Speedway, West Salem, WI

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Going in Circles



Charlie Spry

After the expected season opener got rained out, the Lafayette County Speedway was finally able to start their season early in May.

Several new drivers are racing here this year. Blaise Watters is one of the new hobby stock drivers. Blaise comes from a racing family, as many will remember his Dad, Jeff, who has raced on both dirt and asphalt and won championships on both. His championships came at the old Freeport Raceway in a hobby stock, while the asphalt championship came in 1999 at Madison International Speedway in the late model division.

Jeff was exposed to racing at a young age. "I grew up just down the street from Arnie Christen in Mineral Point. I hung around the shop and became interested that way", noted Jeff.

Jeff would also go on to be involved with the Midwest Truck series, first as a racer, then later as a tech inspector. Then he just decided to step aside for a while. "I never even went to a track after that for a while, until Blaise got old enough to want to do it."

Blaise then started racing karts at a young age, starting out at Fort Atkinson, but moving on to a track at Delaware, Iowa, and soon racing all over on the indoor circuit. He then raced a Legends car for a couple of years until college and football interests came calling. "I then played college football for UW-Platteville, and worked hard on completing my studies. With doing all of that there was no time for racing," stated Blaise.

As you read this, the twenty-three year old driver will be graduating from college and starting his working life, working at Carey's Seamless Gutters as a labor management specialist. With football and college completed, getting back into racing was something that they both wanted to do. "I wanted to race in something somewhere that was close to home, and wouldn't break the bank, and I didn't want to race front-wheel drive, so the hobby stock class seemed to be the way to go," Said Blaise. His goals? "Stay out of trouble, keep it in one piece, and compete. Of course, the ultimate goal is to WIN," said Blaise.

The Watters team understands how to get and keep sponsors, so they have plenty on the car. His new employer, Carey's Seamless Gutters, along with Symdon Chevrolet, Midway Bar & Grill, Al's Towing, BSE Construction, Heins Contracting, Larry's Towing, Paradis Construction, Easy Fix Livestock Comfort, Tri-State Directional Drilling, CJ Performance Harley Repair, Eggers Ent., and Ubersox Construction all are on the car.

Keep an eye on this young driver as he learns the ropes of a new division and new track!

Another new driver with college football experience in his past is Colin Conner, who is racing a sportmod. Colin played his college ball at North Dakota State, and is looking to get into racing, which is also a tradition with this family. Colin's Dad is Jim Conner, who raced back in the late 1990's and early 2000's, racing at Lancaster and also at Darlington when they were starting to get back going again. Jim raced in the Pro-Stock division. Jim's Cousin, Patric, also races in the sportmod division, and Patric's Dad is Gary Conner, who raced at asphalt tracks in the 1990's and early 2000's.

A family friend is Cade Nichols, who also races a sportmod. Cade kind of had a rough year last year

of trouble!" He pretty much did that on opening night, which was good to see.

Early in the season we have seen some new faces in victory lane for feature wins. On opening night, Grant Manthe won his first career feature event here in the modified class, which has been dominated by Jeff Larson and Jed Freiburger for the past couple of years. In 2024, Matt Crist was the only other driver besides this pair to score a feature win here, as he did it on June 7th.

On the second night of the year, young Mason McNett won his first ever Sportmod feature event. Just like Manthe, McNett also drove a pretty much flawless race to get the win.

Although no stranger to victory lane at other tracks, Jordan Miles also scored his first feature win here in the hobby stocks.

Wes Digman has won features here before but has probably more runner-up finishes than he would care to count. The Sportmod racer is having a great start to the season, winning a feature here and finishing second to McNett in the other. He has also been running real well at Dubuque.

Had a chance to take in the season opener at the Hawkeye Downs Speedway in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. I had not been to this track since 2009, and since this year they celebrate their 100th anniversary, this seemed like a great time. The opener was held on a Sunday afternoon, in lieu of their usual Friday night shows. Timing was perfect.

Seven divisions were on hand this day to make for a busy show at this rare asphalt track in Iowa. Late Models, Sportsman, Hobby Stocks, Sport Mods, 4 cylinders, Legends, and a new division named H.D. Dawgs (For Hawkeye Downs Dawgs). The Dawgs are a division similar to the MisFitz division at Madison, and is a timed division, meaning a they have a breakout rule. Five cars raced in this, three sportsman type cars, a truck, and a four cylinder. It also proved to be an exciting division, as the top three were involved in a collision on the front straight, with the truck getting launched in the air. He made it back out to take the win after the caution, but it was quite an interesting race. Garrett Warren was the name.

I was impressed with the four cylinders. I have seen some of them show up at the Bahama Brackets at Rockford and now Grundy. Always very impressive and fast cars that look great. Veteran Kurt Bohnsach took the win.

Other winners included Griffin McGrath in Late Models, Dave Lemkuhl in the Legends, Adam Petrzalka in the Hobby Stocks, Tom Hess in the Sportsman class, and Nathan Ballard in the Sportmods.

It was a fun show, and would go more often if it were closer. The people were very friendly. One young lady working security chatted with us for quite some time and was a wealth of information. While not huge car counts, it was decent for this early in the season. The only downer was that both my friend and



Charlie Spry photo

(his first). "I raced only six or seven times last year and got kind of disgusted with it. Then, on test and tune day this year I ran for about 15 laps and the motor blew. I am sticking with it and also made the car look much nicer this year," noted Cade. Cade hails from Linden, Wi., and says that he has no other prior racing experience. His main goal this year? "Stay out



Charlie Spry photo

Going In Circles continued on page 9

Going In Circles continued from page 8

I tried a hamburger at the concession stand, and while tasted okay, was cold. Fire that grill up! We must have been too early!

One of the last races during the month of May found me at the Dells Raceway Park. Six divisions on hand this night, and the prefect night of racing, as it was all divisions that I enjoy very much.

Had a chance to talk with Dan Howard and his Son, Cole. Dan races the number 25 modified, Cole races the number 52 late model. Dan was a front runner in the street stock division at both Columbus and here at the Dells. His Caprice was a very fast car and he was always hard to beat. He even won a

having kids and other family obligations, so I just up and quit and sold everything,” said Dan. “Problem was, after a couple of years I got to miss it and ended up having to buy all of the stuff to go racing once again.” Dan has found a home in the asphalt modified division here and at Tomah. After selling everything, he has now quite a collection. “I have two complete modifieds, and four chassis.” In addition, Cole’s late model is there and an old hobby stock that had been raced by Dan’s Dad. “We can’t find room to put anything anymore, it gets to be looking like a used car lot.” said Dan.

As for Cole, he runs very well with the late model. Cole noted that he never had the chance to race at Columbus, saying, “I was just a little kid when they closed down, so unfortunately I never had the chance to race there. Wish I had.” Cole does just fine here at his home track of DRP, and is a threat each and every week.

With two cars, race night can get a bit hectic at time. “We have kind of separate crew for each car, but when something needs to be done, everyone pitches in and helps the other guy,” said Dan.

Dan also said that he still has fun out there. “I get asked all the time when I am going to retire, but I still have fun. As long as I am having fun and can compete, I will stick with it.”

Talked with Bandit racer Steve Deininger. Steve plans on making the trip here from Monroe, which is a pretty long haul. “They pay us pretty good and treat us well, so that is why we keep coming here,” Said Steve.

Kind of a hard luck guy, Steve has raced for a couple of years with an old Ford Escort, but had a bunch of problems with keeping engines together. Now, they have a better car to race with and Steve is finishing races and doing better. “My buddy found this car, and it had raced here before, so we got that and kind of gave up on the Escort for now. Still have it, though,” said Steve. He finished third in his heat and fourth in the semi, missing the transfer to the feature by one spot.

Always enjoy chatting with Sean Worman, A.K.A.

“Beerman.” Sean has raced in

various divisions, but a few years ago found much success in the Sixers. He then switched to a Roadrunner class car, which is a de-tuned version of what is raced as a hobby stock in the area. With Rockford

Speedway closing, he found himself basically bringing a knife to a gun fight. He was alerted to his current Sixer coming up for sale over the winter, and jumped at the opportunity, selling the Roadrunner car to finance the Sixer deal. It is a fast and well-built car which was put together by another driver who is fastidious in car building, and had won a lot of races.

Beerman’s buddy, Austin Fowler, was also a very successful Roadrunner racer, and has switched his car over to be closer to an actual hobby stock. However, he still misses his old hometrack, saying, “Rockford Speedway was four minutes from our shop, now it seems like everything is four hundred minutes from home,” He joked. He is planning on racing wherever and whenever he can. “I just go wherever the pocketbook and time allow,” said Austin.

All of the feature events were very tightly contested on this night. Veteran Bill Prietzel jumped out to a nice lead in the modified feature, only to be chased down by Mike Sandholm. Sandholm even briefly tasted the lead, but Prietzel was not fazed, and pulled back ahead by inches at the stripe to get the win.

The Sixer division also put on a great show, with Joshua Zacharias getting the very close win over teammate Gracie Flanagan and Greg Brown. Beerman came through the pack to take fourth.

The Bandit class had the largest car count of the night. It was like being at a post-season special, with cars coming from far and wide to race, with twenty-nine present. Tyler Vincetich raced beside James Junget, each trying not to “break out.” Taylor Dawson was looking for a place to go but found no running room with the pair up front so close. Vincetich gave er’ a little more on the last lap to edge out the win.

The Hobby Stocks were present tonight with a good field. Cars from the Rockford area, Jefferson, Tomah, and a couple from the Wausau area all raced together, and it did seem like a post-season show. Waylon Robinson showed patience and waited for the right time and the right restart to take the lead and win over Andy Raley, who may have won if there had not been the late caution. I do believe that Raley was racing the same Hobby Stock car that he raced back in the day at Columbus 151. Nice to see him back out again. Two other drivers who were present were Kyle Kluetz and Steve Schilling from the Wausau area. With State Park Speedway now shuttered, these drivers are having to search for a new place to race. Kluetz grabbed a heat race win.

Dave Trute continued his mastery of the Sportsman division, taking the win over a very stubborn Bobby Turzinski Jr. I think Dave had to work up a sweat to get the win tonight. Fun race to watch!

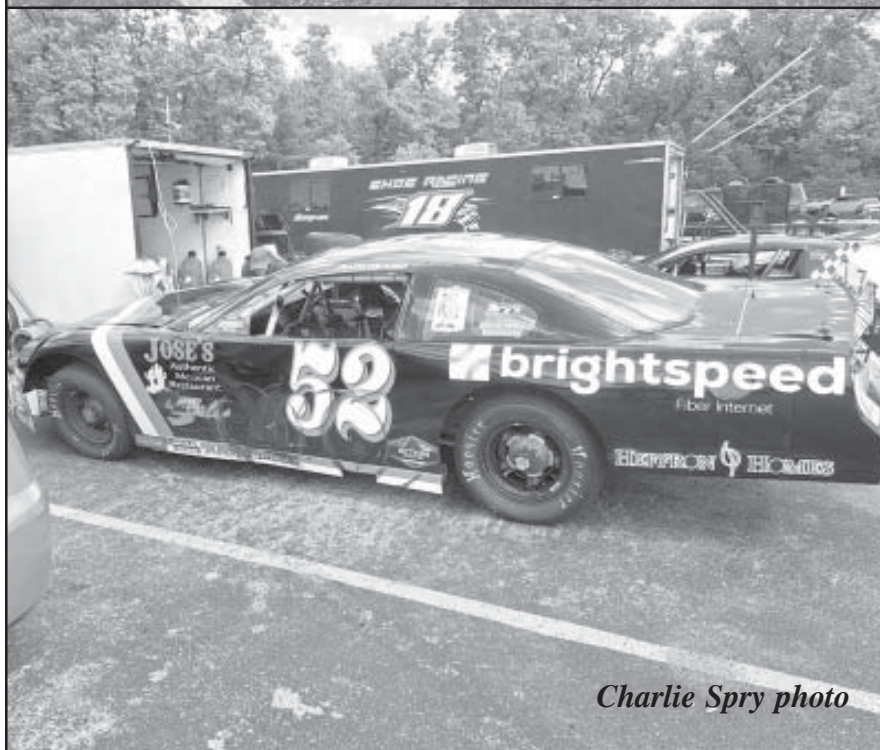
Finally, Mike Lichtfeld took the win in the late models over Michael Guderski, who led until about the half-way mark. It was fun watching Litchfeld work through traffic. The Late Models went 50 laps, caution-free. Well done!

The show ran off quickly. I believe that everything was completed at about 9:20 P.M. Not bad at all!

Onto June we go!



Charlie Spry photo



Charlie Spry photo

championship at Columbus back in 1999.

After racing with much success, Dan found himself getting out of the sport for a bit. “We started

Talkin' Racin' with Jason



Jason D. Searcy

This Spring race fans were starting to really get worried that Elko Speedway was going to be flattened and made into homes after its 60th season in existence. After 25 years of ownership Tom Ryan had expressed his interest to sell the property for a few years and some zoning changes really had the rumor mill turning. After going through the closing of I-94 Raceway in Sauk Centre (MN) 15 years ago and then Raceway Park in Shakopee (MN) 10 years ago, the prospect of losing Minnesota's only remaining asphalt track was frightening.

Luckily a new ownership group emerged and saved the day. All members of this group are local businessmen and have strong racing ties. Jaycen Brockhouse was the 2009 ELKO Legends division champion, Pat Flynn is the owner of Eternity Homes and has been involved at ELKO with his grandson Christopher racing in the Bando division and Wade Brelje is the owner of Rack Shack Barbecue and has been a longtime supporter of local motorsports, most recently with Justice Doubrava also racing in the Bando division. Great North Legends owner Tim Brockhouse is the father of Jaycen Brockhouse, he recently purchased Tomah-Sparta Speedway in WI and has been coordinating much of the transition at Elko Speedway.

The new group used the clever name MEGA properties which stands for "Making Elko Great Again," even though the group has stated they don't plan on changing what has made ELKO great (or at least popular) during the Tom Ryan era, the "Eve of Destruction," format of race nights combining racing with Motorcycle stunts, Monster Trucks, School Bus racing, spectator drags, loud music and petting zoos.

The group emphasized the desire to increase payout for the local racers, add more events to the schedule in the future and improve the facility. One big

change is the addition of a huge variety of Rack Shack Barbecue items to the menu. An arcade has been added to the Champions Lounge on the West Side of the main building. Also, an exclusive 3 day event just for Drifters was added to the 2025 schedule June 13-15. The Track Enterprises events will go on as planned, that is the ARCA National event on June 21st and Thunderstruck93 event with the ASA Midwest Tour Super Late Models on September 20th.

The post season Track Champions awards banquet will return this year after being organized by the racers themselves the previous few years. The new race director Bill Kallberg was introduced. He has a long history of racing both at Raceway Park and Elko Speedway, he stepped away from racing himself about 15 years ago but has stayed in touch with the sport. The vibe was noticeably positive at the initial drivers meeting with Tim Brockhouse stating he is hoping to have the rules and tires more universal so drivers will have more of an opportunity to travel and more out of town cars will make the trek to ELKO.

Opening night car count was encouraging with 19 Late Models entered, the Late Model car count had dwindled down to as little as 11 on the final night of racing in 2024. Power Stocks and Thunder Cars both had 12 entries, Legends had 16 and Bando's 15 cars. The NASCAR divisions will continue to have 2 features per night, but the INEX division classes will have heat races and 1 feature per night. Expect increasing car counts as the season progresses, with a number of racers planning on returning to racing at ELKO now that the future looks much brighter from the drivers perspective. With the

Brockhouse long standing ties in the INEX divisions, the Legend and Bando classes are sure to see record car counts.

Michael Ostdiek and Grant Brown won the Late Model features on opening weekend, fans can expect a hotly contested battle for the championship this year with Chad Walen and Chris Marek both looking very good and defending champion Jake Ryan scoring a very rare DNF during race night number one of twelve in 2025.

With the transfer of ownership, Tom Ryan's legacy at Elko Speedway is now cemented. He was an innovator of the Eve of Destruction format exposing stock car racing to a much wider audience of fans, he built a stadium style grandstand with an elevator and luxury boxes allowing the ability to bring in larger events including televised ARCA races. He moved Elko Speedway forward in its history and importantly he did not give into greed at the end. Ryan made a decision to sell the property not just to "the highest bidder no matter what," but to a group of local businessmen who just happen to also be racers. The track many of us love will not be going away, it seems to be in good hands, and for that we can be thankful not only for the 60th season of racing at ELKO, but many more to come.



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JULY 5

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JULY 16

Super Lates: Tom Reffner 88

Plus CWRA Late Models - 7pm

JULY 19

Fairtime 50 Lap Late Model Feature - 7PM

AUGUST 9

Double Feature Showdown

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FRI JUN 13

ASA STARS NATIONAL TOUR 250



FRI JUN 20

FAST CARS AND FREEDOM 76



THU JUL 10

THURSDAY STREET DRAGS



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THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

Photo Gallery



*Riley Stenjem and Michael Bilderback at the Joe Shear Classic
(Doug Hornickel photo)*



*Joe "Bundy" Prusak in Vintage Stock Car action
(Junior Jackson photo)*



*Bud Riedner in Crown Vic action at Tomah
(Dan Plan photo)*



*WISSOTA Street Stock action at KRA Speedway
(Kyle Kingman photo)*



*Johnson takes the lead from Somers in the Joe Shear Classic at MIS
(Doug Hornickel photo)*



*Vintage photo of "The Zero Hero" Tom Jones
(Dale P. Danielski photo)*

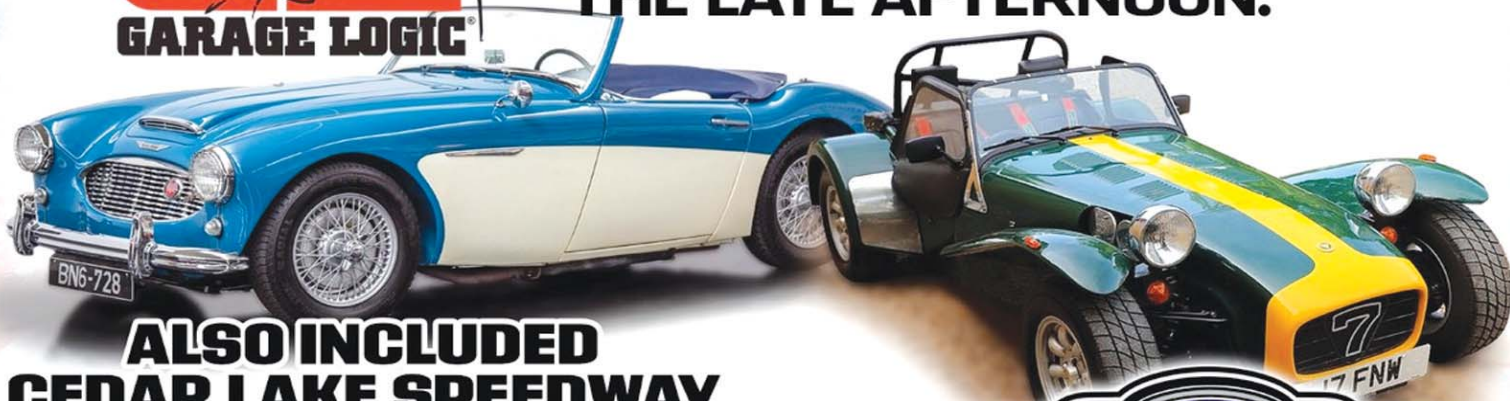


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Dangerous Dan



Dan Margetta

It seems like I blinked and its suddenly June while the month of May flew by. I guess that's the way it goes with so many races to attend that you don't see the time going by until you sit back and figure out everywhere you've been.

My month began with the annual Joe Shear Classic at the Madison International Speedway as the ASA Midwest Tour opened up their season. The day began early as Brian Schmitt, PJ Nuttleman, and I were live on site for the LTN Hour radio program while Todd Behling and even our engineer Matt Losee headed to the track as soon as the show was over. It was a rare occasion where all five of us were actually in the same place at the same time. I didn't have too much time to socialize though because as soon as the show ended, I had to go to work on camera for the Track TV live stream. There was barely enough time to slam down lunch before the cars hit the track for qualifying and we had to go live. Mark Martin was on hand and the plan was for him to join Jim Tretow and Dean Strom in the booth for a few minutes after opening ceremonies. Mark is definitely a racer and remarkably he called the entire race with Jim and Dean and it was real cool to hear his perspective as the race unfolded. For instance, he correctly surmised that Ty Majeski had the valve stem knocked off his left rear tire when he spun from the lead in turn four before the camera replays showed the incident exactly the way he called it. In the end, Casey Johnson passed Gabe Sommers in the waning laps to score the victory in what was an overall good race.

The following weekend, I attended the weekly program at the Plymouth Dirt Track as the late models joined the 360 sprints, grand nationals, and B-mods. It was also the inaugural event for the new Dirt Devil Grand National Series that Brad Mueller helped put together and an impressive 39 grand nationals showed up. At the end of the evening, Mike McMullen put a whooping on the late model field to win the feature while the veteran Brian Gilles took top honors in the grand national main event. Youngster Joseph Hintz won the 360 sprint car feature while Spencer Long took the victory in the B-mods.

From there it was time to go straight line racing as I headed to the Route 66 Raceway in Joliet, Illinois for the NHRA drag racing qualifying rounds. There is nothing like the massive horsepower sound of a top fuel dragster or a nitro funny car as it launches from the starting line. You can feel it in your bones and you would swear the ground shakes. Plus, it's a way more laid-back atmosphere than say a NASCAR or Indycar event and the NHRA drivers are very accessible. It was cool seeing Tony Stewart having fun signing autographs and taking photos with the fans and it was refreshing seeing the fans conducting themselves in a well-behaved manner when you think about how chaotic and testy those situations got during his NASCAR days. High winds and an impending dust storm made for some hairy runs down the strip as the cars caught the strong crosswinds at the end of the grandstands but thankfully there were no major incidents. They got all the qualifying rounds finished just in time as you could see the massive dust storm approaching. It hit just as we walked back to the car and it was one of the craziest things I've ever experienced. I had been in a mini dust storm once in Vegas but never one this big that totally blocked out the sun, pelted you with dirt, and lasted for an hour. I guess it didn't really help the dirt track was right next to the dragstrip which added "fuel to the fire" so to speak as the track dirt was added to the swirling debris. We had decided earlier we were spending the night as I really dislike Chicago traffic the way it is and it turned out to be a good decision as adding fighting a dust storm to the mix would have just been a mess.

We got up early the next morning and headed back to Wisconsin and the twenty degree drop in temperature meant I had to make an extra stop home for the proper attire before heading to the Tundra Super Late Model Series opener at Wisconsin International Raceway in Kaukauna. Despite the cooler weather, a decent crowd showed up to watch 25 super late models contest The Bear 96 held in honor of Roger "The Bear" Regeth. After some rocky opening laps in the main event that saw numerous cars sustaining heavy damage after hitting the Styrofoam barriers in turn four, the race eventually settled down. It appeared Dalton Zehr was about to cruise to victory when he broke a shock mount with about three laps to go. Grant Griesebach had run strong all day and was there to pounce when Zehr had his problems and he took the checkered flag for a popular victory.

I was up and at Slinger Speedway the next morning for the Keith's Marina Race Against Cancer super late model opener. It was the debut live stream event on the track's new streaming platform Flo Racing. Some last-minute configuration changes meant there had to be tests conducted well before the first green flag flew. That meant I had to simultaneously conduct the Flo tests while doing the LTN Radio show live at the same time. It was a good test of my multitasking skills and everything worked out good. The super late models are on a new Hoosier tire



Ron Erstad Jr. photo

this year and right away you could tell it made a difference. Five drivers broke the 31-year-old track record set by Tony Strupp with Steve Apel turning in the first qualifying lap in the ten second bracket to set the new track record at 10.994 seconds. I was there when Strupp set the old record back in 1994 right after a repave and for 31-years all everyone talked about was when will someone get into the 10's? It finally happened and I'm glad I was there to see it. The new tire also raced well as if you didn't think Slinger's racing could get more intense. Jesse Bernhagen led most of the main event and turned back numerous challenges before Alex Prunty wrestled the lead away following a restart with about three laps to go. Prunty took the checkered flag first but Bernhagen got the spoils as he was declared the winner after Prunty's car was found to be .1 over the maximum left side weight in post-race tech. To be bounced for something so miniscule is frustrating for many of the casual fans but the racers and hardcore fans actually like to see the rules followed strictly. Prunty handled the situation like a pro and it was nice to see it not get blown way out of proportion on social media.

Memorial Day weekend began with a last-minute trip to the Big 8 Late Model Series event at Madison International Speedway as they needed me to run a camera with a good number of the regular of the Track TV personnel were busy with the ASA Stars Tour races in Hickory and Newport. I hadn't been to a Big 8 event in a while and a good field of 17 late models turned out with Randy Sargent picking up his first Series victory. The busy holiday weekend meant I had to transport some of the video equipment to Jefferson Speedway the next night as I worked the ASA Midwest Tour Salute the Troops 100. Super late models are always fun to watch at Jefferson and this race was no different. Jevin Guralski stole the thunder to capture his first career ASA Midwest Tour victory. The feat was especially gratifying as he about destroyed his car a week earlier in the Tundra race at Kaukauna and the crew put in long hours rebuilding the car for Jefferson. Their hard work was rewarded with a dominating win plus first-time winners are always fun to witness.

The holiday weekend wrapped up back at Slinger for the EH Wolf and Sons Memorial Day 100 which featured an increased purse with \$5,000 going to the winner courtesy of Incredible Bank. The extra cash brought in some extra cars including Justin

Dangerous Dan continued on page 16

New Track Record!



Cole Searing and Kevin Eder both set new track records at the KRA Speedway with identical lap times of 15.966 seconds during the WISSOTA Challenge Series visit at the end of the month of May. Both drivers, along with five others, went faster than the track record that was set during the 2024 visit to the facility. Searing would go on to win the 4-lap main event.

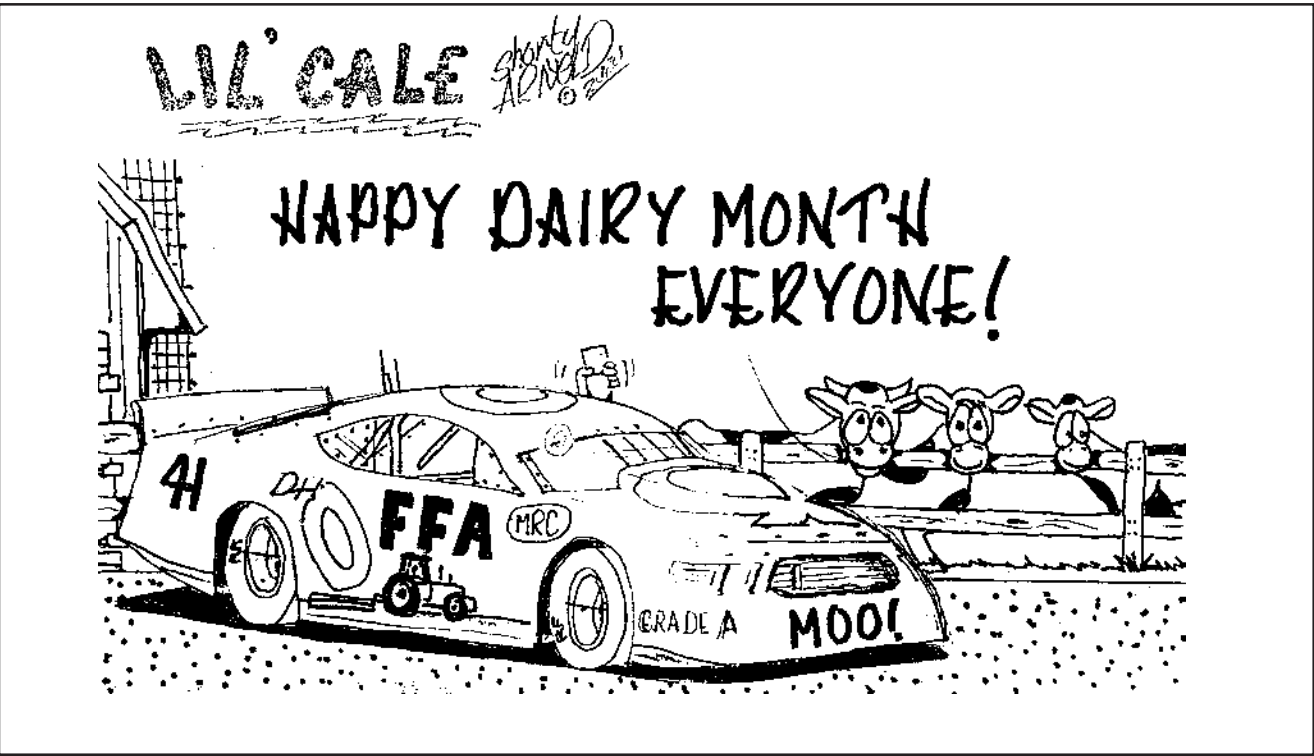
Dangerous Dan continued from page 15
Mondeik who previously had nothing but bad luck on the high banks. Once again the Slinger super late model racing was a pressure cooker and I have to tell



Doug Hornickel photo

you, watching it through the camera lens for the Flo Racing stream, you really get an appreciation for the skills the drivers here in the Midwest possess. Mondeik charged by early leader Ryan Farrell and then held off hard charges Alex Prunty and Brad Mueller to stay out front. As the laps wound down, Prunty made a serious challenge on the inside and when he wheel-hopped into turn one, both cars shot up the race track. Somehow both Mondeik and Prunty kept their cars out of the fence and most importantly

still in the park as they lost spots but continued on while Grant Griebach took advantage of the contact to grab the lead. Mondeik then tracked down Griebach to retake the lead before holding off Brad Mueller who suddenly came to life running the outside groove. Mondeik scored his first Slinger victory over Mueller and Prunty as the super late models are now off until the ASA Stars National Tour race on June 15th and then the next \$5,000 to win Independence Day Fireworks event on June 29th.



Doughty Doubles Up




After running a partial schedule in the 2024 season, the D1 of Dustin Doughty plans on a full season of USRA Hobby Stock competition for the 2025 season. With multiple track championships at Deer Creek, Rice Lake and Red Cedar, Doughty started off his 2025 season strong with back-to-back wins to open the season at Deer Creek Speedway in Spring Valley Minnesota. The second win came with a checkered flag crash. When Dustin was asked how bad the damage was, he stated “Enough to be annoying, but at least we won!”

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Racing History

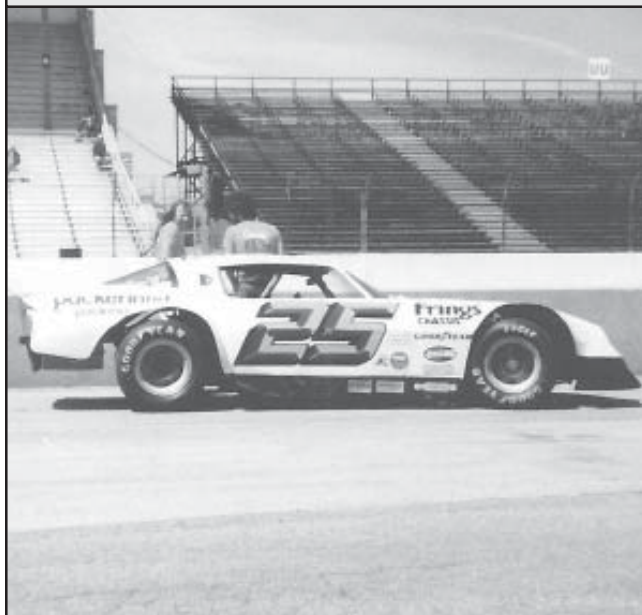


Dale P. Danielski

It's the roaring '20s times 4, as we delve into some hot, exciting racing from July of 1980 and 1981. Read on...

1980 and Darrell Waltrip is set to debut the "stock car of the future", a 1980 Buick Skylark, powered by a 255 cubic inch, V-6 engine. This writer owned a Buick Skylark once so it gave me hope that I could continue racing with that type of race car if I chose. Country and Western music star Marty Robbins promised his race car would be finely tuned and singing on the racetrack in entering the Firecracker 400 at Daytona International Speedway on July 4th. "Lonny the Lizard" Girard won the Late Model Super Stock feature at the Rensselaer Raceway, Rensselaer, IN., Nabbing flies along the way, Lizard won over Roger Matthews and Bill Davis. It was his first ever Late Model win. The Mark Martin

#25 Larry Detjens Frings chassis

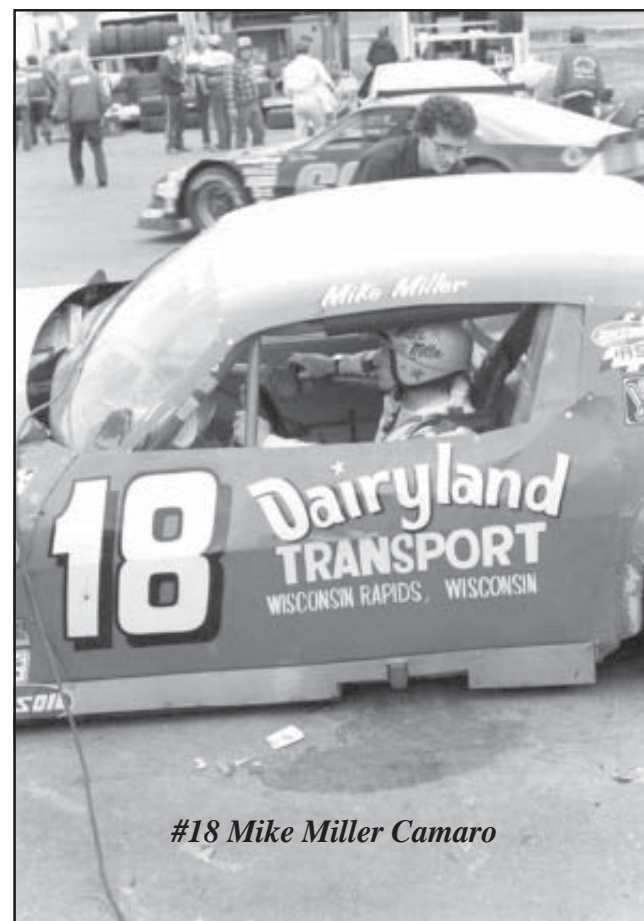


bar became standard fare on stock cars after Martin was hit in the door July 1st at the Capital Super Speedway, Oregon, WI., ARTGO event, breaking his leg and both ankles. After that crash stock car builders included the bar in chassis construction to prevent any further such occurrences. Al Schill, on dirt, won the 25 lap Late Model feature at Raceway Park of Beaver Dam, WI., on July 4th. Whitey Harris, Jack Aschenbrenner and Gordy Seegert, Jr., followed. The best crowd of the season and the largest in years watched Fritz Scharf win the Superstock feature at K-G Raceway, Eagle River, WI., July 1st. The Leadsled main went to Daryl Slizewski. Larry Detjens was the overall winner of the 3rd Annual Dairyland 150 race, July 4th at Golden Sands Speedway, Plover, WI. Joe Kryzkowski and Gary Porter won semi-mains. Mike Miller and Rick Wateski took Late Model and Hobbystock feature wins at La Crosse Interstate Speedway, West Salem, WI., July 2nd. The pick-up drags winner was Larry Wuensch. Ron Prochnow and Doug Herbst won the Late Model and Street stock features respectively, at Yellow River Speedway, Marshfield, WI., July 5th. Bill Honaker who was rumored to still be running the cheater cylinder heads I sold him, set fast Street Stock time. Eddie Bushman borrowed Bill Linder's Late Model and won the Officials race. Lindner, subbing in the flag stand for Bushman, flagged him to the win. Rich, what a "Wondra" full World won the Modified feature at Plymouth Fairgrounds Speedway, Plymouth, WI., July 5th. Wondra won over Etchie Biertzer and Gib Wiser. Jerry the ageless one Eckhardt won the Late Model feature at Lake Geneva Raceway, Lake Geneva, WI., July 5th. Gary Dorn and the still cheating Bill Honaker won the Late Model and Street Stock main events at the Tri-County Speedway, Colby, WI., July 2nd. Perkie Zastrow won a Late Model heat race, while pavement racer, Al Schulz won the semi-feature. According to Dale Danielski, from his From the Point to make a Point, column (A Stevens Point, WI., native don't 'ya know.) it was a competitive weekend in ARTGO racing. Larry Detjens ran the best taking a win at both State Park Speedway and Golden Sands Speedway. Lance Matthees won the Late Model feature at Cedar Lake Speedway, Somerset, WI., July 5th. Forty-five years later Matthees is still winning features, having won another Late Model main recently. Ted Musgrave won his first ever Late Model feature in Wisconsin taking the 20 lap main event win at Wisconsin International Raceway July, 3rd. Musgrave was behind the wheel of the 1980, United Van Lines Camaro. Tom Raatz and Joe Jaekels won the Figure 8 feature races. Mike Murgic bested a 26 car Late Model field to win the feature at Elko Speedway, Elko, MN., July 12th. Bill Woodworth captured the Hobbystock feature. Al Buedler was the mid-season champion driving his 1977 Camaro at the Jefferson Speedway, Jefferson, WI., July 12th.

HISTORIC VALUES

HISTORY THAT NO LONGER REPEATS ITSELF

Audrey Holzhausen was the Powder Puff race winner at La Crosse Interstate Speedway, July 9th. Other winners of note included Dick Trickle in Late Models, and Roger Lund in Hobbystocks. Tony Izzo won features Saturday and Sunday at Sante Fe Speedway, Hinsdale, IL., and with it, took over the track point standings lead. Ron Nissalke, Jim Tradup and Lance Matthees won their respective features in Street stock, Hobbystock and Late Model action at River Raceways, Fountain City, WI., July 1st. Kirby Kurth driving



#18 Mike Miller Camaro

ye olde scribes ex-Chevy Nova, won the first Late Model heat race at State Park Speedway, July 17th. Minnesota racer Dewey Gustafson made an appearance and won the 3rd heat race. Bill Gentry, no relation to Bobbi, won the Roadrunner feature at Rockford Speedway, Rockford, IL., July 16th. Tom Flippo stayed on four wheels to win the semi-main. Darrell Waltrip driving for the injured Mark Martin won the 200 lap ARTGO feature at La Crosse Interstate Speedway, July 20th. Martin sat and watched uncomfortably from his wheel chair. Dick Grave won the Late Model feature at Elko Speedway, July 19th, leading flag to flag. Hometown favorite, M.J. McBride won the Late Model feature at the Shawano Speedway, Shawano, WI., July 19th. Pete Vercauteran reported all the action from the big, 1/2 mile clay oval. Wayne Lensing topped the ASA

Racing History continued on page 19

Racing History from page 18

Sportsman race at Fairgrounds Motor Speedway, Louisville, KY. After 500 laps, yes you read that right, it was Lensing followed by Glenn Ohlman, and Buddy Schrock. Larry Meadors finished 10th, completing 412 laps. Tom Nesbitt beat Rick Popovich to win the main at the Tri-State Speedway, Superior, WI., July 25th. Dwain Erickson was 3rd. Tony Strupp won the 30 lap Late Model feature at the Slinger Super Speedway, Slinger, WI. Steve Seligman and Willie Goedon followed. Jim Weber ended the month of July by winning the Late Model feature race at Golden Sands Speedway. Those dang Minnesota invaders stole the show as Dan Prziborowski finished behind Weber in the main. Their timing was good as it was announced Late Models would no longer compete on a regular basis at the track. Rex Rossier won the Road runner main, which would now be the main division of racing at the speedway. Bobby Allison won the fastest Firecracker 400 NASCAR race ever as he clocked an average speed of 173,473 in winning the race in Daytona July 4th. Tom Nielsen was a convincing winner in Late Model action at Raceway Park, Blue Island, IL., July 2nd winning the 30 lap feature. Bob and Dave Weltmeyer followed. It was nothing to shout

about, but Jeff Tout won the 20 lap Superstock feature at Crash's Grand Rapids Speedway, Grand Rapids, MN., July 2nd. Street stock and 6 cylinder winners were John Giernot and Gale Grife. Johnny Johnson became the first American driver to collect the \$500 bounty for winning the feature at Riverview Raceways, Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada on July 2nd.

Glenn Timko and John Shedler were next. Leon Plank left \$2,500 richer by winning the Gopher State 50 at Chateau Speedway, Lansing, MN., July 9th. Phil Prusak, Pete Parker, Wendell Kuehn and Bill

Racing History continued on page 20

Jim Sauter in person. Working on the race car unlike most of today's drivers.





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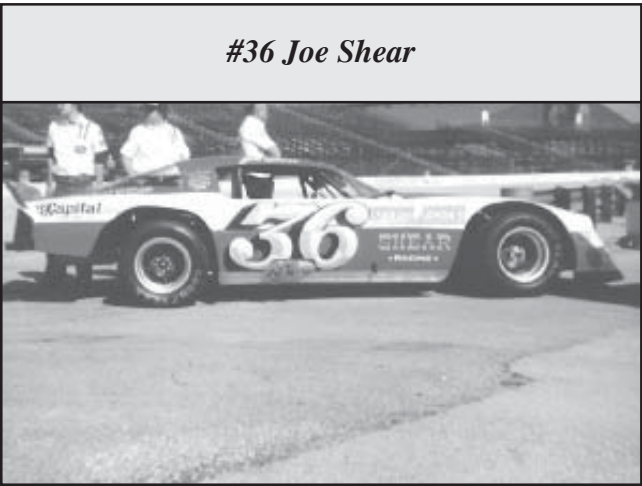





Racing History from page 19

Zwanziger followed. Rusty Wallace defeated “Chopper Joe Ruttman” to win the Miller 200 USAC stock car race at the Milwaukee Mile, West Allis, WI., July 13th.

1981 rolled into town with Jim Sauter winning the Firecracker 100 ARTGO race at Lake Geneva Raceway, Lake Geneva, WI. Sauter drove his Bernz O Matic Camaro to victory over Tom Jones, Larry Detjens, Wayne Lensing, Mark Martin, and Dick Trickle. Fox River Racing Club officials voted to continue the claim portion of the 9:1 engine rule for the remainder of the 1981 season. A record crowd of 7,814 saw John Ziegler win the 20 lap feature at Wisconsin International Raceway, Kaukauna, WI., July 2nd. Ziegler’s win, which was extremely popular, snapped the seven race winning streak of Jim Sauter. Sauter did finish 2nd and was followed by Ted Musgrave, Rich Somers and Cliff Ebben. Tom Carlson won the Hobbystock feature at Dells Motor Speedway, Wis. Dells, WI., July 4th. Ted Musgrave won the 50 lap Late Model feature. Bob Iverson finished 1st and 5th in the two 20 lap features at Dickinson County Raceway, Norway, MI., to capture the overall Earl Iverson crown at the track, July 3rd. Rick Haase won the other 20 lap main. Fans attending the July 5th racing program at Slinger Super Speedway were nearly deprived of the scheduled fireworks for the night. Thieves stole the fireworks, but promoter Wayne Erickson saved the day by driving to Green Bay, WI., to pick up new, more powerful ones, so the display could go on. Brian Leslie won the Firecracker 50 Late Model feature at the Hales Corners Speedway, Hales Corners, WI., July 4th. It is reported that over 500 events scheduled around the 4th of July weekend were titled Firecracker something. I just made that up, but it was probably pretty accurate. Dave Feese won the Late Model feature at Kankakee Speedway, Kankakee, IL., July 3rd. Bill Davis won the 25 lap Late Model feature at Southlake Speedway, of Crown Point, IL. Roger Matthews and Kevin Hastings were next in line. Dick Sorenson and Karl Fenske won the Late Model features at the Dodge County Speedway, Kasson, MN., July 3rd. Mark Noble, who has recorded over 700 feature wins in his career won the Sportsman feature. Ken Schrader won the USAC Midget feature at Kokomo Speedway,



#36 Joe Shear



#70 Joe Ruttman USAC competition

Kokomo, IN., July 8th. Mel Kenyon, Kevin Olson, and Joe Saldana followed him to the stripe. Joe Shear battled to the 70 lap White race win (That doesn’t sound right does it?) July 14th at Wisconsin International Raceway, July 14th before 4,502 fans. Jim Pierson, Al Kulwicki and Dick Trickle followed. Event coverage was provided by Gary Vercauteran. Jim Eliason drove to his 3rd consecutive Late Model feature victory at ABC Raceway, Ashland, WI. Dick Christman won the Sportsman main event. John Foegen led all the way in the Late Model feature at River Raceways, Fountain City, WI., July 4th. John Rogge won the Hobbystock main over Ed Sanders and Rick Hauser. Cliff Ebben won Late Model Feature events the 2nd week of July on the pavement at Wisconsin International Raceway and on the dirt at Shawano Speedway. The winningest driver in USAC stock car division history, Don White, was scheduled to make his 300th career start in the Miller 200 at the Milwaukee Mile, July 19th. He made the show and finished an impressive 4th in the race. Denny Silver won the bomber feature at Wild Bill’s Track and Trail Speedway, Tomah, WI., July 19th. Marty Georgeson and Joe Potter were 2nd and 3rd. Virginia Backus won the Powder Puff race. Tom Jones scored his 3rd Late Model feature win of the year at the Illiana Speedway, Schererville, IN., July 11th. Bob Strait, Bobby Dotter and Ed Hoffman were next in line at the finish. Frank Gawlinski romped to the win showing his Polish Pride in a 30 lap Late Model feature win at Raceway Park Blue Island, IL., July 11th. Figure 8 driver, Greg Feldbrugge had a sizeable lead in points heading into the midway point of the season at Raceway Park, Shakopee, MN. Ed Loomis outran Dan Fredenberg to win the Badger Midget Racing Association Pepsi 50 lap feature at Angell Park Speedway, Sun Prairie, WI., on July 19th. Ken Biertzer was 3rd. Sammy Swindell won the 20 lap Sprint car feature at Knoxville Raceway, Knoxville, Iowa, July 22nd. Doug Wolfgang and Roger Rager finished behind him. Jim Sauter took the ARTGO sanctioned main event win at Elko Speedway, Elko, MN., July 26th. Mark Lamoreaux was certain he was going to win since the race date matched his car number 26. He finished 16th. Mike Melius made an appearance at the Door County Speedway, Sturgeon Bay, WI., winning the 20 lap Late Model feature. Jeff Hinkemeyer beat out Don Aas and Johnny Johnson for the Late Model feature win at the Hibbing Raceway of Hibbing, MN., July 25th. Kevin Stepan was the Late Model star at State Park Speedway, Wausau, WI., July 23rd, as he won the 30 lap feature. Barry Wehrs won the go-kart feature. A tornado hit the west side of the Illiana Motor Speedway, July 25th, canceling the nights

racing. 300 fans were at the track at the time, but no injuries were reported. The Tornado touched down twice, damaging a concession stand and destroying a ticket booth. Ron Schreiner won the 20 lap Late Model feature at the Rice Lake Speedway, Rice Lake, WI., July 25th. Dave Morgan and Steve Weber were next at the finish. Doug Hillson swept the program in Sportsman action at Chateau Speedway, Lansing, MN., July 25th. Hillson won the main event, his heat, and the dash to sweep all events he was in. Archie Sawyer won the Late Model Sportsman 25 lap feature July 24th, at Golden Sands Speedway. Sawyer held off Royce Rossier and Rex Rossier in the process.

And so it goes, as we conclude our 1980, 1981, month of July racing recaps. We’ll try again, aiming for the July MRC. The anxiety and suspense are killing you I know!

Here and there...Actually caught a live racing event, as La Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway, West Salem, WI., had their season opener. Ah yes, what fun watching someone pass 13 cars on the way to a win. Skylar Holzhausen closed the deal, passing Tony Leis with a lap left in the race to take the NASCAR Late Model win.

Questions, comments, opinions and other information should now be directed to Starmaker Multimedia 314 3rd Avenue South, Onalaska, WI. 54650. 608-518-2478 or to dale@starmakermultimedia.com

Mystery driver



#98. Who is it what is it? Fringe benefits if you guess will be enormous.

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37 Years Later

Chuck Doyle hung up his dirt racing helmet following the conclusion of the 1988 season at Cedar Lake Speedway. Believe it or not, it took Chuck 36 years to return to the track as a spectator last year with the IMCA Oldtimers portion of the Fall Fun Day in September. This year, after 37 years away from competitive action Chuck returned behind the wheel in the IMCA Oldtimers Vintage open wheel action. Although motor issues kept the ride from being competitive, Chuck had fun. Fun is what it's all about. I would imagine once the motor issues are figured out, we'll see him in more vintage racing action during the course of the 2025 racing season.



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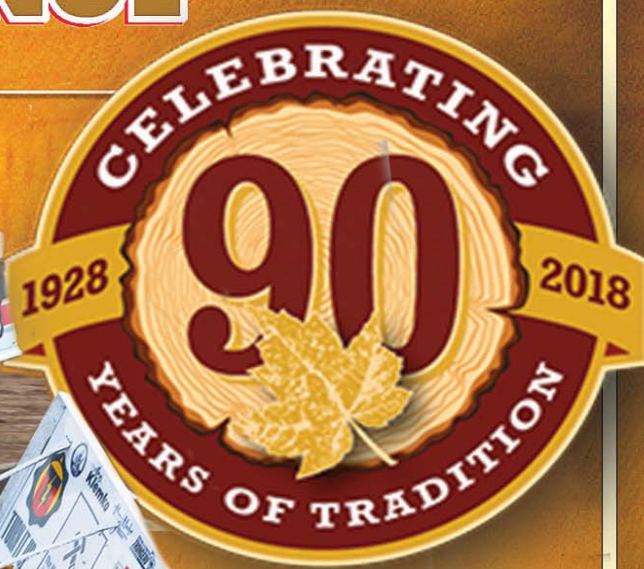
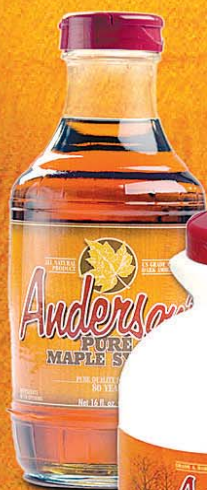
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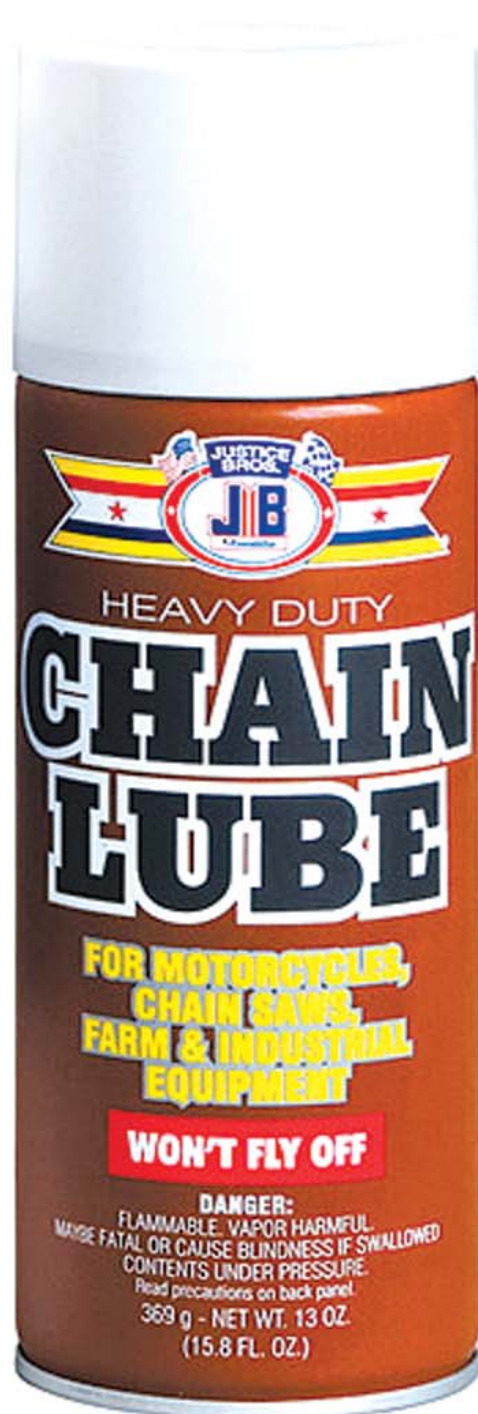
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