

THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

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THE MIDWEST'S SHORT TRACK AUTO RACING AUTHORITY

Winter Time Racing



January 2026

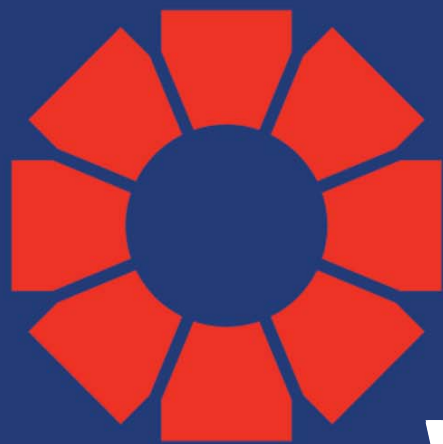
Inside...



Racin' in the South



Super Fan

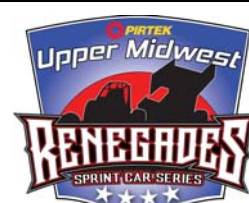


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Publisher's Note
Racing According to Plan



Dan Plan

Over the winter months, I've been posting old photos that I started taking as a kid in the late



Dan Plan photo

State Fair Memories

1970's from grandstands at the Minnesota State Fair race track. One of the frequent comments on these posts is to bring the track back. I'm pretty sure that will never happen. It's been over 20 years since the track shut down. The fair board at the time wasn't interested in keeping the track and I'm pretty sure the present board has no interest either.

Another thing I often think of regarding the Minnesota State Fair race track is how would the crowds be in this day and age. The ASA Series was very popular in 2002, and drew enormous crowds to the Minnesota State Fairgrounds. I don't think there is national series on the pavement side of things that has the following that ASA had in the early 2000's. As much as I enjoy pavement Late Model racing, the fan base has changed and it would be a hard sell to fill the grandstands at a venue this big. This along with the overwhelming majority of pavement shows these needing to have practice days would make it next to impossible to have anything if the track still existed.

I know I was disappointed when the Fairboard made the decision to get rid of the track. Disappointed is probably the wrong word. Pissed is more like it.

I too stayed away from the fairgrounds for several years after the track was removed. I'm pretty good at holding a grudge, and I wasn't ever

*Publisher's Note
continued on page 4*

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THE MIDWEST
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Publisher's Note continued from page 3

planning on going to the Minnesota State Fair again. After a few years, my wife pointed out that I probably shouldn't let my bitterness impact our son's ability to attend the state fair. I gave up my grudge and now make visits just to see the fair.

While I'm on the topic of things that happened more than 20 years ago, the 2026 season will mark the 30th year in print for The Midwest Racing Connection. Publisher Emeritus, Rob Hahn, started what was then known as Minnesota's Racing Connection in 1997. I believe I first started contributing to the paper during the 2001 racing season and then purchased the business from Rob in 2006.

When the print issues start up in the month of May we will start doing some nostalgic pieces along with inviting some of the past contributors to pen a guest column throughout the summer of the 2026 racing season.

Dan Plan photo









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Talkin' Racin' with Jason



Jason D. Searcy

If you are reading an article in a racing newspaper, most assuredly you are a big race fan. Some people though are at a whole other level, Tim Sebo from St Louis Park (MN) is one of those Super Fans.

When Tim was just a kid, his father Odell got him interested in racing, they attended races at Raceway Park back when it was still a dirt track in the 1960's.



Jason Searcy photo



Jason Searcy photo

Super Fan

He has been going to Oktoberfest at LaCrosse Fairgrounds Speedway for 29 years, he attends all four days of racing Thursday through Sunday, "I love this track, I love the racing."

Tim's main track has always been Elko (MN) Speedway, he has attended the races there for about 45 years, he doesn't just watch, he keeps the stats. He gets there early, usually before the gates even open to watch practice. He documents who is racing and where they finish each race, he is not the official scorer, he keeps these stats as a personal archive. It is a huge passion in his life.

He keeps all the stats on paper, not on a computer. He keeps hand written papers and fills up a box each year.

When deciding what races to go to on Saturday nights ELKO has always been his priority but if Elko Speedway is not racing, he will check the schedules and go to another track like Ogilvie (MN) or LaCrosse (WI). It's not unusual to see him at Princeton Speedway on a random Friday night, there he is with his row of clipboards in the stands.

When asked why do you do this? "I just wanted to, I guess," Tim says with a laugh. What do you do with all of these stats that you keep? "Good question, I don't know what I will do with them or what my son will do with them when I am gone," he says. "I just love it."

Tim's son Keith also had the bug for racing, he raced at Raceway Park in the Figure 8 division and drove in numerous Enduro events. He did score one win in the Figure 8 division on July 22nd of 2007, "we were so happy" said Sebo.

Tim was there first hand to see many of the improvements at Elko Speedway over the years, "I'm glad they updated the stands for the fans, it's

much nicer now, the concessions are pretty good now, but I wish they would bring back pizza" says Sebo.

On the racing side of things John Lemke and Mark Lamoureux were always his favorite drivers. "I always liked the old ASA style 200 lapper races with Tricke and Reffner. It's great that the ASA boys have come back, I love to see them every year."

Tim is now retired from working as a school custodian for 27 years so he can set his own race watching schedule. On his bucket list for 2026 is to go to Granite City Speedway in Sauk Rapids (MN) and I-94 Speedway in Fergus Falls (MN), he regrets never making the trip to Rockford (IL) Speedway.

Tim is not on social media, he does not brag about his accomplishments on a Facebook page. There is one way that he has updated to current technology, he checks his own personal stats against the online results on the MyRacePass app, "that is very helpful," he says.

Tim has no plans on displaying his archive or putting it up on a digital form. But you can be assured that his own personal history of racing is in safe hands.

Tim is a man of few words, but you will always find him with a smile on his face and a pen in his hand when he is at the track, any track. "I love racing, that's all," says Sebo, spoken like a true Super Fan.



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Racing Nuggets



PJ "Jacklyn" Nuttleman

When my friend Heather and I planned to go to the Snowball Derby together, we had visions of Thelma & Louise (without the death at the end) for our return drive back home. As it turns out, we got to experience the bittersweet death (sort of) and ended up with my chatty husband in the car with us the entire way back from Pensacola to Wisconsin.

My husband, Toby, rode with me in our car down to Bradenton, FL, for the first of the double-header race trip. Heather flew into Pensacola the following week. I must admit, when Toby said he would ride with me, I was less than enthusiastic. I would have loved to go on a road trip with him, but... I'm lying. I didn't want to road trip with him. He talks on the phone **CONSTANTLY**.

He said he didn't want me traveling that distance by myself, and I adore him for caring. As it turns out, we had a delightful trip together. He did NOT talk on the phone the entire time; only about 20% of it. (Insert snarky giggle here.)

The truth is, we had fun on the trip, and we have rarely had that kind of quality one-on-one time. I like it when a man can't run away from me because he's strapped into my vehicle, hurtling at a breakneck speed down the interstate. Sidenote: I did get a speeding warning from a State Trooper on I-90. Thank you for the warning and not a ticket!

The first race of the trip, the Bill Bigley 128 Memorial, was interesting. Ty Majeski's car had the belt of the oil pump come off during final practice. You can never be sure whether the engine was damaged under those circumstances, so the team had to make a quick decision, as there was less than half an hour left of practice. I am forever impressed with how that group of guys can work in symphony during



PJ Nuttleman photo

a crisis. They pulled the backup car (Snowball Derby car) out of the hauler, switched everything over to the Bigley in 20 minutes, and got in a little "shakedown run" before that final practice session closed.

Majeski qualified 5th fastest and ended up finishing second to George Gorham, Jr. in a truly bizarre race. I say that because I felt like I was

watching an Enduro race. Cars seemed to be either really good or really bad. There was no middle ground. Seeing stout competitors be lapped over and over, and the rest of the field running like they had the Ultra Mini-Turbo from Mario Kart engaged, made for a hard race to keep track of. But whatever. Finishing 2nd is better than a snowball to the face.

Once tech cleared and the equipment was packed up, Toby and I piled into our car and headed north to Pensacola. It was about a seven-hour drive, which shouldn't be a big deal, but we had been up since early that morning. Admittedly, I was nodding off as we were edging into Pensacola in the wee hours of the morning. Toby was super helpful in keeping me awake. It's hard to sleep when he snores. When we finally arrived at 5 Flags Speedway, we grabbed a short nap before they opened the pits to get parked for Snowball Derby practice around 9 am.

While I'm grateful for the extended vacation in Florida, I do find it painful how much practice there is for the Snowball Derby. Majeski ends up running more laps on old tires to get a race-trim feel, but overall, I think that the event has WAY too much practice time before race day. It's an in\$ane u\$e of re\$ource\$. But my opinion doesn't count for anything. However, it rained cats and dogs most of the week in Pensacola. With that in mind, those early practice days were instrumental this year in helping



Racing Nuggets continued on page 10

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2026 SCHEDULE

1

Sat, Apr 18

49th Spring Classic
Grundy Co. Speedway

2

Fri, May 22

Late Model Special
Madison Int'l Speedway

3

Fri, June 5

Clash at the Downs XII
Hawkeye Downs

4

Sat, July 18

Hawkeye Hoosier Classic
Hawkeye Downs

5

Fri, Aug 7

Union 464 Night
Madison Int'l Speedway

6

Fri, Sept 18

65th Bettenhausen Memorial
Grundy Co. Speedway

7

Sat, Sept 26

61st National Short
Track Champs
Dells Raceway Park

8

Sat, Oct 10

57th Oktoberfest
LaCrosse Speedway

Racing Nuggets from page 8

many teams at least get a sense of how their cars would run.

One of the things most people don't know about the Snowball Derby, unless they've attended it before, is that qualifying is a HUGE event. It's exciting and nerve-wracking. The stands are generally full, and people are CHEERING during qualifying. It's intense and highly unpredictable.

They even have an earlier event in the week to "draw" the qualifying order. I had asked Majeski what number he was hoping to pull. He surprised me when he said, "earlier rather than later." When I asked him why, he said, "I just think the track will be greener with all of the rain." And he just had a Spidey sense that earlier would be the way to go this year.

He got his wish. He drew #4. He was fast—but didn't break his own track record for qualifying, which he set in 2015. Majeski ended up second-fastest to 48-year-old Preston Peltier, who hinted that this might be his last Derby effort. Two other Midwestern drivers, Derek Kraus made it into the Derby through qualifying, as did Ty Fredrickson—in his first ever attempt at the crown jewel event.

Rain was the headline of the entire Snowball Derby event in 2025. The race was postponed one day to Monday. That creates a LOT of chaos for teams and fans alike. Flights needing to be rescheduled, hotels or Airbnb stays needing to be extended, and more meals needing to be covered are just a few of the costs involved in that chaos. It caused a wrinkle for my friend, Heather, and me, as we had to explain to our boss that we would NOT be back to work as intended on Tuesday.

In the end, all was worked out, and Heather

PJ Nuttleman photo

and I were doing something I had NEVER done in all my years of attending races with Toby: we watched the entire race from the pits. I don't like to do that because I can't see the whole track; however, FloRacing had a jumbotron set up right in front of the Majeski pit, so I figured it would be an incredible experience for us to stay down there. And it was! Until it wasn't.

I don't need to rehash the end of the Snowball Derby. It's well-documented that Majeski had the dominant car, and the rules were written such that you could begin to increase speed as you got closer to the firing box, blah, blah, blah. A judgment call had

Majeski being black-flagged five laps AFTER that final restart for allegedly "jumping the start," and the win was ultimately handed over to the guy who crossed the finish line second, Stephen Nasse. He had experienced a kick to the nuts in 2019 at the same race.

Oddly enough, it was a trivial brake issue that had Nasse getting DQ'd in 2019—and it was likely brake "issue" that helped him win it this year. Games. A \$50,000 payday comes down to gamesmanship and

subjective decisions. Whatever.

The worst part of the final laps of the Derby was related to my decision to watch from the pits. I had kept an eye on Toby pacing the entire race. With a handful of laps remaining, I was uncertain what was happening, as I noticed that Ty was no longer being shown as the leader. Toby, who paces and watches the car going through the corners, was utterly oblivious to the turn of events.

It was heartbreaking to have him come up to me immediately after the checkered flag flew with a massive smile on his face and throw his arms around me in a celebratory hug... only to have me break it to him that they stopped scoring Ty and he will not be the winner. That was total devastation, and I don't ever want to have to be the one to deliver that kind of gut-punch to my husband ever again.

It goes without saying that the drive back to Wisconsin was a painful 18 hours. My heart broke for Toby, Ty—the entire team. They delivered a complete ass-whooping and basically took it up the posterior with a subjective decision.

If you've ever read the James Patterson book, "The Murder House," there's a great quote that seems to resonate with the Snowball Derby: "Give a guy with an inferiority complex some power and watch out."

Will they return to the Derby again? I don't know. It depends on the day as to what they say. But more than anything, it will likely depend upon the role and/or presence of specific individuals at the Derby when race time comes around again.

PJ Nuttleman photo*PJ Nuttleman photo*

Dangerous Dan**Dan Margetta**

After a few off-season weeks of no racing and then the Holidays, it's time to look ahead to 2026 racing season and just about every die-hard fan is laying out a calendar and planning out what racing events will fill out their personal racing schedules. I'm no different and the week between Christmas and New Year's I began transferring the 2026 races I plan to be at from my mind to paper. It's crazy how when you actually write out the days of the races you want to attend this year on paper, how you realize just how big a part of your life cars driving in circles have become. Normal people say you do this too much but the truth is they just don't get it and the only people that really do get it are the people you see just about every week at the racetrack, which is why you go so much in the first place. Get it? LOL!

Anyways, to begin the new year, here is the first draft of my 2026 racing schedule and as always, it's very much subject to change depending on various factors. One new addition for this year is I was asked and agreed to run a camera for about six Interstate Racing Association (IRA) Sprint Car Series races in 2026 so the schedule this year will be a little dirtier than previous ones. I love running a camera and being a part of the streaming broadcasts so as far as the other events, I'll work them if they need and/or want me to but either way I plan on being there one way or another whether working or as a fan.

My 2026 racing schedule kicks off in February with the ASA STARS National Tour event at New Smyrna Speedway followed by the World of Outlaws Late Model Series program at Volusia Speedway Park two nights later. Then it's off to Daytona International Speedway for the NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series race and the ARCA and NASCAR O' Reilly Series races. The Florida trip culminates with the Daytona 500 which will be my 8th "500" and 133rd NASCAR Cup race overall. Then

2026 Schedule Planning

it's back to Wisconsin for about two months to wait out winter before the Ice Breaker 100 at Dells Raceway Park opens up the "local" season in April. Two weeks later, the ASA Midwest Tour and Slinger Speedway start their season with the Jerry Priesgen Memorial. Slinger is my "home" track and while I'm only highlighting some of the Slinger dates in this column, I will be there just about every Sunday night when they race from May-September.

May begins with the ASA Midwest Tour Joe Shear Classic at Madison International Speedway followed two weeks later by my first IRA Sprint Car event of 2026 at the Plymouth Dirt Track and then Slinger Speedway's first super late model Triple Crown race the next night. Memorial Day Weekend begins with the ASA Midwest Tour race at the Jefferson Speedway on Saturday with Slinger Speedway's Memorial Day super late model firework show on Sunday. My month of May concludes at Dells Raceway Park with the Trickle 99 which is the second of the Alive for Five super late model races there.

As was the case last year with the beginning of summer, June is the busiest month as far as my planned schedule goes. While the first weeks of my June schedule include a few non-racing events such as baseball games and family graduations to go with Slinger's regular Sunday night programs, if I could be at two places at once I'd be at the World of Outlaws Sprint Car races at Plymouth and Angell Park. I am signed up to work two back-to-back IRA Sprint Car races at Outagamie Speedway and Shawano Speedway in the middle of the month. Father's Day Weekend is extremely busy and I plan to be at the IndyCar weekend at Road America during the day and the World of Outlaws Late Model races at 141 Speedway at night on Friday and Saturday. Then Father's Day Sunday will start out at the Road America Indycar race and will finish at Slinger Speedway for the ASA STARS National Tour race. Two days later, I plan to be at the ASA STARS race at Madison International Speedway. The final weekend of June will consist of the Trans Am Series at Road America, the Dairyland 100 Alive for Five super late model race #3 at Dells Raceway Park, and the big \$2,500 to win late model event at Slinger Speedway.

Fourth of July Weekend will find me at NASCAR's return to the Chicagoland Speedway oval and then about two weeks later is the prestigious Slinger Nationals. The end of the month features the ASA Midwest Tour Howie Lettow Classic at Madison International Speedway.

August is another busy month and it begins with the IMSA Sports Car Weekend at Road America where I'll start Saturday of that weekend at

the road course and finish it down the road at the Plymouth Dirt Track for my 4th scheduled IRA Sprint Car race. Sunday of that weekend begins back at Road America to see most of the big six-hour endurance race before heading to Slinger Speedway for second Triple Crown super late model race. Then two days later, it's off to Wisconsin International Raceway for the ASA Midwest Tour Gandrud Auto Group 250. The following weekend, I plan to be at Dells Raceway Park as the Detjens Memorial race moves there as the fourth Alive for Five Series super late model race. I finally made it to Elko Speedway last year, and plan to return in 2026 for the ASA Midwest Tour Thunderstruck 93 in the middle of the month and then the following weekend will be my 5th scheduled IRA Sprint Car race at Wilmot Raceway. The final weekend in August will find me at the IndyCar double header races at the Milwaukee Mile and Slinger's third Triple Crown super late model race.

September begins with Labor Day Weekend at Dells Raceway Park for the ASA Midwest Tour Jim Sauter Classic followed by Slinger Speedway's big fireworks super late model show. The month ends with my 6th IRA Sprint Car race at the Plymouth Dirt Track. The beginning of October of course means the Oktoberfest Race Weekend highlighted by the ASA Midwest Tour and after missing it in 2025, I definitely plan to be there in 2026. The local season concludes late in October with the Falloween 100 at Dells Raceway Park for the fifth and final Alive for Five Series super late model race. I tentatively plan on ending my 2026 racing season at the NASCAR championship weekend as the event returns to Homestead Speedway. I attended the championship races at Homestead from 1999-2019 and really want to get back there and as long as the logistics line up and hotels, airfare, etc. don't end up costing an arm and a leg, the plan is to be there.

Of course, I'm sure many more events will be added as the year moves along and I'm sure I'll see many of you at these events as well. Now we just have to find a way to speed up winter so we can get back racing again.





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Chill Chaser Photo Gallery



Matt Rowe singing the National Anthem to kick off the Chill Chaser



Chill Chaser action in turn 4 at Elko on New Year's Day



The full field prior to the start of the Chill Chaser 250 Enduro



Three-wide action on an ice-covered Elko Speedway



The field coming to green for the Chill Chaser 250



Turn 1 and 2 action at the Chill Chaser 250

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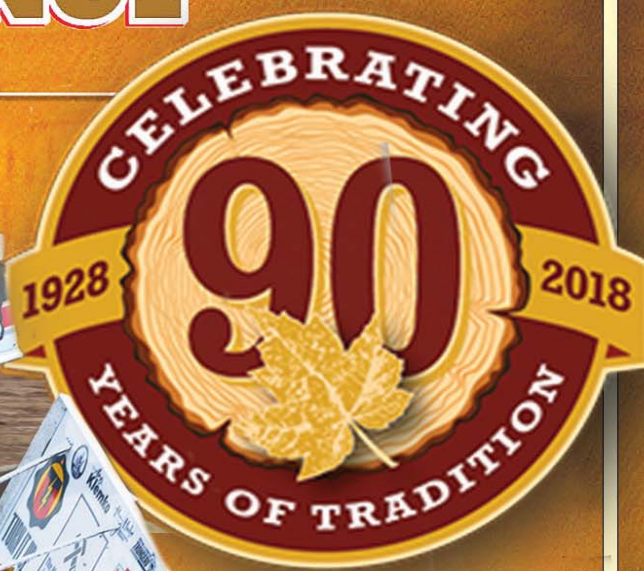
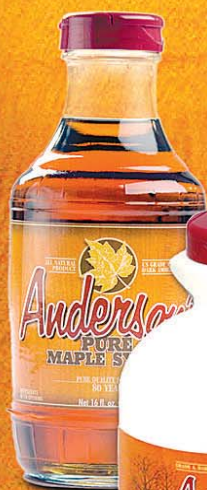
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