

THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

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THE MIDWEST'S SHORT TRACK AUTO RACING AUTHORITY



Stock Stub Action



Mahder Memorial



& Slinger Nationals

August 2026

Inside...



Back on the Road Again



Photo Gallery

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Publisher's Note
Racing According to Plan



Dan Plan

Early in the month of July, I realized I could have attended eleven race events in eleven consecutive days that were all fairly close to home. In my younger years I would have taken two weeks off of

***The Best of Times
and Worst of Times***

work and made this happen by sleeping in the back of my 1989 S-10 Blazer for the entire time. Now that I'm pushing 60 years on this earth, it still sounded like a lot of fun, but my priorities have changed and sleeping in my car doesn't sound like a lot of fun anymore.

I went to Thunder Hill Speedway in Menomonie, WI on Thursday 07/09 and then went back to Menomonie Friday night for the Street Stock Tour on Friday night 07/10 at Red Cedar Speedway. This was followed by a weekly show at Cedar Lake on Saturday 07/11. My original thoughts were to go to three full days racing at the Slinger Super Speedway. Typically, Monday is just a practice day for the Super Lates, but this year they added an actual race event for the CRA Pro Late Models on Monday night following the Super Late Model practice for the Nationals.

After Slinger's Tuesday night Nationals, my next option was the annual LaCrosse County Fair race on Wednesday. Thursday would have been the annual

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The Midwest
RACING
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August 2026

P.O. Box 101
Roberts, WI 54023
651-451-4036
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Publisher
Dan Plan

Contributing Writers
Dale P. Danielski
Dan Margetta
PJ "Jacklyn" Nuttleman
Jason Searcy
Charlie Spry

Contributing Photographers
Martin DeFries
Kim Kemperman
Doug Hornickel
Nuttleman Kids
John Luethard
Roy Ophime
Vince Peterson
Shawn Swannstrom
Mark Zeidler

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THE MIDWEST
RACING CONNECTION



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Dodge County Fair race in Kasson, MN. Friday would have been another return to Red Cedar Speedway, followed by the annual Mahder Memorial Race at Cedar Lake. I'm sure I could have found something on Sunday 07/19. With the oppressive heat during this stretch (10 straight days of 90+ temps) I opted for just the LaCrosse County Fair race on Wednesday night and the Mahder Memorial at Cedar Lake the following Saturday. That trip would have been the best of times.

And now for the worst of times. With scheduling conflicts, heat and lack of precipitation in the area, several events in the Upper-Midwest were cancelled in the month of July. While many fans get upset, I get it. Nobody wants to cancel events, but sometimes business decisions need to be made. As much as I would have loved to have had a "Speedweeks" type adventure through Wisconsin and Minnesota in July, I'm still going to go with the thought of I had the opportunity to make this the best of times.



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Going in Circles



Charlie Spry

I really enjoy the sport of stock car racing, but just as much, I enjoy the people involved in the sport. We all have a common bond. We love a sport that is anything but “common”.

Touring the pits at the Lafayette County Speedway one senses a common bond. One division that really seems to enjoy the fun factor are those in the hobby stock division.

Andy Bearer kind of exemplifies that. The driver of the #31 car will tell you quickly that most are definitely not into this for the money. “I will likely spend more tonight to get here and race than I will make. I don’t care. We all know that we won’t come out ahead, so why take chances on wrecking stuff and having to buy more parts and spend more time fixing?” Andy tries to avoid wrecking the car but sometimes things happen anyway. “I have been racing for three years now. The one year I got in two bad wrecks, both at Maquoketa. It happened on the season opener there and then the last race, which was the Iowa dirt nationals. In that one I ended up rolling the car six times. We took the car back home, slept for about four hours, then got up and started working. We made it back in time to race that night.”

Andy became interested in racing the hobby stocks from his involvement with the operation of the Sugar River Raceway kart track. “I worked with owner Marshall Fairman. He was a really great guy to work for, and this is where I met some of my current

teammates.” (Matt, Landon, David Bennett and others). “They started racing there and I got to know them well. When they started racing the hobby stocks they told me that I really need to get one, so I did.”

Although he has not won a race yet, he has had some good memories, including a night where he finished fourth in the feature and looked strong. His favorite memory though involves his Daughter, Kelsi. “I got a chance to see my Daughter race my car in the Powder Puff race here last year. That meant so much to me.”

Kelsi puts out quite an effort with many photos on Facebook depicting their racing nights. Some are quite comical, which shows that these guys know how to have fun. This is under Bearer Family Racing.

Hoping that Andy can continue to enjoy the sport so much. The third year driver is fun to watch.

Jonathan Walton is another Hobby Stock racer who tries his best to make it all fun. He always has a good attitude about things. He is in his first year in the division after racing four cylinders for many years. “We are slowly making progress,” Said Jonathan. “I get a little more confident every week, plus I was able to talk to Jevon and Jason Robbins, and they gave me some great advice on driving, which is pretty neat, because when I was a kid I grew up cheering for them, as we are from the same town.”

Tim Seichter is another Hobby Stock racer that is in it for the fun. “I just like driving the car,” Said Tim.

On the Late Model side of things, rookie LM driver Blaise Watters recently scored his first career feature win in the class, his first year out. Blaise also races in the Hobby Stocks and is the current point leader and is one of the drivers to beat.

Carsen Udelhofen is also in his first year of racing a Late Model, after some time in a Hobby Stock, mostly at Dubuque. “We got the car over the Winter,” Said Carsen. “It had been wrecked, but we took our time and fixed it up. It was time. I was ready to move up. It was always a dream of mine to race a Late Model, and here I am.” Carsen has been a threat to win each week, and has had a couple of runnerup feature finishes.

Carsen’s Dad is long time racer Jason

Udelhofen, who won many features and track championships here in the hobby stocks, including four in a row from 2000-2004. He and Carsen, along with the crew recently re-did the old hobby stock car that was a big part of that success. “It had been sitting in a shed, just down the road from here. We started working on it and kept at it last winter,” Said Carsen. “We did alot of updating to make it more



Charlie Spry photo

competitive, about the only thing that is original is the bare chassis.” The car was even redone in one of the original paint schemes, with vintage Monte Carlo body. It brings back memories for anyone who was around the track at that time and saw Jason pretty much dominate the hobby stock class with it. It is now being raced in the Stock Car class by Logan Weaver here, and by Carsen at Dubuque.

Four cylinder class racing here still has a car count hovering around 9 cars weekly, but the racing has been outstanding. One of the drivers on the verge of breaking through for his first career feature win is Braxten Kent. In his third year of racing, he makes the trip across the border from his home in Apple River, Illinois, to race weekly. Another driver who grew up around the sport. “I always came here as a kid and wanted to try racing later on,” Said Braxten. “I got to know Josh Chambers, and got a car from him. Then, over the Winter I worked with him to build the car I have now.” His car is the popular Dodge Neon, the

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Charlie Spry photo



Charlie Spry photo



Charlie Spry photo

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kind of car that dominated this class for years, but now faces strict competition from the many Hondas racing. Still, Braxten can run with the best of them, and this year scored his first career heat race win. Mr. Chambers has helped many people out throughout the years, and builds great cars, many of which are racing and winning here. Braxten drives well and I think he will join the feature winners soon. He is definitely going in the right direction.

The modified class here has put on some outstanding racing this year. While Jed Freiburger and Jeff Larson have been the guys to beat, others such as Jaden Fryer and Joe Huenefeld have broken through. Others are on the cusp of getting feature wins. The division is tough from top to bottom.

Veteran Sean Rupp is one driver that has been consistently near the top the past few weeks. Sean has made his car work very well on the low groove, and has had some top five finishes, and recently grabbed a second place feature run on fair night. His last feature win came twenty years ago at Lancaster, so he is definitely deserving to break through and get another win here at his home track. Sean is fun to talk

to, as he has been around the sport a long time and has a great memory of drivers of the past.

Took in the “racer’s reunion” show at the Madison International Speedway. I always really enjoy this show as it is a time where racers from the past are celebrated, and the Upper Midwest Vintage group brings out their beautiful cars to race.

Some interesting drivers and their cars were racing in the vintage group on this night. Le Larsen brought out his Boyce chassied Camaro. Le figures that the car was built around 1972, so it is true vintage. Another veteran racer is Russ Grossen, who has helped build the car and helps when Le races it. He also shares driving duties.

Le raced many years ago at the Madison track, going so far back as to have competed when it was a go-kart track. Russ has raced since the 1960’s as well, winning many races here and at other tracks. Being the “vintage” person that I am, I can remember Le racing a #129 hobby stock here, and Russ racing a fluorescent orange #33 hobby stock. Russ is probably better remembered for his yellow #16 late models.

Looking further along, Veteran racer Steve Rubeck was behind the wheel of Keith Selvog’s Don Leach tribute Camaro. Keith goes back a long way, racing go-karts and then late models. He told me that he remembered racing against Dick Trickle and that gang at this track back when all late model type cars ran in one division (1980 comes to mind). He had a Rockford/Lake

Geneva limited late at the time, and reports that he could start up front and hold on to a lead for about ten laps before Trickle and others would catch him. Not bad company to have raced against. Keith always did his racing with less investment than most, using ingenuity and smarts vs. dollars. The Don Leach tribute comes from the fact that Keith owned a car in which Don won two championships at Rockford Speedway in the late 1970’s. Besides here at Madison, Rockford, Lake Geneva and Columbus, Keith also raced in the old ASA sportsman class that ran in conjunction with the circuit of champions cars, back in the late 1970’s. As for Rubeck, he has raced and won in many different divisions, and still competes at Grundy, but probably best known at Rockford Speedway.

Good to see John Ostermann present. John, too, has raced at many different tracks, and has pretty



Charlie Spry photo

much seen everything. He did admit to never having raced at this track before tonight. When one realizes that he hails from the Michigan U.P. we can realize why. John was racing a beautiful 1961 Thunderbird, as a Red Bedell tribute car. Red was a familiar winner on the northern Wisconsin dirt tracks.

Racing with the MisFitz class for the past couple of weeks is Scott Getzloff. Those familiar with racing in the central Wisconsin area are aware of the legendary tire sellers Albert and Vic Getzloff. Scott is in fact related, as they are his great uncles. Both were heavily involved in racing in the central part of the state. Their tire truck would be everywhere. Albert has since passed, but Scott has a very nice tribute on the hood of his car in memorium. Both were heavily involved with the racing efforts of Dick Trickle and other central Wisconsin racers. Both even raced for a time. If you were around the CWRA you definitely knew who they were.

Took in another weekly show at Dells Raceway Park. Talked again with veteran racer Steve Dobbratz, who now races in the hobby stock division. He had retired from racing at one time but made a bit of a comeback, saying, “It was kind of by accident. I had sold the other car and then bought this ’75 Malibu for parts for my Camaro. I got to be looking at it and the frame was really good on it, so I thought that it would



Charlie Spry photo

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be fun to build one up from the ground. Talked to Chico (Riedner) and he has a cage kit that was very reasonable, so I went to work, and ended up with another race car." If anyone is looking for a good asphalt hobby stocker, here is a good one.

Waylon Robinson is kept busy, as he was fresh off a feature win to go along with a second place finish in the MisFitz division at MIS the previous night. Now, he had his own hobby stock to race tonight, and it was another hot night. Good thing that he is a young guy.

Thanks to both Steve and Jimmy Robinson for the bottles of water on the sweltering nights.

It was nice to see Nathan Kruschke get what I think was his very first feature win in the Bandit class. It was reported that Nate borrowed his Sister's car to get the win. She may want it back, pronto. Always nice to see people get that first one. He checked out on the field and was gone. Never a doubt.

Also nice to see Austin Fowler out with his hobby stock for the first time all year. He and a few others make the trip here from the Rockford area, which is an expensive thing to do anymore. Austin was a top runner at the old Rockford Speedway. He grabbed a heat race win tonight. Also present was his friend, the "Beerman", A.K.A Sean Worman. Never a dull moment with him around. Good people. Matthew Cleveland got the feature win tonight, his second of the season here.

I have noticed that one of the cleanest drivers in the mod class is Steven Schulz. He just seems to have the knack to stay out of trouble, and is definitely fast. He not only set fast time but won their feature on this night. Clean car.

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The first of two late model features came down to the finish between ultimate winner Randy Sargent and Mike Lichtfeld. I will pass no judgment, but let's just say that it wasn't just the weather that was hot on this night. Jesse Bernhagen won the second feature of the night.

Ghage Moore topped his Dad, Matt Moore to win the Sixer feature, and rookie Camden Grommes won the Super Cup feature.

Sad news, as we lost a very familiar racer to folks in the Beloit/Rockford area, as long-time racer Wayne Swartwout passed away in mid-July. Wayne was racing in 1969 when I first attended races, along

with several of his brothers. I know that he raced religiously at the Rockford Speedway, but also Madison, Columbus, and others. He also raced in the old ASA sportsman races, as did Wayne Lensing, the aforementioned Keith Selvog, Larry O'Brien and others. He was also the winner of the National Short Track Championship for Rockford rules cars in 1983. He was a big Ford guy and often raced Mustangs, but also had an affinity for American Motors products, racing an AMC Javelin at times, with an AMC engine. I had the opportunity to talk to him quite a bit in later years, and he loved to talk about racing. My condolences to the family, he will be greatly missed.



Racing History



Dale P. Danielski

Often overlooked is the racing career of Wausau, Wisconsin race driver Dave Marcis. Marcis began his career racing 5-6 nights a week on the rough and tumble Wisconsin circuit back in the late 1950s into the late '60s. The dedication and hard work by Marcis got him to the big league of NASCAR Winston Cup racing where he carved out a very successful career. Following will be excerpts from an earlier Danielski interview, along with added information following the Marcis career and his years racing at the top level of sport.

"I started racing in 1958. My Dad had a garage and wrecking yard near Wausau, so I was always interested in cars." Marcis could race nearly every day of the week, as tracks dirt and asphalt were popping up everywhere. "I started at Sam's Speedway near Mosinee, WI., a track run by Sam Bartus. Not many people know that track was there. After

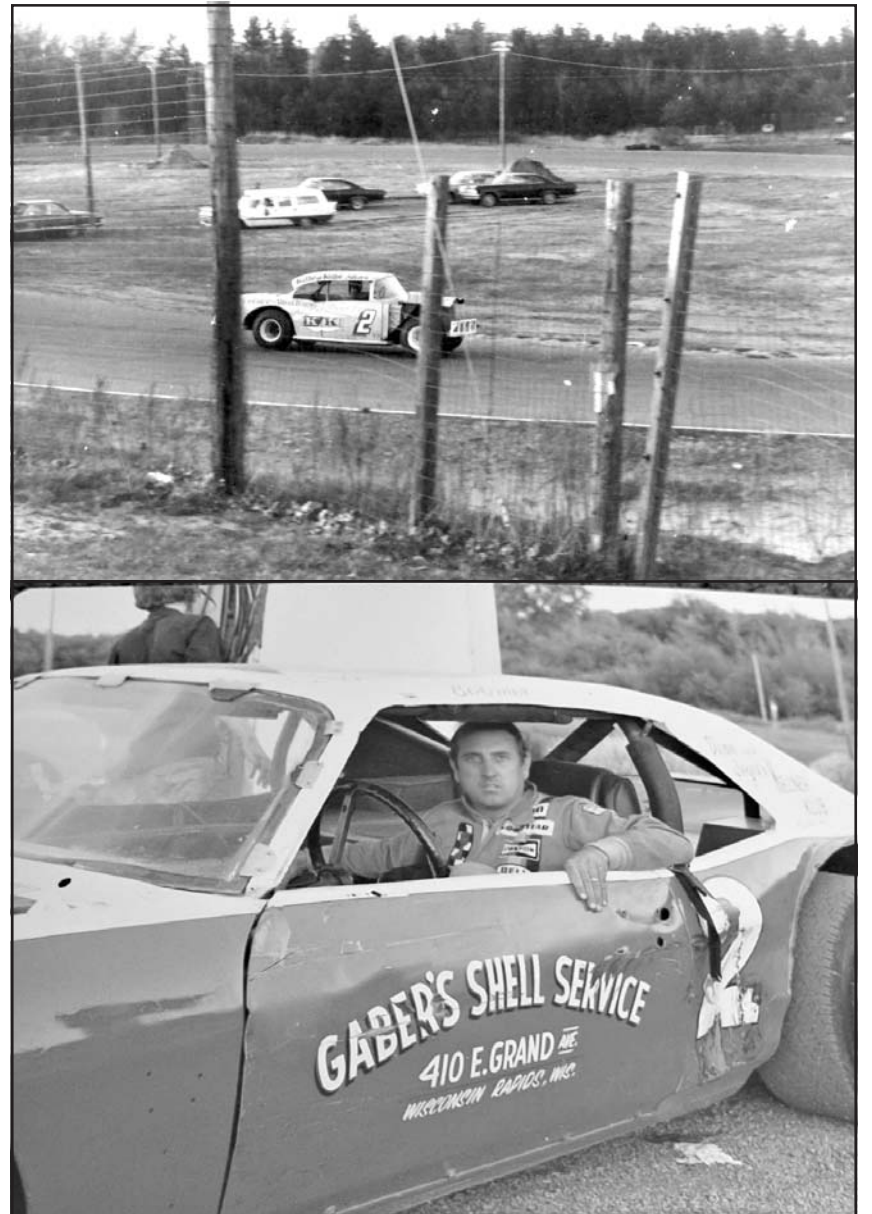
that we raced at Stratford, Speedway, Adams-Friendship, Black River Falls, Tomahawk, Tomah-Sparta, Griffith Park Speedway, Golden Sands Speedway, all North Central Wisconsin race tracks. Later we ran at Elko Speedway and Raceway Park, tracks just outside the Twin Cities Minnesota." Marcis became so good at his craft, that he won 52 main events out of 92 run in 1965. "We raced seven times a week that year and that was just in three months time."

With his success, Marcis was already looking at heading south to race, and getting latched up with the famed Ernie Tuff and Elmer Duellman. "I took a Ford down to Daytona for the ARCA race, that was our first experience racing down there. I had moved to Bangor, WI., in the fall of 1965, my wife was a teacher at Logan high school (Lacrosse, WI.) I knew Larry Wehrs before that, he was a big race fan, and he bought me my first race car to run in NASCAR. I wanted to race and you had to be where they were racing to make a living at it. I ended up being in it longer than I thought I would but that's just how it happened."

The Marcis career included racing for a number of well known teams although he remained an independent operator for most of his career. "That first car was sponsored by Milt Lunda Construction, of Black River Falls, but I raced for Roger Penske, Henley Gray, Ray Nichels, with the Chrysler program at the time and Nord Krausdkof of K&K Insurance. We won three Cup races with that car. "I won all those races in 1975 and '76, then at the end of the year the team got sold and I was out of a ride. You get to wondering what the hell you gotta' do, you won 3 races and 12 pole positions, and you don't have a

HISTORIC VALUES

HISTORY THAT NO LONGER REPEATS ITSELF



ride."

Marcis raced for Rod Osterland for awhile, but it all went sour. "I wasn't happy with that deal, we weren't getting what we needed so I left in the fall of that year, 1978." The Marcis departure left the door open for upstart, Dale Earnhardt, Sr., to take the seat, and I think we know how that career went.

Consequently, with the politics with teams and the NASCAR way, Marcis turned to being independent, far removed from the corporate teams. "What can you say, it's what I wanted to do for a living. You work night and day and try to make a living. The sport has gotten totally out of hand. All the millions in sponsorship you need, but if you work your ass off, you can make it."

"As far as NASCAR goes, they'll just keep doing what they are doing right or wrong. They always think what they do is fine and dandy. I didn't think



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Racing History from page 8

they'd go with a franchise agreement, but here we are that's how it's done. Who knows where it goes from here."

Marcis having been out of the seat of a race car for sometime now, does still keep himself up to date, and has helped teams with various things. "What I can't understand is that so much of NASCAR ways got to the short track level. The two should have separation other than on track experience. When these shock packages came in it really raised the costs to compete. \$6,000 or better shocks that you have a specialist install and work on, that's crazy. And it's only gotten worse. How many guys can afford \$100,000 race cars with engines running \$30,000-\$60,000? Back in the day, we built and worked on all of our stuff. When you did that you could save and even make some money. Now someone writes out the big check for you to get the ride. Where it goes from here, who knows."

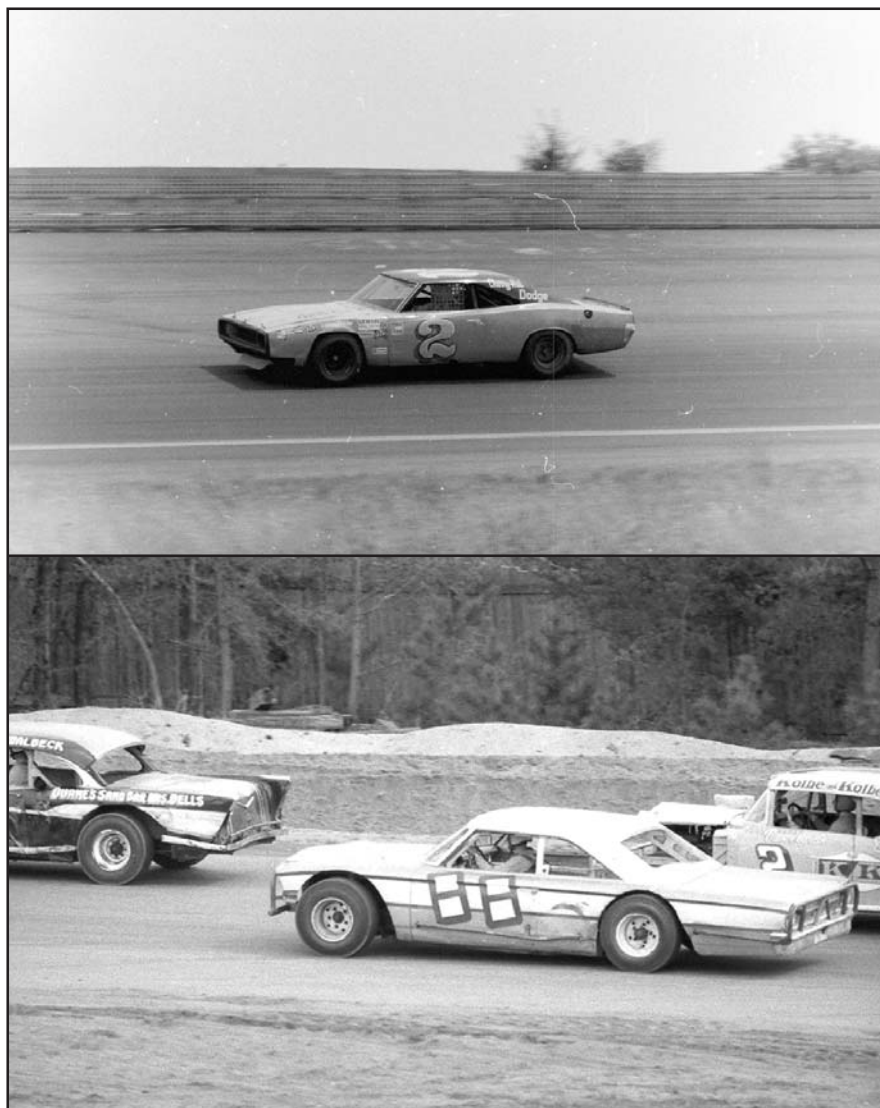
Back in time, in Dave Marcis racing history. On Sunday afternoon, May 5th, 1963, at the Stratford Speedway, Stratford, WI., Dave Marcis won the feature race over Augie Winkleman and Dick Schultz...On Friday night, June 14th, 1963, Dave Marcis won the feature race at State Park Speedway, Wausau, WI. On Saturday night, July 4th, 1964, it was Dave Marcis winning the feature race at Black River Falls, WI., Speedway, beating Lyle Nabbefeldt and Ev Fox in the process. On Friday night, May 29th, 1964, it was Dave Marcis winning the first ever feature race at the new Tomah-Sparta Speedway, Tomah, WI. On May 8th, 1966, it was Dave Marcis winning the feature race at Griffith Park Speedway, Wis. Rapids, WI. On Sunday, July 7th, 1968, Dave Marcis won the 30 lap feature at Golden Sands Speedway, Plover, WI. Bill Wirtz, Marlin Walbeck, Tom Reffner and Dick Trickle followed. In May of 1972, at Wisconsin International Raceway, Kaukauna, WI., Dave Marcis, driving the Dave Deppe owned, Chevy Nova, became the first driver in a Pony car to win in USAC competition, capturing the 200 lap race there. Dave Marcis while NASCAR Cup racing, won 5 events, finished 94 times in the top 5, 222 times in the top 10, and competed in 883 races from 1968-2022.



Here and there...Pretty much a two horse race again at La Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway, West Salem, WI., this year as Skylar Holzhausen and Jacob Goede dominate NASCAR Late Model Action. Wiley veteran Steve Carlson has managed to win a couple times at the speedway though.

Photos by Bob Bergeron, Marg/Farrar, Ernie Tuff collection, Dale P. Danielski, Kurt Luoma, Rodney Dykeman. Dave Marcis #2 racing at Griffith Park Speedway. #2 Dave Marcis 1st ever winner Tomah-Sparta Speedway. Dave Marcis Dodge #2 in Cup action. Marlin Walbeck, Tom Reffner and Dave Marcis racing at Griffith Park Speedway. Dave Marcis returning to Wisconsin to race #2 Jim Bohmsach car. 1964 Marcis first foray to Florida.

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



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Racing Nuggets



PJ "Jacklyn" Nuttleman

I am more excited for August than ever in the past. I normally only have one major race vacation of the year, which is over Thanksgiving and into December for the two big super late model races in Florida. This year, I'm taking a couple of days off work in August and have rented an RV to take our two dogs, Pudge and Daisy to THREE races in FIVE days! And all three tracks are unique and highly technical for drivers, which will make for INCREDIBLE racing.

First up on the itinerary is Golden Sands Speedway for the UARA Carbliss 125 super-late model event on Saturday, August 1st. The race will pay \$10,000 to win and \$1,000 to start. Already entered for

the event is Ty Majeski, Gabe Sommers, Florida's Michael Atwell, Ty Fredrickson, and Justin Mondeik.

Golden Sands is such a unique place. It is a driver's track; a fast, one-third mile with high-banked turns, where commitment matters more than horsepower. A driver has to attack the corners without overdriving them because momentum is everything. The banking lets you carry incredible speed, but if you miss your lane by a few inches, it will cost you down the straight. It's a place that rewards patience, precision, and confidence. When you hook up a perfect lap there, it feels like you're shot out of a slingshot. It's one of those tracks where it's not just about how good your car is. Driver finesse makes the difference.

Following that barnburner at Golden Sands, the dogs and I will be trekking in the RV over to Slinger Super Speedway for the 8th Annual Carl Wegner Memorial. My husband, Toby knew Carl very well and has shared a lot of legendary stories about the man. I still scratch my head over the tales of Carl lifting an engine with his own body and massive hands and putting it into the back of a pickup truck when Toby and Steve Holzhausen were picking up their engine back in the 80s.

The fact that it's an event to honor Carl Wegner would be enough to draw many to the race, but it is the second race of the Slinger Triple Crown for the Incredible Bank Super Lates and there's \$7,000 on the line to grab the checkered flag. I'm excited to return to camp at Slinger again. I haven't been able to do that since the April opener, due to work and family commitments. I have been CRAVING this racing trip and can't wait to watch super late models in-person again on Slinger's wicked-fast bullring.

Back on the Road Again

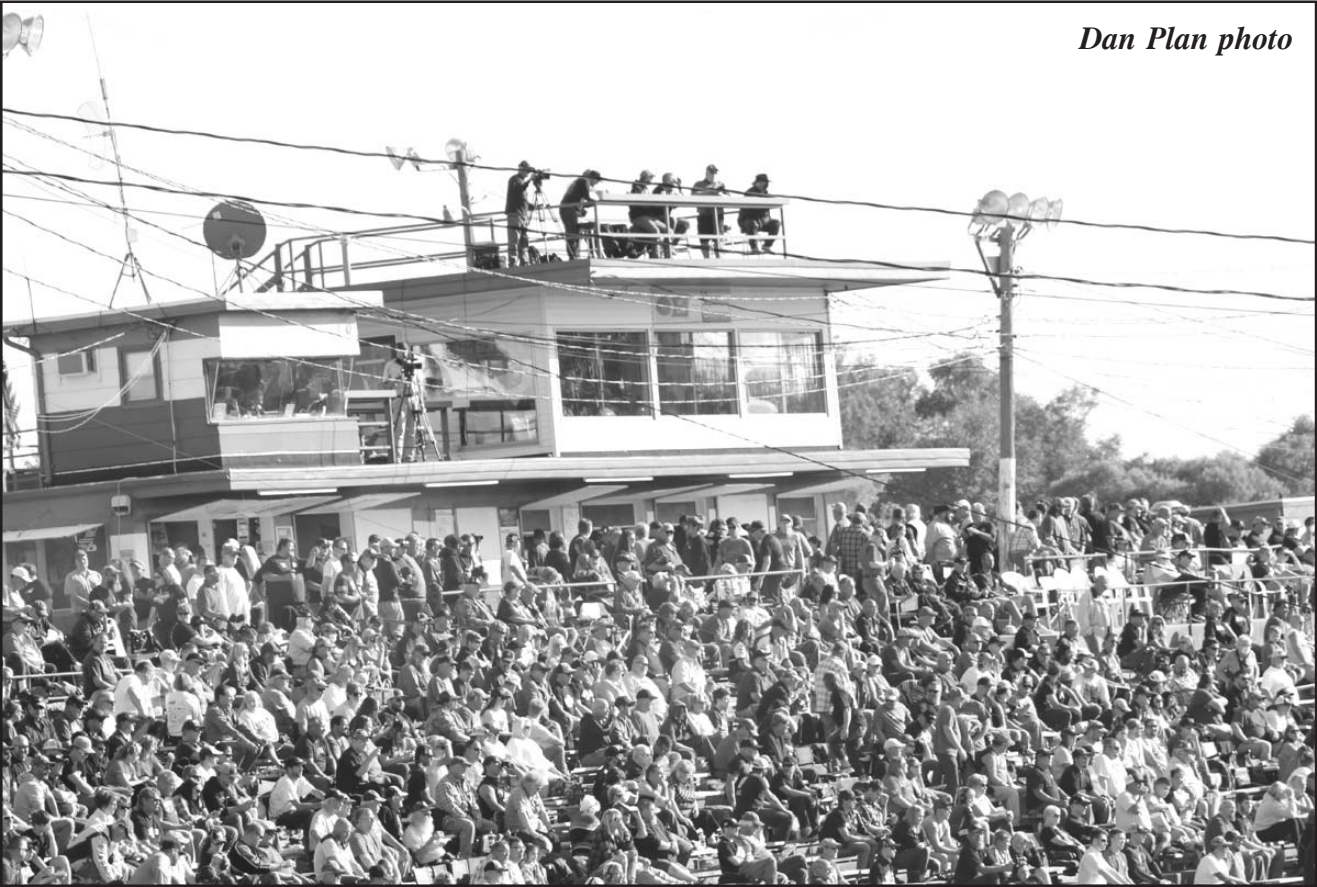
The finalé of my little racing adventure: The Midwest Tour's Dixieland 250—now known as the Gandrud Auto Group 250 at Wisconsin International Raceway. While I completely understand the importance of sponsorships and appreciate Gandrud Auto Group's support—this race will always be known as the Dixieland 250.

Name aside, the winner will pocket \$15,000 for their efforts. The field will be stacked with talent and there is always a LOT of action throughout the field. This has always been a tough race to see everything all the time because there are battles EVERYWHERE on the track.

WIR is all about rhythm and speed. The D-shaped half-mile is fast enough that drivers will be flirting with the edge every lap, but technical enough that they can't just hold it wide open and hope for the best. Turns 1 and 2 have drivers building momentum, then they hustle their car through 3 and 4 to launch onto that dogleg frontstretch. It's a place where "smooth" wins races. If your car rotates in the center and allow you to get on the gas off the corner, you'll be hard to beat.

This event will see the Midwest Truck Series as the support class. That series seems like more than a support class because it's filled with a wide swath of experience behind the wheel, which makes for highly entertaining racing.

There will be several drivers who plan to run all of these super late events and should one driver grab the checkered flag at all three of them, they would enjoy cashing checks totaling \$32,000! Are the odds in favor of one guy winning all three? Probably not. But it's going to be a delight to watch all three races. Even MORE delightful knowing that I will FINALLY be on the grounds for all three AND have our dogs along for the fun.



Dan Plan photo



Bruce Nuttleman photo



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Dale's Pictures from the Past

Dave Marcis in Wisconsin driving Jim Sauter's car. And bringing back the mystery photo here it is! The #66 Camaro of? Identify it and pester Dan Plan for your prize.



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THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

Photo Gallery



*3-Wide action at the Slinger Nationals
(Doug Hornickel photo)*



*Jeff Weinfurter swept the CWRA portion of the LaCrosse fair race
(Dan Plan photo)*



*Winged Kart action at Thunder Hill Speedway
(Brewster Baker photo)*



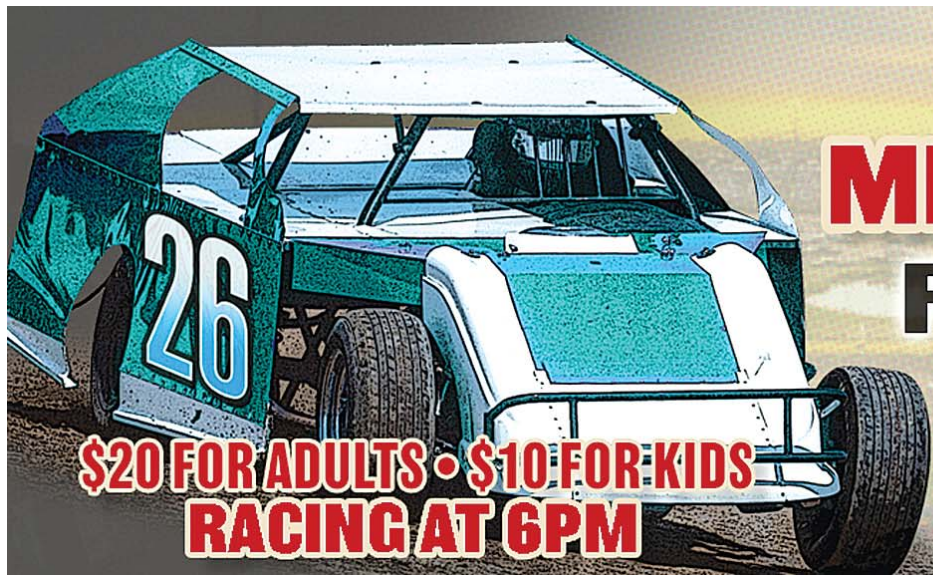
*Fuel stop during the Duane Mahder Memorial race
(Bruce Halverson photo)*



*James Swan won the Midwest Truck portion of the Slinger Nationals
(Ryan Nuttleman photo)*



*Pat Kelley picked up his first USRA Late Model win in July
(Junior Jaccson photo)*



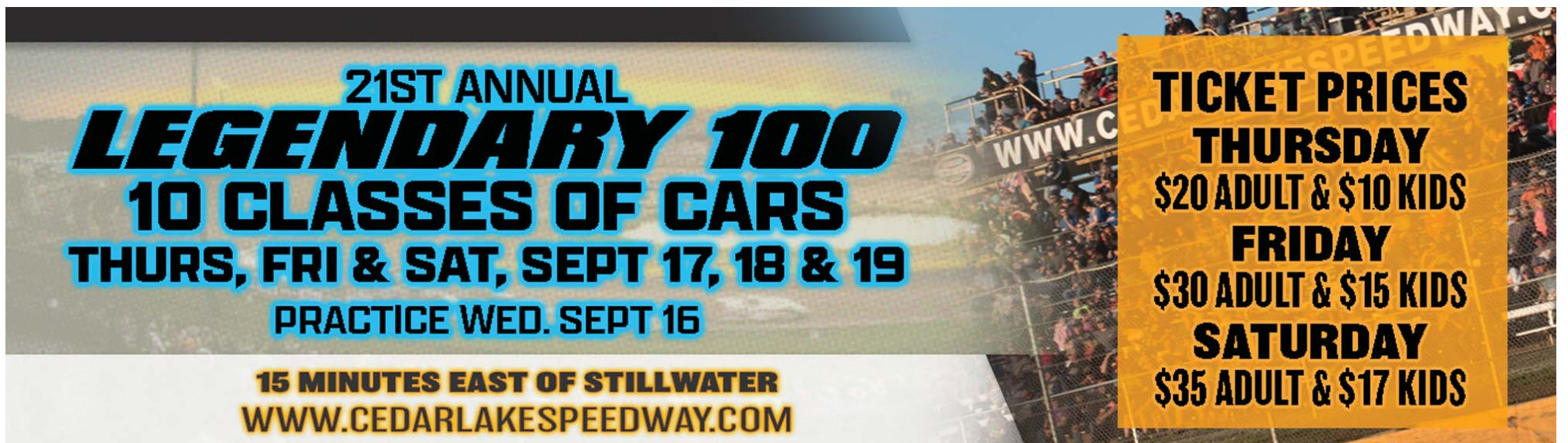
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The Gillund family has supported the sport of short track racing (asphalt and dirt) for a long time. If you've been around short track racing the past 40 years or so in the upper-Midwest, you've most likely come across the Justice Brothers logo at one point or another.

Shown here is Paul Gillund carrying the American Flag during the National Anthem for the IMCA Oldtimers race at the Rice County Fair.



Dangerous Dan**Dan Margetta**

“You gotta wanna”...how many times have those of us in the racing scene heard that and what does it mean? To me, it describes the passion and determination everyone involved in the racing community here in the Midwest has for the sport we all love and this year’s Slinger Nationals provided many examples of just how much some of us “wanna.”

To start off, behind the scenes, track officials, employees, the safety crew, and members of the live streaming broadcast braved near triple digit temperatures on both Monday and Tuesday of the Nationals event and I didn’t really hear a whole lot of complaining. Ice-filled coolers, cold compresses, make-shift fans, and plenty of water were utilized as everyone did what they always do because well...they wanted to. In my case, I kind of forgot about the heat while the

Slinger Nationals - "You Gotta Wanna"

action was going on and it wasn’t until everything was said and done when I realized just how hot it was. It was a popular conversation topic during the post-racing socialization activities and there was kind of a feeling of accomplishment for being a part of one of the more memorable Slinger Nationals. The Nationals Lap Money crew worked very hard this year, chasing

down donations that topped \$20,000 by race time. Soda Sense continued their strong commitment and really showed how much they “wanna” with two mystery laps each worth a whopping \$2,500 to the driver that led them. 35 super late model teams arrived for this year’s Nationals and the heat was probably the most brutal on both the drivers in the cars and the crews who spent all day and night slogging away to make the cars faster.

The scorching temperatures made for a late-arriving crowd but they came in droves when they arrived and the stands were packed just before the drop of the green flag. That impressed me because in this day and age it is so much easier to stay home when conditions aren’t ideal and having that many people brave the heat and come out for the Nationals shows just how much fans up here in the Midwest “wanna” race. The drivers sure made their time and effort to show up at the track worthwhile as they put on a memorable show and the final laps provided many surprises, plot twists, and drama. I know a lot of social media comments were quick to label the final laps a “shit show” but was it really? Could it be that maybe the Slinger Nationals is that prestigious of a race that everybody wants to win? I’ll admit the final laps were very aggressive and I saw drivers use the usual tricks of the trade to muscle their way for a spot but I don’t think anyone blatantly took someone out the way some of the hand wringing internet commentators

*Doug Hornickel photo**Dangerous Dan continued on page 16*

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would want you to believe.

Here's the way I saw the race play out and keep in mind, I've never turned a competitive lap in a super late model in my life so my opinion might be null and void to some. Ty Majeski had a comfortable lead until suddenly Gabe Sommers and Carson Brown began to drastically reel him in with less than 20 laps to go. At first I thought Majeski might be saving some but it was quickly apparent that his tires had gone away and Sommers and Brown closed to Majeski's tire tracks. If I'm Gabe Sommers I have to be thinking the Slinger Nationals are right there as the 91 car is very vulnerable but also Carson Brown is closing quickly too so he's got to get around Majeski fast and hope Brown is held up enough to allow him to drive to victory. So I get the tag he applied to Majeski's rear bumper exiting turn four that sent Majeski up the track with about five laps to go. Sommers moved him but didn't wreck him and yeah, it was very overly aggressive but in the circumstances I've seen that move made numerous times towards the end of the Nationals. While Sommers got by Majeski, he didn't get a great entry into turn one which sent him wide when he got on the throttle off turn two and sort of slide job blocked Majeski. For Carson Brown, the seas parted so to speak and he was able to drive by both of them. As the two raced through turns three and four, Sommers again drifted a bit wide off turn four and opened up the inside to which Majeski promptly filled the space. As they exited the corner, they made contact and both cars spun. Of course Majeski is going to fill that hole because again it's the end of the Slinger Nationals and guess what? He really wants to win. And he's certainly not going to cut Sommers a break at that moment because he was just rapped in the bumper and knocked out of the lead the lap before. I saw that incident as a hard racing deal between two top level Wisconsin racers doing all they could to win the biggest Wisconsin short track race of the year. It's unfortunate it took them both out of contention for the victory but I applaud them both for their efforts and so look forward to future battles in the remaining marquee races during the season.

That left Carson Brown and Andrew Morrissey as the top two drivers and while everyone figured Brown would walk away with the race, I knew not to count Andrew Morrissey out so soon. Morrissey is a scrapper who is certainly going to put everything he has effort wise on the table to win and even more so for the Slinger Nationals. Their battle didn't last too long though as both drivers engaged in subtle advantage seeking restart antics and swapped the lead during a few laps of white-knuckle racing before colliding with three laps to go when Morrissey's inside move and Brown's block converged on the backstretch. With a Slinger Nationals victory in sight, the unwritten racing rules of "If you see an advantage, take it" and "if you can avoid a wreck, do it" tend to contradict each other and the results lead to damaged



Doug Hornickel photo



Doug Hornickel photo

race cars which was what happened here. Again though, both drivers laid out everything they had on a hot sticky night because they "wanna" win the Slinger Nationals. While I was unaware at the time, I was informed later that the final caution flag was for fluid on the track from a car returning from the pits and not the Brown and Morrissey tangle which is the reason Brown retained his spot and Morrissey would've as well if he didn't leave the track and head to the pits.

Brown's damaged car was no match for Casey Johnson, who ironically had the cleanest car, and Johnson held off Austin Nason for the biggest victory

of his career having notched his name to the list of Slinger Nationals champions. It was a very popular win for Johnson as he's known as a true racer on the Wisconsin racing scene and after spending some time out of the car a few years ago due to medical issues, his return to the seat last year left no doubt how much he wants to race. The 47th Slinger Nationals had it all and ended with a popular victory. It was a race we will all discuss, reminisce, and even argue about until we do it all again next year with the 48th running of the prestigious event. Now you gotta come on back and be a part of it once again...if you wanna.

Talkin' Racin' with Jason



Jason D. Searcy

Over the last decade Super Late Model events have become a very rare commodity in Minnesota, now even more so. Super Late Models ended as a weekly division at Elko Speedway in 2016, Jacob Goede was the final Champion. One more Midwest Tour Super Late Model race was held during Thunderstruck in 2017 where Dalton Zehr edged Ty Majeski for the win. The more affordable Late Models took over as the NASCAR premier division at ELKO in 2017 and it remains that way even to this day. The Thunderstruck event, a race held as a memorial for driver and car owner Dan Ryan and as a fundraiser for ALS research, raced with the Late Model cars being the main event for two more years. A huge field of cars raced in 2018 and 16 year old

Owin Giles was the unlikely winner, Giles passed Jacob Goede on the last lap and won by 0.034 seconds. Jacob Goede bested the 26 car field in the 93 lap race that took place during his first NASCAR National Championship run in 2019.

Then Covid hit and Thunderstruck was on pause for quite some time. It was seven full years before both the Super Late Models and Thunderstruck made their return to the 3/8th mile high banks at ELKO.

The Midwest tour race was rained out in 2023 but in 2024 twenty-one Super Late Models raced for the iconic guitar trophy widely regarded as one of the best trophies in all of stock car racing.

Justin Mondeik had a memorable week; he made his NASCAR truck series debut at Bristol on Thursday and won the 125 lap Thunderstruck race on Saturday.

The 2025 race was won by 16 year old Ty Fredrickson, son of 5-time Thunderstruck winner Dan Fredrickson, Ty Fredrickson raced a 23 year old car that was once owned by Dan Ryan to the win. Two-time Thunderstruck winner Jacob Goede finished second place of the twenty-three cars entered.

This year Thunderstruck will look a bit different because Late Models are back being the main event. The Midwest Tour race that was on the original schedule for Saturday August 15th will not happen, instead there will be an 80

Thunderstruck Schedule Adjustment

lap (two sections of 40 laps) Late Model race in honor of Dwain Behrens, a former Elko Speedway Champion who passed away too soon. This race has been

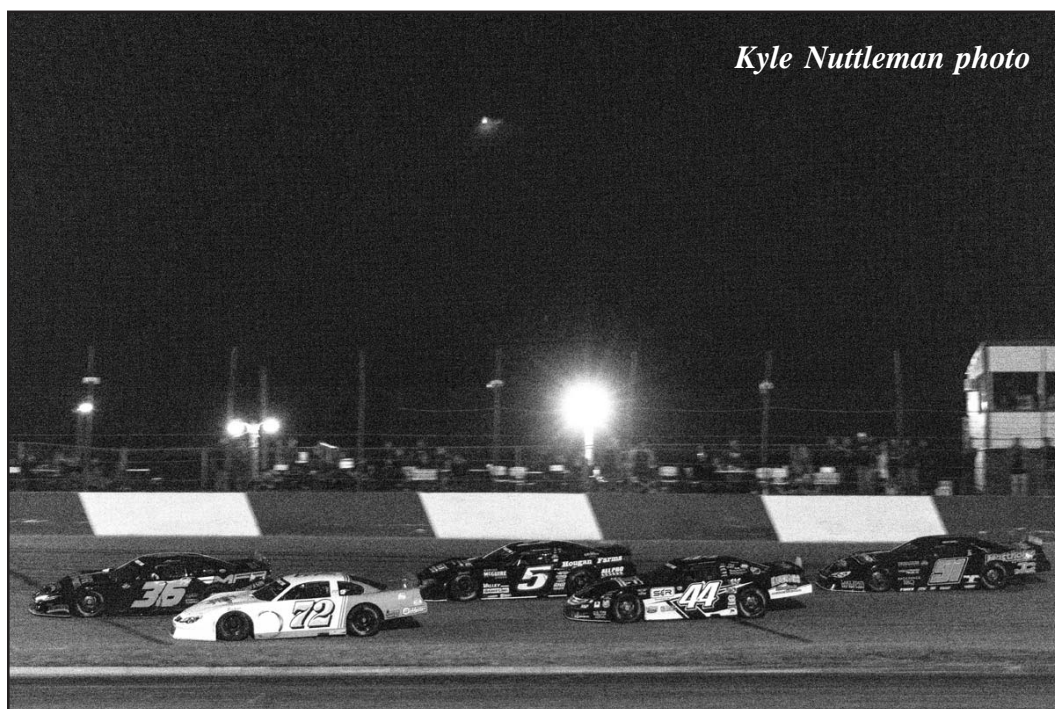


PJ Nuttleman photo

held yearly at ELKO since 1994. The Behrens race is not only known for its long and accomplished list of winners, but also for the iconic clock trophy that goes to the winner. Long-time announcer Jim Burns and his booming voice will be at the track that night to provide some color commentary of the events as they unfold.

The Thunderstruck 93 lap race for Late Models will now be held on Saturday September 12th; the hope is that out of town cars will make the trek to ELKO for this event. There are fewer conflicts with Wisconsin tracks on this date, and this will be a 4-tire event so travelling cars will not be subject to any penalty on race night. It should be right at the end of the NASCAR points season, so with the increased car counts expected on that night, cars should be able to score maximum NASCAR points. The track is running a promotion to give away free tire vouchers for pre-entered cars to help with the car numbers, they are hoping to break the Thunderstruck record of 29 Late Model cars that qualified for the race in 2018. Added drama will be in the tight points title race in the

Kyle Nuttleman photo



Talkin' Racin' continued on page 17

Talkin' Racin' continued from page 17

ELKO Late Model division, veteran drivers Chris Marek and Chad Walen have been separated by just a handful of points all season long, it is sure to come down to the final race to determine the Championship. All the divisions racing that night will run extended lap feature events. Minnesota race fans will have to travel quite the distance to see Super Late Models in 2026 or just wait until Oktoberfest. But in the meantime, they will be treated to two extended lap Late Model events at Elko Speedway to ease the pain.



BIG 8 Late Models

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

Duane Mahder Memorial Race

This year's running of the Duane Mahder Memorial Race was the 10th time the event has been run. After starting at Red Cedar Speedway, and moving to Rice Lake Speedway for a year, the event has been at Cedar Lake Speedway ever since. This year's 55-lap main event saw one of the types of races that you simply can't make up. In the first half of the race, Jesse Glenz and Pat Doar spent many laps side-by-side exchanging the lead numerous times. After the lap 30 fuel stop, they continued their battle for the top spot, only to have Dustin Sorensen sneak by both, in a 3-wide move to take the lead. Just when that seemed like more than enough excitement for the race, along came Ashley Anderson. Ashley took over out front for a few laps over Sorensen. In the closing laps of the race, Anderson and Sorensen battled it out with Sorensen coming out on top.

Bruce Halverson photos

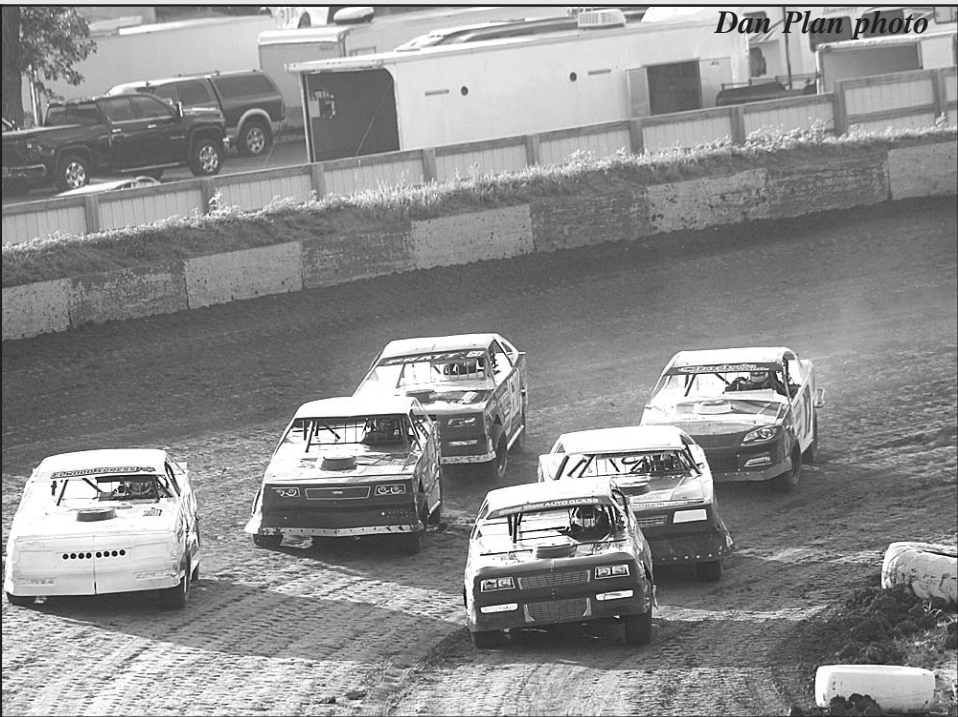


Stock Stub Action

During the month of July, a couple of travelling series that are based on cars that feature “stock stubs” had events in the state of Wisconsin. The DRC Street Stock Tour made appearances at Red Cedar Speedway and Rice Lack Speedway. The newly formed Sportsman Showdown Series had shows at LaCrosse Fairgrounds Speedway and Dells Raceway Park. This type of car is probably the closest thing we have today that resemble what the sport of “Stock Car Racing” originated from. I’m fully aware that the days of going to junkyards and getting parts are gone and you can buy just about everything you need for this type of car from a catalogue these days. On the plus side, there is still a large portion of the competitors in both the dirt and asphalt worlds that build these things from scratch in their backyard garages at home.



Dan Plan photo



Dan Plan photo



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Rice County Fair



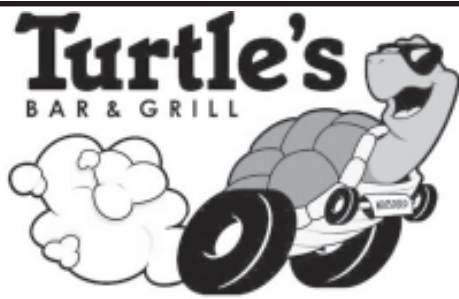
Three years ago, the IMCA Oldtimers club brought racing in the form of a regular race program of heats and features (versus the enduro format) to the Rice County Fairgrounds. Each year the crowd has continued to grow. The word on the street is the crowd was even bigger this year when Mike Wilson announced he would be hanging up his helmet following the event and selling his vintage car.

The Midwest Racing Connection Directory Page



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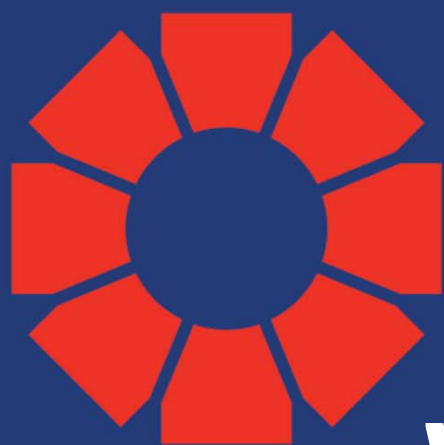
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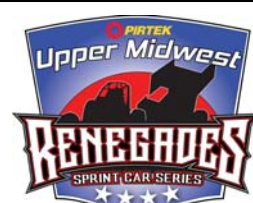



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