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Tyler Nicely

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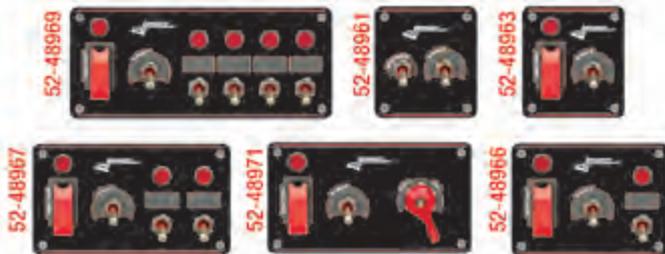
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World of Outlaws rolled into Perris Auto Speedway in Perris, California in early September. Sprint cars in SoCal, what a sight to behold.
Photo: Jonathan Nimerfroh



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Racin' ain't easy, even if super late model driver Jason Feger makes it look that way. *Dirt Empire* hangs out with the "High Side Hustler" and finds out what it really means to be the guy behind the wheel.

36 REVIEW IN PICTURES - KNOXVILLE NATIONALS

The 2025 Knoxville Nationals were a thrill! It was an event not to be missed... but if you did, here's our review in pictures. If you were there, then relive the excitement!

48 REVIEW IN PICTURES - PRAIRIE DIRT CLASSIC

Oh, it's a classic alright. There's no doubt the PDC continues to be one of the most exciting events on the racing calendar each year, and this year's event was no exception. Enjoy these amazing photos by some amazing photographers.

64 REVIEW IN PICTURES - WORLD 100

Jones Racing Products presents this expanded look back at Ricky Thornton Jr.'s quest to rule the world. There were some spectacular sights along the way. Race-tastic!



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Issue 30 • Volume 05
NOV/DEC 2025

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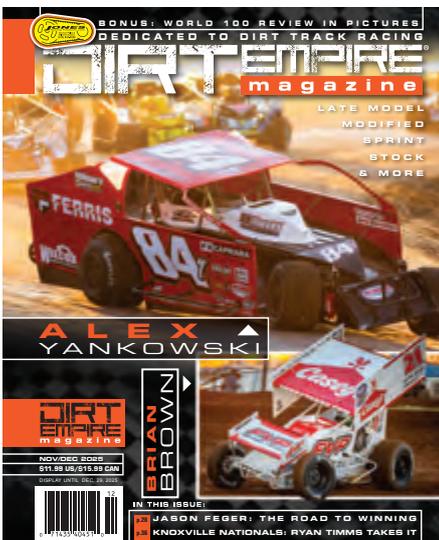
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IN THIS ISSUE!
JASON FEGER: THE ROAD TO WINNING
KNOXVILLE NATIONALS! RYAN TIMMS TAKES IT



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DIRT EMPIRE
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Postmaster: Send all address changes to: Dirt Empire Magazine, PO Box 919 Brunswick, GA 31521

Subscription rate is \$36 US annually for United States. \$70 US for Canada and \$110.50 US for all other International addresses

fore WORD



BY ADAM CORNELL

THERE ARE MILESTONES that allow each of us moments of reflection. With this issue we officially celebrate five years of publishing one of the best print publications ever that is solely dedicated to automotive racing on dirt circle/oval tracks. Thirty issues! (Twenty-nine in print, the first one digital.)

In the summer of 2020, as it became apparent that other publications were going away, I stood at the crossroads of what I was going to do. I talked with my wife, Belinda, about this plan to start a magazine pretty much from scratch and to try to craft it into something people would enjoy and market it far and wide to the racing community. She gave me the confidence to make the leap and do it.

I am reminded regularly, almost on a daily basis, that I don't deserve her. She believes in me, and gives me the strength to go on, even when I feel like giving up. And I will tell you, there were many times over the last five years that I wanted to give up – but she wouldn't let me. All this while running her own successful business and at times keeping the family bills paid while I was trying to put every penny into each page of each issue. So, all of you who love



Our first print issue from 2021. Still available for purchase on our website if you missed it.

5 YEARS 30 ISSUES

Dirt Empire Magazine owe someone you didn't expect a huge thank you: Belinda Cornell.

I'd also like to thank the rest of the family who have spent hours helping the cause, whether it be assisting with subscriptions or the website behind the scenes, or schleping boxes and trade show displays to Indianapolis or Knoxville or Oswego. Thank you Abigail, Shaun and Alexander. Thanks for being a part of the team over the years.

But isn't that the case with most successes? There are always those individuals behind the scenes that don't get the attention or spotlight for the victory. It's one of the reasons why I love printing pictures of drivers in victory lane with all of their family and crew. Sure, the driver crossed the finish line, but that whole team helped him or her get there.

Well, it took the whole team to get us here. In the last issue, I was able to reflect on former editor, Justin Zoch and his contributions to *Dirt Empire Magazine*. Our new editor, Ashley Zimmerman, contributed so many great articles from the beginning with such enthusiasm and racing insight that she was the clear successor. We've also had dozens upon dozens of photographers and writers along the way who have contributed photos and stories – not because it pays well – but because they share the same passion for dirt track racing that we do. Thank you one and all for helping us get to this milestone!

Also, our advertising partners have helped keep the lights on. These advertisers have been in every issue from the very beginning. They are the foundation of the empire: **Allstar Performance, Bernheisel Race Components/ Lazer Chassis, Close Racing Supply, Dominator Race Products, Eibach, Jones Racing Products, T&D Machine and Wehrs Machine & Racing Products.**

If you're walking through PRI reading this, or maybe you just bump into someone from one of these companies, take the time to thank them for their dedication to dirt track racing by supporting *Dirt Empire Magazine* – then make a purchase. As altruistic as they may be, they appreciate seeing a return on investment for their advertising dollars.

Oh, I almost forgot. There's one more

person I forgot to thank. It's you! Thank you for picking up this publication and reading it. Thank you for believing in us. And if you are one of the thousands of initial subscribers who are still with us, thank you for continuing to be our family and part of the Empire!

If this is your first issue, maybe you're picking it up at PRI or a race or another show, I hope you enjoy it. Consider subscribing and helping us continue the tradition of dirt track racing in print. It will be a small contribution to creating a lasting record of the sport we love.

Speaking of PRI and trade shows, I usually take a moment in our PRI show issue for a few trade show survival tips:

1. At a show as big as SEMA or PRI, take the time to pre-plan. Even if you have a couple of days to tackle the event, group the booth numbers you want to visit so you aren't crisscrossing the show space. Also, make sure you explore the entire venue. Sometimes new companies are hidden around corners or in hallways – they may have the best deals as they are trying to make the most out of their show.
2. Consider bringing multiple pairs of comfortable shoes. Switch up shoes daily or between morning and afternoon. Swapping shoes can help alleviate pressure on the same points on your feet and can help you last longer.
3. Bring a notebook (or use your cellphone notepad) to keep track of the things you talk about and the things you see. At big shows it can sometimes be overwhelming just how much info your brain takes in. If you're like me, the older you get the lower the retention level.
4. It's a lot of work hustling through a show. Take the time to enjoy and appreciate it. Sure, it can be stressful. But it's also amazing that all these racing folks have come together in one place. That's pretty cool.

Love it or hate it, with the races in December and January, there really is no off-season now. So, despite it being the off-season for many, I still get to say...

Let's go racing! See you all somewhere next year.

from the EDITOR



BY
ASHLEY ZIMMERMAN

LIFE IS CYCLICAL. We see it in trends, in fashion, and even in racing. I grew up at Knoxville Raceway, where, to my family, Knoxville was the only racing that mattered. As I got older, life took me down different paths — weekends at barrel races or tracks closer to home. But somehow, I've found myself back at Knoxville most weekends. While I've come to embrace that racing exists outside of Knoxville, the cycle has a way of pulling me back.

In racing, cycles often restart as the result of an ending — and nowhere is that more apparent than during silly season. While the biggest silly season news usually breaks in the off-season, sprint car racing saw it come early this year, packed with endings that will inevitably spark new beginnings.

It began with Gio Scelzi's announcement during the Kings Royal that he would be leaving KCP Racing. As many media sources predicted, that move was the first domino to fall. While most of the changes weren't directly tied

to Gio's decision, his departure set the tone.

Then came a seismic shift: Donny Schatz leaving Tony Stewart Racing. Few pairings in sprint car history can rival the longevity and success of Schatz and TSR. They were as synonymous as Jac Haudenschild and Jack Eldon. Now, with Schatz's future destination uncertain and Tony Stewart Racing's sprint car program clouded by rumors, a new door has opened. What new driver-owner partnerships could define the next decades?

Sheldon Haudenschild's departure from Stenhouse Jr.-Marshall Racing only added to the intrigue. The big question: sponsorship. When you think NOS Energy Drink, is there any driver who embodies their brand more than Sheldon? While NOS supports multiple drivers, in dirt racing, Sheldon is the face most fans associate with them. Will that partnership continue, or is another cycle about to begin? If it does end, which driver would fans most likely connect with NOS moving forward?

People keep asking me if I've ever seen a silly season like this in all my time around racing. To be honest — no. In my 39 years, I can't recall another silly season that packed such a punch. The last time I felt this kind of shock was when legends like Steve Kinser and Jac Haudenschild retired. And while change is hard — I certainly didn't like saying goodbye to the King or the Wild Child — change doesn't always mean loss. The close of one cycle

doesn't have to carry sadness; it simply makes space for another to begin.

This isn't the end of the story for Donny Schatz, Sheldon Haudenschild, or Gio Scelzi. Even for a veteran like Schatz, this could be the spark of a resurgence, bringing renewed excitement and success. As history shows, every ending in racing is just the start of something new. For longtime fans, this cycle might feel familiar. For newer fans, it might feel uncertain. But either way, we are lucky to witness such an electric time in sprint car racing.

As the season winds down, 2026 may feel far away — but with each announcement, anticipation builds. And with whispers of even more shocking news to come, one can't help but wonder: when one cycle ends, what new one will begin? ■



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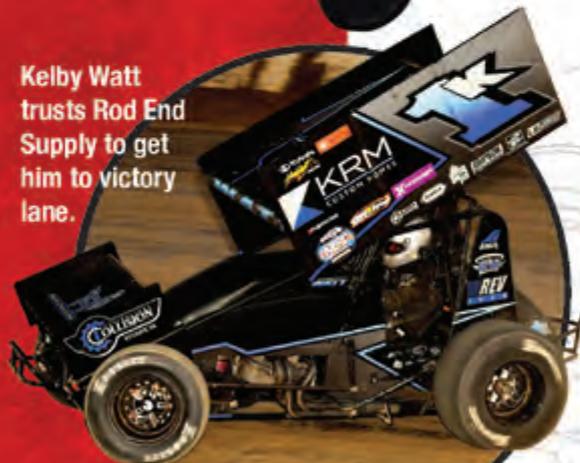


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the lighter side of
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ASIDE FROM SPONSORSHIPS, racers use their cars to convey everything from politics to jokes and to express their personalities. Here are some of our favorites from the last couple of months.

PHOTOS BY
PAUL ARCH



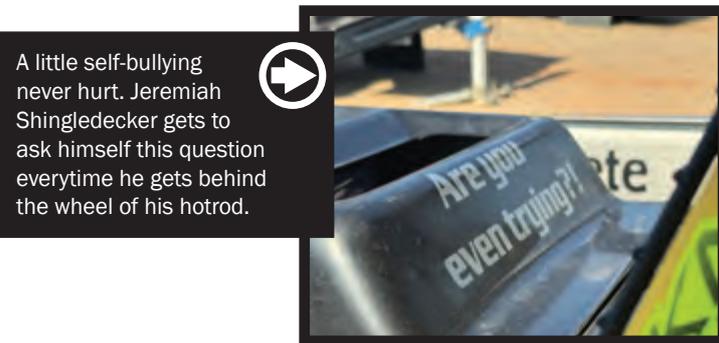
Trip Gaylord at Boone Speedway.



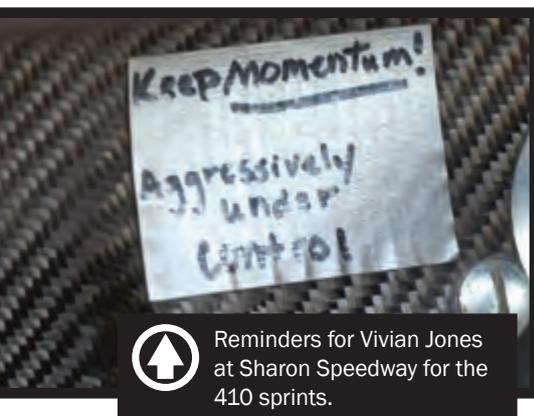
Troy Jerovetz at Boone Speedway.



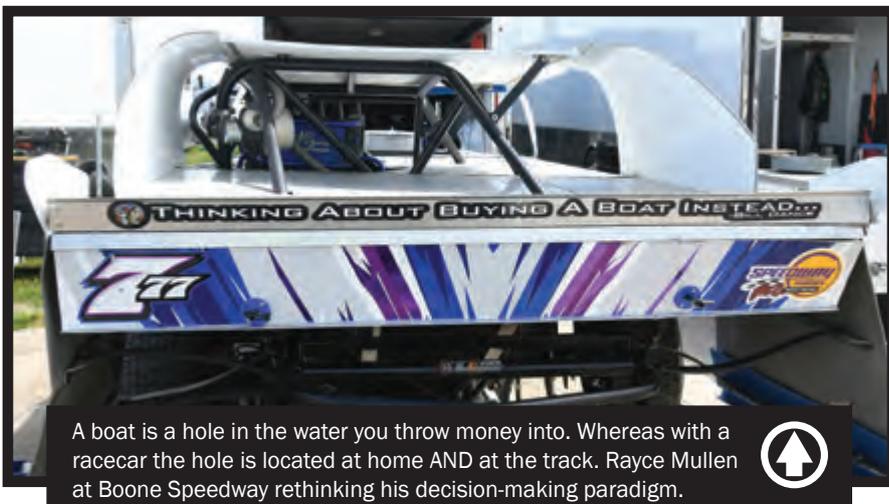
Just a friendly reminder from your friends at Fremont Speedway.



A little self-bullying never hurt. Jeremiah Shingledecker gets to ask himself this question everytime he gets behind the wheel of his hotrod.



Reminders for Vivian Jones at Sharon Speedway for the 410 sprints.



A boat is a hole in the water you throw money into. Whereas with a racecar the hole is located at home AND at the track. Rayce Mullen at Boone Speedway rethinking his decision-making paradigm.

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DIRT EMPIRE ASKS



Dirt Empire is taking questions provided by YOU and will seek out your favorite drivers to get you the answers to your long awaited questions! All you have to do to submit your question is just Like Dirt Empire on any social media and include #DEasks with your question. Then watch for the next issue to see if your question is featured!

BY
ASHLEY ZIMMERMAN

WHEN RACE FANS THINK of Knoxville Raceway, beyond its legendary place in sprint car history, one name rises quickly to the top: Brian Brown. Behind the wheel of a 360, Brown has claimed 19 victories, ranking fifth all-time. In the 410 ranks, he's added 69 more, putting him second on the track's all-time win list. Few—if any—know Knoxville Raceway the way Brian Brown does.

With longtime partners like Casey's General Stores, whose branding stretches across the famed half-mile, Brown has become inseparable from the identity of the sprint car capital. He's done what many only dream of—turning racing into a full-time career while still getting to enjoy life at home during the week. It's a rare balance, built through marketing relationships that Brown has nurtured since the late 1990s.

Now, sidelined by injuries from the Knoxville Nationals, the driver of the #21 had a little downtime. *Dirt Empire* took the opportunity to sit down with him and bring you the answers to your burning questions in this edition of #DEAsks.

Dirt Empire: What has been your biggest setback in your career, and what did you do to overcome it and get back on top of your game?

Brian Brown: That's a great question, obviously, during different times of your



Photo: David Campbell

career, setbacks are when you're not running well, or things like that. When you're not running well, you obviously try to not let one night turn into three nights, turn into a month, or two months of bad runs, and then turn into a bad year. I think there's been times that does happen, and you try to eliminate that. But I think probably more than anything, I'm learning right now, it's the injuries, when you can't even get on the track. I think that's been the biggest setback, or the hardest to overcome. It's not even being able to get to the track because you're fighting injuries that you just can't overcome and drive your race car.

DE: It is not a secret that when it comes to promoting your sponsors, you're one of the best in sprint car racing, was this something instinctual for you, something you were taught? How did you acquire the skills you have to be as good as you are at marketing your partners?

BB: I never went to school or spent one minute in college, or anything like that. We just know it's very important to take care of our partners. We don't come from a rich background, or a family

No one does fan interaction quite like Brian Brown. Young or old, interacting with fans is one of his favorite parts of racing.

background where if a sponsor doesn't get what they want, that we're going to continue to race. One way or the other, we have to make sure that we take care of them. And not just put the sticker on the car, but help them get a return on investment, no matter how big or small the partner is. I don't think it's so much of us knowing what to do, it's just listening to our partners and really caring about what they think and what they need out of the partnership.

DE: You've remained committed to Knoxville Raceway for most of your career, what draws you back each year to compete at Knoxville and sometimes for track championships?

BB: We don't necessarily compete for the track championship every single year, because we do miss events, to go to things like the Kings Royal. But it's hard to not want to commit to Knoxville for the championship, because we're



A master of Knoxville Raceway, Brian Brown ranks second on the 410 sprint car all-time wins list with 69 wins.
Photo: Jordan Hanisch

BRIAN BROWN

from Kansas City area, so it's just three hours down the road, and obviously pays very well. They pay well to win, they pay well throughout the field, and if you're lucky enough to stay in the points even after missing races, the points payout is very good. With the Knoxville Nationals there, it's important to run well there. I just love being at Knoxville, it's obviously my favorite track. Being able to do all of those things, and all the benefits to race there, it makes it hard to not race there. We just really love supporting Knoxville, whether it's a weekly show, or the World of Outlaws are there, or the Knoxville Nationals.

DE: It's been said a lot that the key to winning at Knoxville is through making a lot of laps, what has this taught you as a driver for mastering the half mile? Has this helped you anywhere else in your driving away from Knoxville?

BB: I think Knoxville is very unique. It's a half mile, and sometimes half miles are not easy to race. They are a bit more technical than some of the shorter tracks. I feel like Knoxville in general is very technical, it's not just run the top or run the bottom, when you do it, you have to do it very precisely. I think there have been very few guys that just show up and have just been naturally very good there. Looking back at this year, Ryan Timms, obviously put in the work, coming there every single week, testing three or four times like Rico Abreu who tested three or four times throughout the year, and those guys ran one and two at the Nationals. I think if you can be good at Knoxville, I feel like you can be good at any half mile, because of how technical Knoxville is. Port Royal, Williams Grove, Eldora, they can be technical, but I feel like Knoxville is just a little bit more than most. Most drivers, if you ask them, they'll probably give you the same kind of answer.

DE: This is a question that gets tossed around often, will we ever see Brian Brown on a national touring series?

BB: Brian Brown the driver would love to go out and do that. But, you know, Brian Brown the car owner knows it doesn't make a lot of sense for our partners. When we race, and leave the track, we want fans to be able to drive to a Casey's, get gas or get a pizza, or drive to an automotive dealer and get an FVP battery, or drive and get Andy's Frozen Custard. It doesn't do us any good to be in New York on a Saturday night racing with the World of Outlaws when there is racing going on in our region, where they can find our partners. So, business wise, it just doesn't make a lot of sense on the ownership side to do it. We just try to look at what's best for our partners and then build our schedule around that. I really love what we do. A lot of times we will race Thursday



Photo: Paul Arch

Brian Brown started the year strong when he earned three consecutive top-ten finishes (6th, 3rd, 2nd) during ASCS National Tour/DIRTcar Nationals competition at Volusia Speedway Park on January 30 through February 1 in early 2025. Injury at Knoxville brought both pain and disappointment. But through determination and grit, Brian Brown will be back behind the wheel soon.



Photo: Paul Arch

– Saturday, and we're back home in our beds on Sunday, and I think there is a lot that can be said about getting to sleep in your own bed the majority of your schedule. A lot of these teams, they may leave, and they may not get back to their home base for a couple of months. I think that takes a toll on your crew guys and things like that. So, I'd love to do it as a driver, but as the owner at this point in my career, it's probably getting less and less likely that would happen.

DE: During the Knoxville Nationals you sustained injuries to both of your hands/wrists, and it is not often that race fans see an injured Brian Brown, what does it mean to you to experience the outpouring of support from fans when you are unable to be in a race car?

BB: It's been different. Race fans in general, they are just awesome. They support you in different ways, and a lot of times it's coming down and congratulating you afterwards for a win, or giving you encouragement when the night didn't go so well, getting to see them face to face. But, now seeing them kind of behind the scenes of how much support they have given us, it's been pretty awesome. Being hurt, is a lonely road sometimes, just because you're sitting there wishing you could be at the track. Having the support of the fans has definitely been huge. It's been not fun, last year I was out a couple of weeks because of an appendix, then this year being out because of a broken wrist on

one hand and broken hand on the other, it's been difficult, but we're close to getting back. I can't wait to get back on the track and most importantly, just get out there where we can see the fans.

DE: In the early stages of your career, you were able to gain mentorship from your Uncle Danny Lasoski, whose knowledge of Knoxville Raceway is extensive, how impactful was the mentorship offered by him on your career?

BB: It's been huge. You know, just because I'm older in age and more experienced now, I feel like I still lean on him from time to time. He was my crew chief for a couple of years, a few years back, and that was awesome to have that. Just in general, there are times that something may happen on a Saturday at Knoxville, and I might call him on a Monday, just to say hey, this particular instance happened, this is how I handled it, was it the right way you feel like or should I have been doing something different, so it's been huge. I've always said without obviously my grandpa, George Lasoski, and Danny, there would be no Brian Brown. I've just been very thankful to have them in my corner. There have been a lot of people along the way, lots of silent people behind closed doors that, if I didn't ever meet those people that were willing to help me when they did, we definitely wouldn't be where we are. Obviously, Danny has been a huge part of that, we definitely wouldn't be where we are without him. I'm very thankful that he

is my uncle for one, and thankful for two that he's very knowledgeable, his record speaks for itself.

DE: What have been some of the most meaningful moments in your career?

BB: There's a lot of wins obviously those are always meaningful, just because that's what you remember the most, but sometimes the losses are meaningful also. Like running second three years in a row to Donny Schatz at the Knoxville Nationals, that's meaningful knowing that while you got beat, you had a chance of winning your dream race and it was in your grasp three years in a row, and for whatever reason it didn't pan out. Or just not burning bridges over the years with different partners. I drove for Casey's in 2004, and got fired by them, but since we kept a great relationship with Casey's and Don Lamberti, when Lonnie Parsons retired from car ownership in 2009, they called me back and wanted to team back up with us at that point. So, that's probably one of the biggest moments of my career, just not burning that bridge with Casey's, keeping the connection to team back up, it took our team to the next level.

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DE: How would you say your driving style has evolved from the start of your career until now?

BB: I think probably a little bit more patient and smarter, obviously you wouldn't know that now, since I'm a little bit banged up. I feel like when you are younger, you have something to prove, so you're always driving harder or over the limit than you should. When you're over the line, sometimes things happen, or you get yourself into situations that you can't get out of. As you grow older, you realize that those wrecks hurt and they can hurt you, and I think you become a little bit smarter and a little bit more tactical on some of the moves you make. I think learning over the years, you see a lot of these young guys come in and they go like a ball of fire, and when they crash the first time very badly, you kind of realize at that point what kind of driver they are going to be. Sometimes when they get back out there, they just don't have that killer instinct that it takes to run on the edge but don't go over the edge. I think just learning that over the years made me a better overall, well-rounded driver.

DE: If you had any words of wisdom to pass down to the next generation of drivers, what would you say?

BB: I would say make sure that you love the sport, you do it for the right reason. It's not an easy life. Sometimes I think everyone feels it's all glamour, which it can be, but there's way more downs than there are ever going to be ups. Try to eliminate the rollercoaster and just kind of be even keel, knowing that there are going to be bad times, but there are also going to be good times. Roll with the punches, things are not always going to go your way, but know at the end of the day, if you keep putting the effort in, and keep pushing, that it can all be possible. I dreamed I would race a race car, but I never dreamed I would be doing it for a living, and here we are twenty years later having our own team, and doing some different things that have been pretty cool, that I just never dreamed of. If you think you can do it, the sky is the limit, just know it isn't going to be easy.

DE: Sprint car racing has evolved greatly in the last few years, which has caused a good bit of conversation and some controversy. As a driver who is able to pick and choose with whom and where he competes, how have the industry changes benefited drivers like yourself, not on a national tour?

BB: I think it's been good. When High Limit came along and went to a full national schedule, I think everyone was kind of like, whoa I wonder what's going to happen here. But I feel like in general, they've kind of played in their own sand boxes a little bit, the Outlaws and High Limit have never really stepped on each other's toes as far as not booking races an hour apart that are making fans really choose. We're racing for a lot more money today overall than we ever have, a lot more crown jewel races that are paying good money. I feel like it's been very good. I feel like in order for us to take the next step in the sport, we just have to figure out how to control the cost a little bit.

DE: In today's world of competition, what do you think separates a good sprint car driver from a great one?

BB: I don't think anymore you can just name the driver as the key component. I think it's more the team as a whole.



You have to have obviously a good driver; he's the one doing the hard lifting at the end when making the moves in traffic. But you have to have a good race car, which in turn is a good crew chief, a good leader that leads all the people on your team, a good car chief that makes sure nothing is going to fall off the car, a good tire specialist to make sure that the tire work is done correctly, and good partners to make sure you have the budget to go up and down the road and to fight for the race wins. I don't think it's one thing, I think it's a little bit of everything. Maybe back in the day you could take a car that wasn't as good as the next guy and a driver could just man up and drive the car harder or do different things, and there are times I feel like that is the case, but most generally, if you don't have a good race car under you, there's not a lot of making up you can do anymore. I feel like you have to have all of those things that I've listed, then get to the racetrack, get qualified and keep yourself in a good position all night long. When you have good opportunities to put yourself in a spot to win those races or run well, you have to capitalize on them. That leads to a good year, and when you're not having a good year, just try to eliminate the bad nights and get back on the right front as quick as you can. ■



While "Brownie" enjoys racing close to home at Knoxville Raceway, he was spotted with the World of Outlaws at Lawton Speedway in Oklahoma, where he finished 15th with the Greatest Show On Dirt.

Photo: David Campbell

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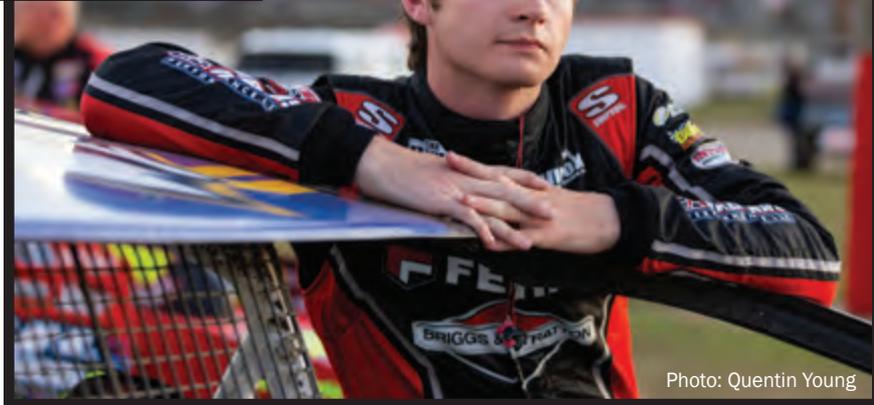


Photo: Quentin Young

ALEX YANKOWSKI

RISING TO THE TOP

BY
DOUG KENNEDY

ONE OF THE BRIGHTEST up and coming stars in Big Block Modified Racing is 20-year-old Alex Yankowski of Covington Township, Pennsylvania. Prior to the 2025 season, Alex decided that he was going to chase the Super DIRT Series championship. That decision was working out extremely well as of late September, as Yankowski sat atop the leader board for the series.

This decision was made after Yankowski finished second in back-to-back Series races and when he captured the “Big Gator” trophy at the Federated Auto Parts DIRTcar Nationals in early 2025 at Volusia Speedway.

He drove for four different teams during the 2025 season. The first was his own #84Y red modified, a car owned by Tim and Debbie Millman (blue #84Y),

the third, the Petruska #66 and lastly, stepping in for an injured Stewart Friesen, the Halmar-Friesen number 44.

Racing the #66 bought him five more races for the 2025 season, and racing the 44 got him a ticket to Super DIRTweek and the Eastern States 200.

“Kid Rocket” as he is affectionately nicknamed, raced on a lot of tracks he had never seen before, a challenge for sure. But, despite his relative youth, Yankowski has a track savviness that has helped steer him right.

Dirt Empire: When did you start racing and what did you race and is there anyone else in your family that has raced other than you?

Alex Yankowski: I started racing go-karts when I was four years old. Racing has always been a part of my family. My grandfather, Walter, and his brother, Frank, began racing a modified coupe in



Photo: Quentin Young



Yankowski leans it hard at historic Weedsport Speedway in Weedsport, New York.

The Chili Bowl attracts the top dirt track racers. In 2025 there were 392 entries, including one Alex Yankowski in the 84y. Sponsor Ferris Mower created a mini-documentary of Yankowski's Chili Bowl experience. Visit Youtube and keyword search: Ferris Mowers The roOK. Or use the QR code below with your mobile device.



Photo: Jeremiah Green



Yankowski kicked off the 2025 season hunting gators of the golden variety during Speed Weeks in Florida. He was successful in his hunt. Photo: Paul Arch

Photo: Quentin Young

upstate New York. Once my grandfather was drafted into the service, the racing halted for a while, but once he returned, the brothers purchased a Modified for #84. That's where my #84 came from. My brother, Stephen, who is ten years older than me, also raced for a while.

DE: Do you feel that there are some other drivers who might think that you're too young to be so successful?

AY: I feel like I've earned some of that respect that I've been able to capture. On the other hand, I have a lot of respect for the drivers who race full-time and make

a living out of it. I'm just doing things right now that are crucial to my career. There's been a large movement over the last decade for a lot of young drivers getting involved. The drivers are starting out young and hone their craft by racing against the best and that's what makes for a good racing career.

DE: How far do you think you can take your career, whether it's with the Modified or a Dirt or Asphalt Late Model?

AY: You never know what might come along. All you can do is be the best you

can on and off the track and do what's best for your race team. Big Blocks are where my loyalty lies but you never know what opportunities might come along.

DE: What has been your biggest win or wins that you have experienced so far in your career?

AY: Right now I would have to say the final at Charlotte in 2021 and the 76er at Grandview Speedway in 2024. Both of those were huge wins for us.

DE: What about the Big Gator win this year?

AY: Absolutely. That was a big win for us as well. That race was a full week of ups and downs with a lot of challenges. It taught me a little bit about the business of racing and how to handle myself. It made me realize that every time I speak, I'm speaking for everybody involved with my race team and program.

DE: How does it feel to be at the top of the Super DIRTcar Series championship run midyear?

AY: Being on top of the standings shows how hard we are working. It's only halfway so you never know what might happen. Let's just let it play out. All I can do is race each race the best that I can.

DE: You're racing three different cars this season. What do you have scheduled for the three cars and how do you choose which one to run on any given night?

AY: The 84 red car is my main personal car. I do race the blue 84 a number of times as well. The 66 is the car that I only race for about a handful of races. Choosing which car to run on any given night depends a lot of time on the location of the track. So, geography and logistics factor a lot into which car I choose to race on that night.

DE: How many races are you going to run this year?

AY: In addition to my full-time schedule with the Super DIRTcar Series, I will run about 20 races at Utica-Rome. I'll race for the track championship there as well. (By late September, Yankowski was sitting fourth in points at Utica-Rome behind Matt Sheppard, Rocky Warner and Matt Janczuk.)

DE: How do you deal with all the different tracks you will race this season, some of which you have never seen before?

AY: I take them one at a time. I learn as much as I can each and every night that I'm on the track. My favorite tracks, though, is Port Royal. I like it because not only is it a great facility, but the racing surface is just terrific.

DE: Are there any driver or drivers that you like to compete with on the track?

AY: Mat Williamson has a great program and team and it's an honor to be able to compete with him on the track. Two other drivers who I have a lot of respect for are Erick Rudolph and Matt Sheppard.

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Alex Yankowski hikes the left front as he navigates around "The Speed Palace".

Photo: Quentin Young

Building up success and respect from other drivers is very important for my racing development. Not only do we compete against each other in the series, but we also face a strong contingent of local and regional drivers.

DE: What do you like to do when you're not behind the wheel of a racecar?

AY: Honestly, I don't have a lot of time to do anything other than racing, but when I'm not, I like to get away from the track completely and do things that have no relation to it. I will go fishing or take in a movie.

DE: How important is it to have good sponsors and what about the quality sponsors that are part of your team?

AY: Having good racing partners allows us to race the volume of races that we do. My top three sponsors are Ferris Mowers, Wilcox Construction, and Millman NAPA Auto Parts. I'm very happy to see Ferris

doing more and more with us. I'm very lucky to have such great people who are involved with my racing program.

DE: Talk about your crew chief Kevin Bates and what he means to you and the team?

AY: He's been so instrumental in developing this program and getting the right people to fit with it. We have our own engine shop that Jeff Murray operates and Kevin is a big part of that as well. We're like brothers and have been together now for the last eight years. He's with me at every racetrack that we race. Even though he's twenty years older than I am, we work really well together. We are able to bounce things off each other and that's very important for a driver and his crew chief.

In late September word came down that Alex Yankowski was getting tapped to step in for one of the top drivers in Super DIRTcar Series racing, Stewart Friesen.

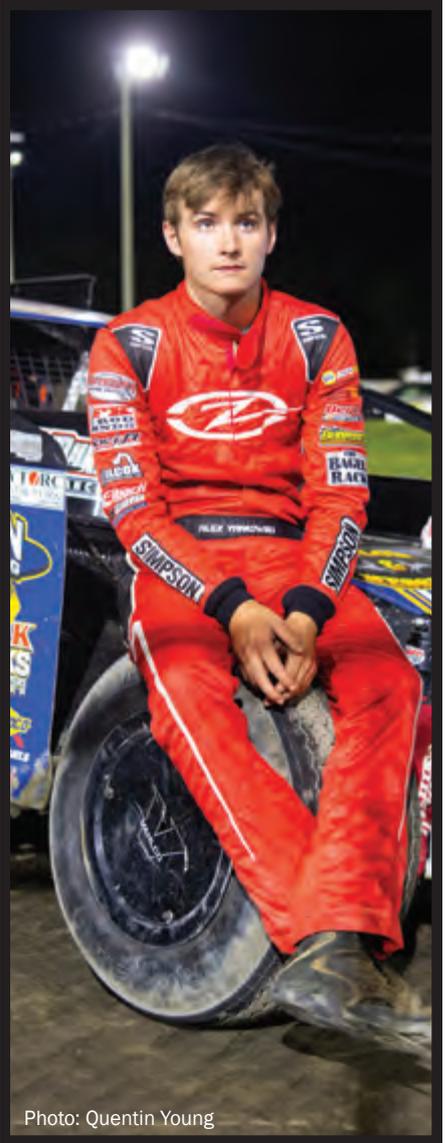


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Yankowski started 2025 with a big victory in Volusia Speedway in Florida. He booked it with a victory in New York, at Can Am Speedway in September. Later that month Stewart Friesen announced Yankowski would be piloting the Halmar Friesen 44 at both Super DIRT Week and the Eastern States 200.



Photo: Quentin Young



Photo: Quentin Young

Friesen has been sidelined from racing since his terrible wreck back on July 28. Friesen was competing in a Super DIRTcar Series race at Autodrome Drummond in Drummondville, Quebec, Canada, when his No. 44 car jumped the cushion at the end of the backstretch. The car tipped onto its right side and hit the end of the outside retaining wall, launching the car into a flip, the vehicle barrel-rolling over the barrier multiple times before erupting

into flames. Friesen's car nearly came to a rest on its roof, but was struck by an oncoming competitor who was unable to avoid the wreckage.

Friesen suffered some rough injuries that required surgery. He will be recuperating for some time, but his desire to get back to racing in some way, shape or form is testament to his fighting spirit. Enter Alex Yankowski.

Friesen announced in an interview with

FloRacing that Yankowski would take the wheel of the Halmar Friesen Racing Modified for both Super DIRT Week at Oswego Speedway and the Eastern States 200 at Orange County Fair Speedway - two of big block racing's crown jewels. This was an unparalleled opportunity for Yankowski and may set the foundation for his racing future for years to come. ■

FACTORY VISIT

WHEN IT COMES to sponsor relationships, it can be difficult for a driver and team to provide the value-added for those precious sponsorship dollars. Every sponsor relationship is different, but going the extra mile is always appreciated by any sponsor.

Alex Yankowski teamed up with Ferris mowers for his run at the Chili Bowl in early 2025 as well as a portion of his big block modified campaign. Above and beyond putting the Ferris logo on his car and firesuit, Yankowski took the time to visit the Ferris factory, which included seeing his Chili Bowl car all cleaned up and on display in the building foyer. Yankowski was quick to notice the racing connection Ferris mowers has in their heritage. They invented the suspension game for mowers, based on their relationship with racing.

Follow the QR code below to see the YouTube video on the History of Ferris. Around the four-minute mark you'll get to see the story behind the suspension on Ferris mowers and its origins from dirt track racing. It's fascinating.



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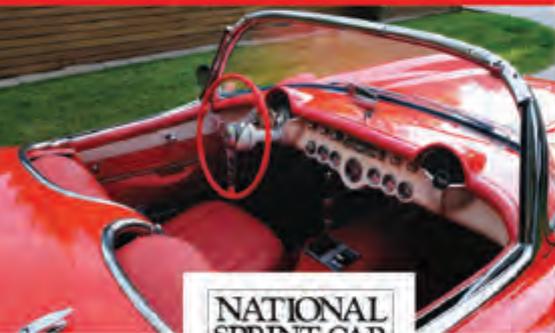
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FEATURE



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JASON FEGER

THE ROAD TO WINNING: PAVED WITH SACRIFICE

BY
ASHLEY ZIMMERMAN

IT'S HARDLY A SECRET ANYMORE:

Illinois has long been the breeding ground for some of the best late model racers in the country. Names like Bobby Pierce and Nick Hoffman are well known, but tours such as the Summer Nationals—better known as the Hell Tour—and the MARS Racing Series prove that regional talents like Jason Feger are every bit as fast and competitive as their more celebrated counterparts.

Victory Lane in Illinois is no easier to reach than in the Lucas Oil Series or World of Outlaws. Yet in 2025, Jason Feger has shown the way. Across 73 events, he's collected 13 wins, 31 top-fives, and 49 top-tens, with podiums against the World of Outlaws, Hell Tour, and MARS. In late August, the reigning Hell Tour champion hit another milestone, earning his 200th career victory at Illinois' Spoon River Speedway with the MARS Series. If momentum holds, Feger could close the year as a back-to-back series champion.

We first introduced subscribers to Jason Feger back in 2022, but a season

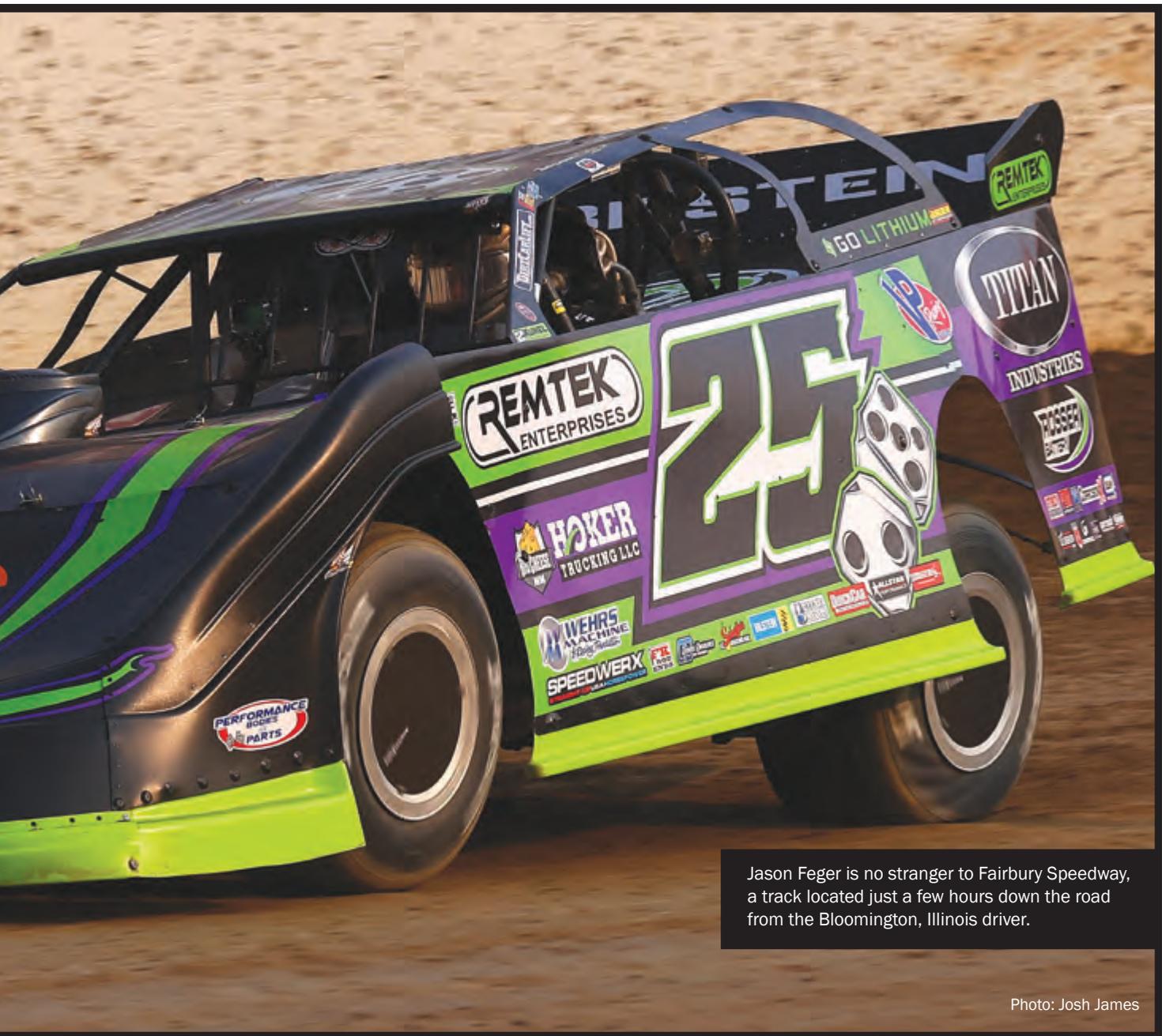
like 2025 is too good not to revisit. This time, we go deeper—exploring regional racing, the sacrifices behind the success, and the evolving landscape of late model competition.

Dirt Empire: What have you learned over the years of running the Hell Tour that helped you to be able to win two Hell Tour titles?

Jason Feger: I would say patience, and learning to take care of your equipment, looking at the big picture.

DE: Do you feel your knowledge and experience with Illinois race tracks





Jason Feger is no stranger to Fairbury Speedway, a track located just a few hours down the road from the Bloomington, Illinois driver.

Photo: Josh James

gives you an edge over competition on the Hell Tour with a large portion of the tour centered around Illinois?

JF: Oh, for sure, most of the tracks on the tour I've raced at a whole bunch. We have a really good notebook for them.

DE: When we first chatted your social media presence and YouTube had just begun to take off with race fans, with the growth of these platforms, how has it changed your racing program?

JF: We are definitely still a regional team, so even though we don't race all over, it's really made us have a broader fan base. It's brought us a lot of new fans. People

really feel like they're part of the team getting to see behind the scenes. They've gotten to know us just a little bit better. It's pretty crazy actually.

DE: What have you been most surprised by fans enjoying from your social media content?

JF: People think we are movie stars. We get old guys fanboying over us, and Red Beard, too. It's pretty funny to us. We're just normal guys, as you know. It's really the support, like on the merchandise and stuff like that, that has just been overwhelming, and where we've seen the biggest change.

DE: Your fans are given a unique advantage seeing you both on the track and behind the scenes, but what are some of the unseen challenges of being a professional driver?

JF: I think a lot of the fans don't see the money aspects of it. You know, we have great sponsors, but I still spend a ton of money out of my own pocket. Also, probably how many hours a week we actually do put in and do work, along with the outside of racing things we have to miss. My YouTube guy has a full-time job, so he can't be here to do a ton of shop stuff, so they just don't realize how many

hours, basically every week, is spent in some form getting stuff ready and focusing on racing. There isn't always a lot of time for fun.

DE: At the time of this interview, you've been to 70 races, had 46 top ten finishes, 28 top five finishes, and 12 wins, with some of your podiums being against national tours, and some of the toughest drivers in the nation, what does it mean to you to have grown a grassroots program into a team that is this competitive night in and night out?

JF: It means everything. I always tell young kids you just never know what will happen, just keep working hard. At the end of the day, it's really hard to beat some of these teams with money, but you never know what will happen. I just keep working hard and don't give up, do everything the right way, just be a good person, and hopefully good things come to you. But it means the world to me, to know that we can compete. At the end of the day, you know, sometimes you wish you maybe had been afforded different opportunities, so that we could run with some of these other drivers, we just haven't really always had the platform to be able to do so.

DE: With another Hell Tour title under your belt, and what will hopefully be a second Mars championship, what does the future look like for you?

If this were a game of I Spy, what do you think Jason Feger has spied? Perhaps a vision of a future Webby Award for his YouTube Channel? Perhaps.

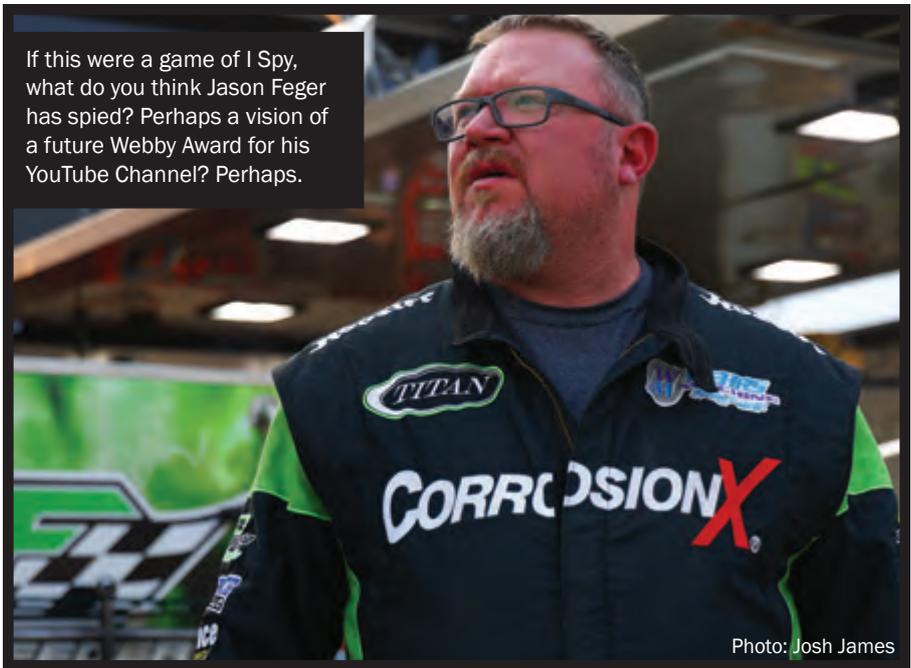


Photo: Josh James

Do you ever see yourself wanting to make a bid for running with a national tour?

JF: I don't think at this point in my career with the way things are currently structured, I would as far as my program goes. If I drove for a car owner, with maybe some different sponsorship, maybe we could go down that road, but I'm really happy getting to be at my house, seeing my dog, and kid. We live in such a great area, I don't really have to travel too far to go to a lot of good tracks. Then with the UMP national points fund,

the MARS series points fund, we can do pretty well for points money by staying relatively close to the house. I don't envy the Lucas Oil guys, when they're gone, sometimes those guys are gone for 30-45 days in a row, and never get to go home.

DE: Where would you still like to improve your racing program to build on the success of your last few seasons?

JF: I definitely feel like we've won a ton of races, but we're definitely missing a major win. We've been working really hard, we



Jason Feger swept the Hell Tour Farmer City weekend in 2025, securing his 33rd overall tour victory.

Photo: David Campbell

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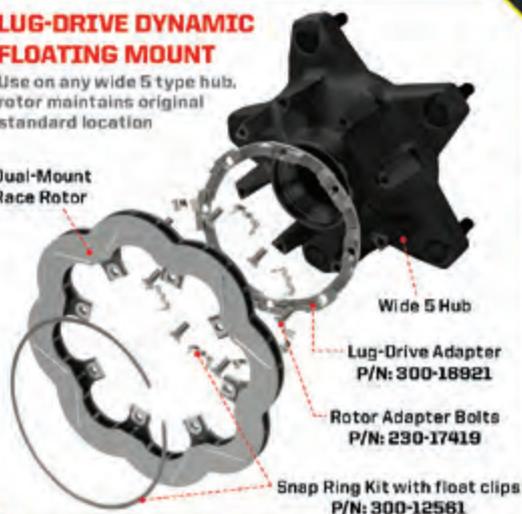
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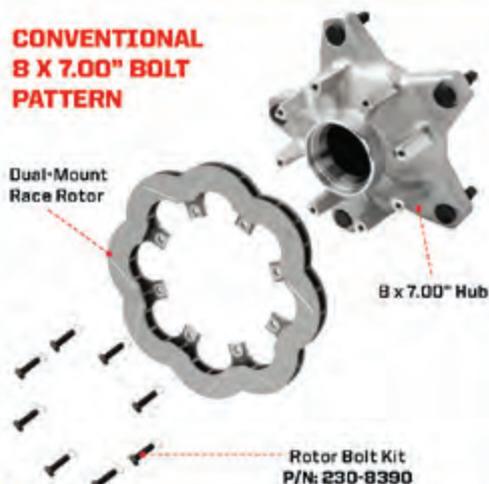


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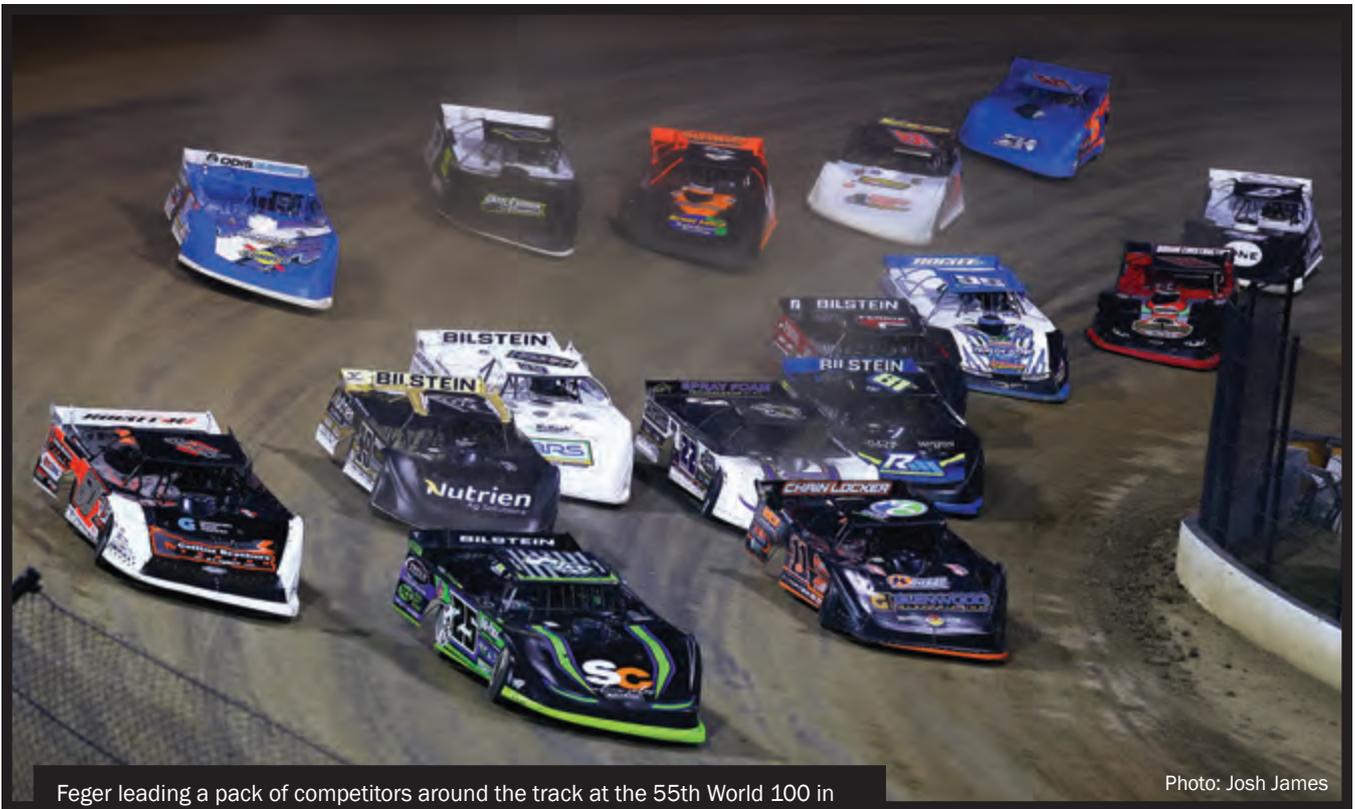
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Feger leading a pack of competitors around the track at the 55th World 100 in early September. Feger finished 17th after starting the Saturday feature in the same position.

Photo: Josh James

are pretty competitive, like at PDC until we broke. It'd just be amazing to be able to get a big win. I feel like that's what we've been trying to build ourselves up for. There's also still a handful of tracks that I struggle at, and that's frustrating as a driver, to go to the track several times and never really be able to get the hang of it or can't find the right setup. We're just constantly trying to improve to get better at places we're not good at.

DE: You have been very vocal and transparent about necessary changes you'd like to see across the landscape of late model racing, what would you say is the most important change that needs to be considered for late model racing to continue to prosper?

JF: I think the biggest change that needs to change is the purse structure. I feel like we're the NFL without a salary cap. Maybe six to ten teams a year get probably 80% of the money. They are not making teams like mine competitive, but want to complain about car counts. I feel like, if we go to a race and we win \$30,000, that's a lot of money. Why do we need to pay a hundred thousand to win? Why don't we put that money back into the field? If we could pay \$10,000

to start in a \$100,000 race, that would be phenomenal. I think that's the biggest thing. I don't know why we don't want to make all the teams strong instead of just a handful of teams. I don't understand that. I really think they need to get money into the non-transfers. The first four or five guys that don't make the races at these shows, need to get travel money. You can't be just going to a race and losing a ton of money. That's why smaller teams don't go to these bigger shows.

I think you have to be able to make is so those guys are getting help for their programs to get faster to compete by spreading the money out more. I think that's our other biggest problem right now, and any driver would tell you this, is help and the lack of quality help on top of that. If you add up the number of hours that we work, some of these crew guys do make really good money, but if you add up the number of hours they actually work, and sacrificing Friday and Saturday,



Photo: David Campbell

sometimes Sunday, and days throughout the week, it really isn't a lot of money, you know? You see they keep adding races through the midweek and all over they are wanting us to race more than ever. Well, that requires more help than ever. That's where I'm adamant to where, as the driver and a team, the racetrack is the fun part. But there's also logistics involved. You can't just be trying to go to the big races against the best of the best with your stuff beat up and tore up, or your crew burnt out.

In reality, if you look at a NASCAR Cup team, they have a lot of people they take to the track. But, for us, we really need to be running a five- or four-man team, plus the driver, minimum, and really more like five. People just don't see how much work it is, even just maintaining the haulers, driving, keeping everything clean. But, if we could have those two more crew guys, then we could actually have a life, right? It would knock down the hours on each guy significantly. The burn out factor wouldn't be as high, and then maybe we could race more nights, stay on top of things better. But it all goes back to having to spread the money out so we can afford to pay, right? So, we can get better help and keep better help.

DE: Where would you like to see late model racing at in the next 5-10 years?

JF: I think streaming has been great for our sport, in a way. But it's also bad for the sport in some ways. It makes it harder for local tracks to keep going. Local tracks are going to have to figure out how to have a couple good events to keep going or I feel like now they're trying to base everything on the back gate.

It's just like any other sport, people have to realize that our sport has changed, it's evolved, and we're now in the entertainment business. Our money is being drive by streaming and advertising dollars now, instead of relying 100% on just gate money. Any other stick and ball sport, or racing event that is on TV, the money from that streaming gets poured into the events. I think we need to get the books opened up, and I think we need to be doing the same, giving a percentage. A percentage that goes to the drivers, which at the end of the day will encourage drivers to promote our sport.

Right now, other than promoting myself to generate t-shirt sales, the driver gets nothing to promote our sport. We need more partnerships there. Some racetracks are probably going to have

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to change their facilities and do some evolving, whether it's a jumbotron, or viewing areas and you're streaming other events, you're going to have to learn how to build an atmosphere were people still can't just get it at home. I feel like promoters will need to return to the good old days, in how they reach their target audience to get them to come to the racetrack, not just a Facebook post.

DE: What would you say has been the most defining moment in your racing career?

JF: I don't know that I have just one.

Probably for me, my biggest moment was when I won a, I think, \$7,000 to win race down at Kentucky Lake. I'd been Babb and Moyer, to get my first big win. It solidified that I felt like we do belong and we could do it. I was in a Bob Pierce car, which nobody had really won in those cars at that time. Then we went on quickly after that to win the national deal, and the summer national deal the next year. I believe that was back in 2009. Then we sort of hit a slump for a few years. I feel like my trajectory has been back up, we definitely had some slumps through there though.

Feger on the gas and creasing those Hoosiers during qualifying at FALS in 2024.



Photo: Patrick Wigans

DE: What do you believe has been the toughest sacrifice you have had to make to get to this point in racing?

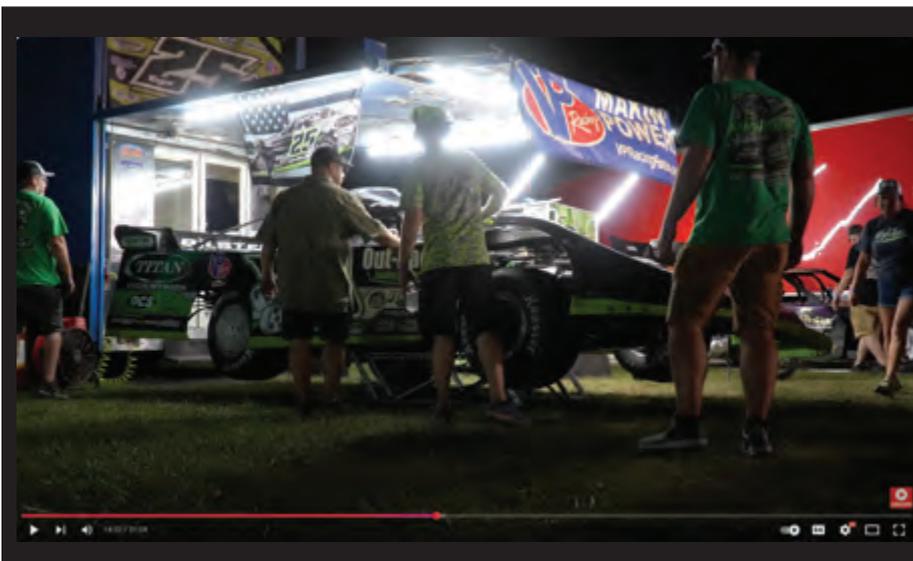
JF: The toughest sacrifice has just been time. I can't tell you how many birthday parties, weddings, or get togethers with my good friends, that I've had to miss over the years. That's always hard, I feel like most of my friends know that if I wasn't doing what I was doing, that I would be there for sure. But, it's no different than an NFL player or NBA player, you're not going to miss a game, or race. They play on Christmas and Thanksgiving, and everything else. But

that's been my biggest sacrifice, you miss out so much on life. I put my life on hold just for racing, as far as my personal life, things like building a house, or even just getting married, having a kid, I did that stuff relatively pretty old. It's a really hard balance. I've sacrificed so much to just chase a dream. It is definitely tough and I often wonder if I should have done some things differently, but you can't change history.

DE: If you could be remembered for just one thing when fans look back at

your career, what would you want it to be?

JF: I always try to stay positive. I try to make as much time as I can for my fans. I'm still that little boy at heart that got to sit in other guys' race cars in the pits. So, I always try to make time for the kids, and keep them wanting to come to the track. I want to be their favorite driver. Hopefully that I just leave the sport in a better place or on a good path, that I did all I could to keep the sport strong and going in a good direction. ■



Ride along with Jason Feger and his team on their YouTube channel. Check out their win at Farmer City as well as video from the Hell Tour Summer Nationals. See what it really takes to be a winning team in dirt track racing.

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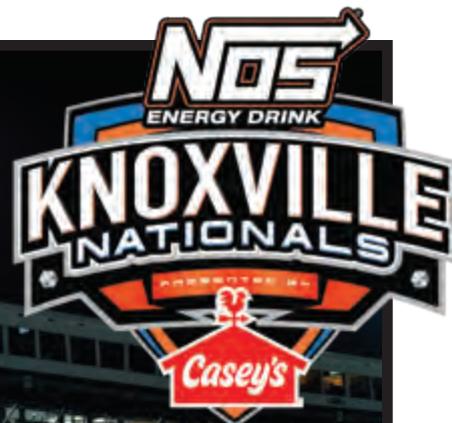


Photo: Nicole Signor

RYAN TIMMS TAKES THE SPOTLIGHT

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Knoxville Nationals, held August 6-9, 2025, at Iowa's legendary Knoxville Raceway, delivered sprint car racing's ultimate spectacle. Amidst a field of 100 elite 410 sprint cars, 18-year-old Oklahoma City phenom Ryan Timms etched his name into immortality, becoming the event's second-youngest winner since Kenny Weld in 1964. The week ignited on Wednesday's Brandt Professional Agriculture Qualifying Night, where Timms charged from eighth to victory in the 25-lap preliminary feature, amassing 487 points and clinching the pole for Saturday's \$195,000-to-win finale. His Liebig Motorsports team, owned by South Dakota's Shane Liebig,

dominated local 410 events all season, netting Timms six wins at the half-mile oval—more than any rival. Thursday's Hard Knox Night saw David Gravel prevail in the feature, while Friday's action featured intense qualifying and B-Mains. Timms' consistency kept him atop the points, setting up a dream matchup against World of Outlaws stars. Saturday's 50-lap championship showdown under the lights was pure drama. Timms, starting alongside Carson Macedo, rocketed into the lead at the drop of the green and never looked back, leading wire-to-wire for a masterful victory. Rico Abreu chased valiantly to second, with 2019 champ David Gravel storming from 21st to third in a gritty performance. Defending

winner Kyle Larson, seeking a third straight crown, faltered from ninth with a late right-rear tire blowout, limping to 19th. Ten-time champion Donny Schatz salvaged 11th after a B-Main surge. Timms' flawless drive—his first in a Nationals finale—netted \$195,000 and marked Liebig's inaugural crown jewel. "This is what we dreamed of," Timms beamed, crediting his family, crew chief Liebig, and mentors. At 18 years and 11 months, just shy of his 19th birthday, Timms' poise silenced doubters, signaling a new era for "The Sprint Car Capital of the World." The 2025 Nationals, blending youth and grit, reaffirmed its status as dirt racing's pinnacle. ■



Photo: Paul Arch



Photo: Mark Funderburk

Ryan Timms started strong and finished in the same manner, becoming the second youngest (by mere months) to ever win the Knoxville Nationals.

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Photo: Paul Arch

Saturday's race was another sell-out for Knoxville Raceway. Weather threatened to ruin things all day, but the race proceeded and the jam-packed stands were a testament to the faithful fans willing to risk the rain to take in the spectacle.

Donny Schatz spent much of his career behind the wheel of a Tony Stewart Racing sprint car, but the Knoxville Nationals would prove to be the last time he'd be the TSR wheelman. Shortly after the conclusion of the 2025 Knoxville Nationals, team owner, Tony Stewart, announced Schatz would be moving on.



Photo: Ben Humphrey

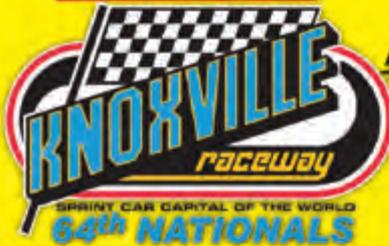


Photo: Ashley Zimmerman

Brandon Wimmer in the Team DGRD 6B had one of the more electric wraps at Knoxville thanks to sponsor Visual Noise. An accident during Friday's Hard Knox night would end Wimmer's bid for a starting spot in Saturday's A-Main feature, but he looked stunning while on the track!

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Photo: Paul Arch

After a wreck on Wednesday in the first turn of the first heat race, David Gravel and his team regrouped and made a strong comeback. They secured the Hard Knox Night victory on Friday, earning a spot in the A-Main event. On Saturday night, they impressively advanced from 21st to a podium finish. To check out the wreck, scan the QR code to the right with your mobile device.



Photo: Paul Arch



Photo: Nicole Signor

David Gravel throws some mock tears to the boo-birds at Knoxville on Friday night.

Corey Day delivered a standout performance at the 2025 Knoxville Nationals. Day qualified second quick on preliminary night one. A second place finish in the B-Main transferred Day into the A-Main where he would make an impressive 22nd to 7th place run. Day's top-10 finish would lock him into Saturday's feature event starting 6th. After an impressive 50-lap battle, Day would finish 6th.



Photo: Paul Arch



Kyle Larson dominated preliminary night two finishing first in the A-Main, securing him the fifth starting spot in Saturday's A-Main. However, while leading the race, Larson sustained a flat right-rear on lap 47, forcing an end to his night, resulting in a 19th-place finish.



Photos: Paul Arch

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Photo: Paul Arch

Rico Abreu roared into the 2025 Knoxville Nationals at Iowa's legendary Knoxville Raceway, fresh off a thrilling 360 Nationals victory over Kyle Larson the previous weekend. The St. Helena, California, speed demon unleashed a relentless pace in the NOS Energy Drink World of Outlaws 410 event. In the 50-lap A-Main championship showdown, Abreu, started in the top 10, sliced through traffic like a hot knife, and seized third by lap 30 after Corey Day's slip. He battled fiercely, holding off heavy hitters to claim a 2nd-place finish behind Ryan Timms, with David Gravel trailing in 3rd.



Photo: Paul Arch

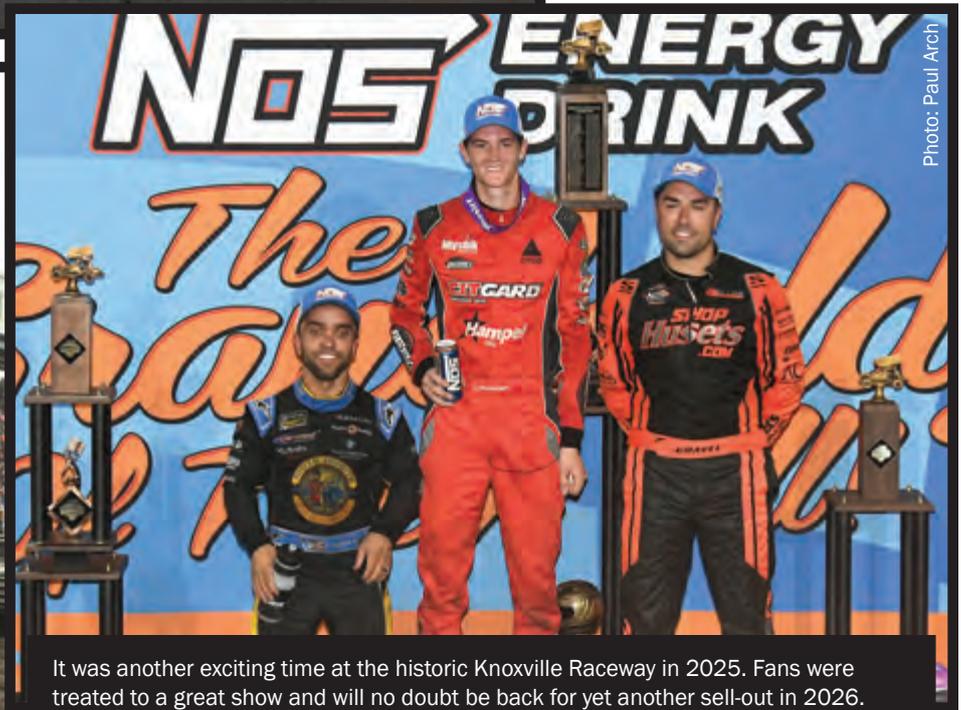


Photo: Paul Arch

It was another exciting time at the historic Knoxville Raceway in 2025. Fans were treated to a great show and will no doubt be back for yet another sell-out in 2026.

Jacee Ball - wife of Knoxville 410 driver Jamie Ball - and horse Panda are a staple in Knoxville Nationals opening ceremonies. See you all there next year.

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Umbenhauer powering around Grandview Speedway.



Photo: Scott Bender

JARED UMBENHAUER CONSISTENTLY CONSISTENT

BY
RANDY KANE

IN PENNSYLVANIA MODIFIED country, perhaps the most consistent of all just might be Jared Umbenhauer, 33, from Myerstown, Pennsylvania. When it comes to finishing in the top ten in the 358 modified point standings, placing in the top ten in weekly feature races—whatever it might be—the second-generation racer and car owner is always there. He’s been consistently consistent, if you will.

Known to everyone as “The Richland Rocket,” Umbenhauer was the 2013 Big Diamond Speedway sportsman point champion. In addition, he was the 2012, 2013, and 2014 sportsman champion at Grandview, where he has scored 18 career Sportsman victories at the high-banked third-mile clay oval. Umbenhauer has six career 358 Modified triumphs at Grandview, where he campaigns weekly. At Big Diamond, he has ten sportsman feature wins and two 358 modified victories, where he competes occasionally. Over the past 12 seasons, he has consistently finished in the top ten in Grandview Speedway’s 358 modified point standings.

“Grandview Speedway has always been my home,” explained Umbenhauer. “If you want to compete with the big boys, you can’t half-ass it. If you do, you’re just wasting everyone’s time. To be successful, you’ve got to do things right. Grandview racing is more my style—you’re up on the wheel, there are always multiple grooves on race night, and it’s elbows-up racing all the time. I’ve always wanted to be a professional race car driver, and I’m kind of doing that this way.

“The track surface at Grandview is always smooth. They really work at it and do a good job every Saturday. I can’t complain. I’m not one who wants to travel to New Jersey weekly to race. I’m very content and happy just staying close to home. Grandview and Big Diamond have become my circuit of choice, I guess. Grandview draws the most cars weekly and it’s the most competitive track around. You get between 35 and 40 cars every Saturday night, and to do well there it all comes down to which lane you’re in. Lately, the guy who starts ahead of me usually wins, and it’s not that easy to just pick a lane. I’ve found myself in the wrong line, and usually whoever gets to the front first ends up being the feature winner,” commented Umbenhauer.

Umbenhauer’s love for racing began when he watched his dad (Tom) compete all over the local area. He caught the racing bug early, beginning in a quarter midget at six years old. Later, he switched to BMX bikes for a couple of years before getting back into cars with help from his dad.

“When my brother (Jordan) turned 16, he was old enough to race. My brother raced a Sportsman and I helped him on the weekends. When I got old enough, I started racing,” revealed Umbenhauer. “I’ve always looked up to Craig Von Dohren. He was my favorite driver when I got started. Since then, we’ve worked together, we’ve become good friends, we park alongside each other every Saturday night at Grandview, and I even outran him one Friday night at Big Diamond to win a feature—that was a thrill. Now here we are, racing door-to-door weekly at Grandview, and it’s been good, clean competition through the years.”

In 2015, Umbenhauer moved up the racing ladder into the weekly 358 modified ranks. Kevin Brown hired him as his full-time driver, and that partnership lasted until Brown retired at the end of the 2021 season.

“I bought out Kevin’s entire operation.



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My sponsors helped me purchase everything 100%, and Grandview remained my home track,” said Umbenhauer. “We’ve always had good equipment, raced hard, and had success on Saturday nights. We’ve raced on a tight budget, and Grandview always has a pretty stout field. In the beginning, when I first started, I hurt my motor when a lifter broke and the camshaft was damaged. My dad offered me his car and I got a third-place finish. Then I got a ride in the Breitenstein car and finished sixth. The biggest thing that year was the tire shortage. All the big boys couldn’t put three new tires on every week, and I couldn’t either. It saved me money and made me competitive—we were all in the same boat.”

Meanwhile, Umbenhauer began working as a fabricator at BFP Specialty in Bethel, Pennsylvania, where he still works full-time today.

“My busy season is during the winter months. It’s tough to go away on vacation. It would be nice once in a while to have a week off each month like New Egypt Speedway does. I’ve got my car and my dad’s car too. Dad wants to race it, and we did run it in the season opener at Big Diamond, but he had some engine issues. We were going to race it at Big Diamond in the Coal Cracker and at a few other specials, plus all the Thunder on the Hill events at Grandview. The Thunder on the Hill races were rained out, and now Dad’s got the motor back in. We’ll see how things work out,” said Umbenhauer. “Dad doesn’t really come to the races anymore. He stays home and watches on his computer while playing with the new puppy they got. Times really have changed.”

For the 2025 racing season, Umbenhauer purchased a brand-new 2025 Bicknell chassis and continued running a Morgantini-built racing engine, a combination that has brought him success through the years.

“I sold my car we raced in 2024 after running it for three seasons. I sold it to 358 modified rookie Logan Bauman and now have a fresh chassis for 2025. We always turn things around after three seasons. Switching the car over from left-side pan hard bar racing to right-side pan hard bar racing, which is the new rule now, wasn’t that hard. We just needed to weld a couple of tabs on the right side and hook things up. With the left-side pan hard bar, you’d hit a bump and sometimes get up on two wheels and feel like you were going to flip over. It was

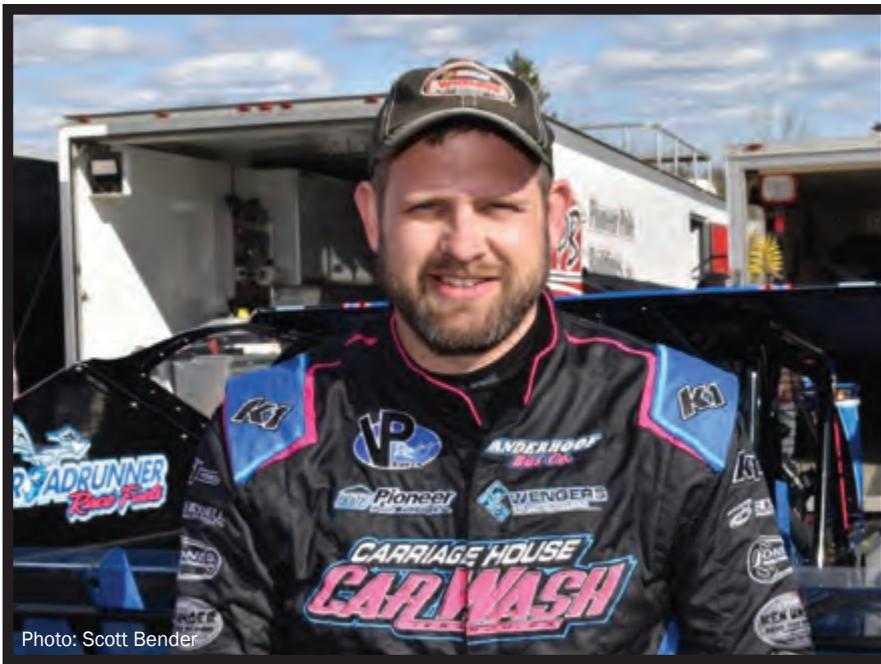


Photo: Scott Bender

much more aggressive racing. The right-side pan hard bar seems to have made things smoother. It put the driver back in the car. The left-side pan hard bar drove the car around. Now, with the right-side pan hard bar, the driver is truly driving the car around,” said Umbenhauer.

It hasn’t always been fun and success for Umbenhauer. He’s had tough moments along the way, but he’s come through in the end. Fortunately, those bad moments have been few and far between.

In 2021, Umbenhauer flipped upside down during a feature pile-up at Grandview. When the dust settled, he admitted he began to panic—he thought he might be trapped. He unbuckled and attempted to exit the wrecked car.

“I thought I was going to die,” Umbenhauer recalled. “I kept thinking of what happened the last time that happened to me.”

Previously, in 2018, Umbenhauer rolled over and his car erupted in flames.

“I remember fuel running out of the fuel cell and I got out in the nick of time,” he said.

That car became fully engulfed in flames and was totally destroyed. Thankfully, his second flip in 2021 didn’t involve fire.

“I saw cars bunching up just in front of me after a restart and I was driven full speed into the wreck because I was being pushed into it,” remembered Umbenhauer. “My right-front wheel snapped off after the initial impact. The frame dug in and the car rolled over, landing upside down. I had no vision of

an escape route. I tried to crawl out, and actually, a track crew guy pulled me out through a very narrow opening. It seemed like I was upside down and hanging there forever. Actually, it might have been a minute in total.”

Broken motors, mechanical ills, flat tires—heck, everyone suffers through that.

Umbenhauer has a solid, veteran crew to help make sure his setbacks are limited. When you finish in the top ten each season for twelve consecutive years, you know you’re doing something right. That much is obvious.

Jared Umbenhauer has been consistently consistent. Simply put, the proof is in the pudding. ■



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review in PICTURES



Who's having more fun, Brian Shirley or the guy in the banana outfit? Honestly, does everything have to be a competition?

Photo: Josh James

BRIAN SHIRLEY CONQUERS THE PDC

BRIAN SHIRLEY'S VICTORY at the Prairie Dirt Classic on Saturday night at Fairbury Speedway marked the realization of a 20-year dream for the Chatham, IL native. The win was his first in the prestigious 100-lap race, adding to an already illustrious career that includes DIRTcar National championships, DIRTcar Summer Nationals titles, and hundreds of Feature wins.

Starting from the outside of Row 2, Shirley navigated a challenging race,

capitalizing on a rain-delayed, bottom-dominant track before making the outside line work to overtake Jonathan Davenport on Lap 22 and later Hudson O'Neal to take the lead. Despite numerous cautions and a fierce challenge from Brandon Sheppard in the final laps, Shirley held on to claim his first World of Outlaws Real American Beer Late Model Series win of the year. His emotional celebration included a stop on the backstretch to salute the fans, dedicating the victory to

his wife, who was in the hospital.

Sheppard finished second, continuing his strong form with Rocket1 Racing, while Dennis Erb Jr. rounded out an all-Illinois podium in third. Nick Hoffman and Tim McCreadie completed the top five, with McCreadie advancing 16 spots. The race showcased Shirley's resilience and skill, cementing his legacy in one of Illinois' biggest dirt racing events. ■

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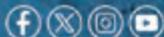
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The night before the big race the late models had a quad feature with a \$5000 to win payout for each. Brian Shirley, Bobby Pierce, Brandon Sheppard and Hudson O'Neal each took their turn in victory lane to hold the big check. Photos: Josh James



Ryan Bachtold captured this drone shot of the 2025 Prairie Dirt Classic. It was a packed house and then some.



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A bad caution restart with just 15 laps remaining by Bobby Pierce collected Nick Hoffman (9), Mike Marlar (157) and Max Blair (111).



Photo: Josh James

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Photo: Tyler Carr

Shirley in the 3s was able to fend off Brandon Sheppard in the late laps, despite the relentless attack by the Rocket1 car.



Photo: Tyler Carr

Brandon Overton in the 76 Dude Wipes car shows the field his clean undercarriage.

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Jackson Frankel
Quincy, IL
2 Wins



Photo: Brendon Bauman



Mike Anderson	MOD	2 WINS
Kyle Anton	MOD	9 WINS
Mario Berger	MWM	13 WINS
Jason Black	PS	4 WINS
Brendan Blascyk	MOD	2 WINS
Tyson Blood	AMOD	5+ WINS
John Boardman	PS	4 WINS
Adam Bohlman	MWM	2 WINS
Cody Borgeson	MWM	3 WINS
Ashley Boyum	MWM	
Seth Brede	MOD	
Jess Brekke	MWM	
Adam Brotherton	MOD	4 WINS
Russell Brown	LM	
Garrett Calvert	MOD	5 WINS
Zack Carley	LM	
Dalton Carlson	SS	
Cole Chernosky	MOD	5 WINS
Adam Chernotik	BMOD	
John Cline	PS	
Bailey Cousins	MWM	2 WINS
Logan Cumby	MOD	
Patrick Davis	MOD	
Dustin DeMattia	UMPMOD	2 WINS
Matt DePiero	MOD	
Craig Dippman	PS	2 WINS
Haley Dykhoff	MWM	2 WINS
Dean Eggebraaten	MWM	
Zack Eller	MOD	2 WINS
Travis Engebretson	MWM	7 WINS
Luke Erlandson	MWM	
Skeeter Estey	LM/MOD	

Mack Estey	MOD	
Jackson Frankel	LM	2 WINS
Ricky Frankel	LM	
Peyton George	MOD	4 WINS
Dean Gibson	PS	2 WINS
Ryan Gierke	MOD	6 WINS
Brian Grantham	SS	6 WINS
Brian Haben	MOD	5 WINS
Chris Hackett	LM	3 Wins
Sam Halsted	LM	
Jake Hartung	MOD	3 WINS
Austin Hauser	LM	
Spencer Havermale	LM	
Matt Heinzerling	MWM	
Dave Hess	LM/UMPMOD	4 WINS
William Hudson	MOD	
Joey Jensen	MWM	27 WINS
Brandon Jensen	BMOD/MWM	4 WINS
Justin Jones	MWM	5 WINS
Tyler Kintner	MOD	4 WINS
Shadow Kitchner	MWM	4 WINS
David Kivi	MOD	
Memphis Klassen	MWM	3 WINS
Tanner Klinge	MOD	6+ WINS
Kyle Langland	MWM	2 WINS
Alex Langland	MWM	
Kyle Layton	UMPMOD	
Cole Logan	AMOD	5+ WINS
Adam Martinson	BMOD	
Wes Mayfield	SS	
Ryan Mikkelsen	LM	2 WINS
Gary Nelson	MWM	2 WINS

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JOIN THE LIST OF WINNERS IN 2026!

Tyler Vernon
Hibbing, MN
23 Wins



Photo: Tim Hunt

Kevin Odell	.....	MOD	
Alex Odell	.....	MOD	
Ryan Ost	.....	MWM	
David Pangrazio	.....	LM	5 WINS
Jayne Peterson	.....	MWM	3 WINS
Ryan Putnam	.....	MWM	2 WINS
Nate Reinke	.....	MWM	4 WINS
Paul Ripley	.....	MWM	2 WINS
Lucas Rodin	.....	MWM	9 WINS
Logan Salazar	.....	MWM	
Matt Sampson	.....	PS	
Riley Scherer	.....	AMOD	5+ WINS
Matt Schow	.....	MWM	8 WINS
Ryan Schow	.....	MWM	2 WINS
Travis Schulte	.....	MOD	4 WINS
Ashton Schulte	.....	BMOD	
Wyatt Scott	.....	UMPMOD	3 WINS
Steve Simon	.....	MOD	
Skyler Smith	.....	MWM	3 WINS
Shane Smith	.....	DMIDG	5+ WINS
Brenton Snitzer	.....	AMOD	5+ WINS



Travis Soper	.....	BMOD	5+ WINS
Scott Splittstoesser	.....	BMOD	2 WINS
Reise Stenberg	.....	MWM	
Cutis Stieh	.....	MOD	
Jeffery Teske	.....	SMOD	3 WINS
Scott Thompson	.....	MOD	
Jason Tole	.....	HS	5+ WINS
James Trantina	.....	MWM	
Brady Uotinen	.....	MOD	
Mike Vajdl	.....	SS	
Brian Vajdl	.....	SS	
Jason Vejtruba	.....	MWM	3 WINS
Tyler Vernon	.....	MWM	23 WINS
Tyler Vernon	.....	MOD	
AJ Viehauser	.....	MOD	
Bobby Whittling	.....	PS	
Jaren Wibstad	MWM	4 WINS
Jake Wilber	LM	2 WINS
Konnor Wiliniski	MOD	3 WINS
Chris Withers	PS	5 WINS

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Photo: Tyler Carr

Brian Shirley took it to the bank. Literally! After his early morning victory, he hopped in his hotrod and headed to the Bank of Pontiac to cash his giant check. It was one of those once in a lifetime experiences that was enjoyed by all the fans that joined him on his 3am bank run.



Photo: Tyler Carr

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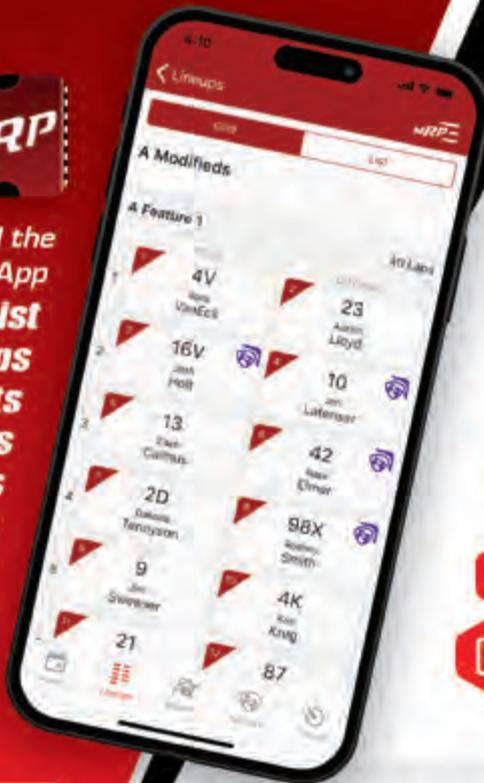
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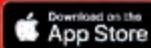
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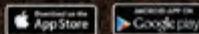
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Cole Falloway (66) was able to keep Steven Brooks (5) behind him, going on to win one of the UMP mod features on Showdown night.



Photo: Josh James

Austin Friedman (89) and Dean Hoffman (1D) battled on Showdown night. Friedman secured the victory.



Photo: Josh James

Blake Brown in the 99 was able to win his feature on Showdown night.



Photo: Josh James

Charlie Mefford was another Showdown night winner.



Photo: Josh James

Mike Harrison (24H) was the big feature winner on Saturday night for the DIRTcar UMP Modified feature.



Photo: Josh James

short track STARS



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Photo: Nicole Signor



Photo: Patrick Wigans

Selvage affectionately earned a new nickname “The Heat Race King” after earning a record 8 heat race wins during the 2025 Knoxville Raceway season.

DUSTIN SELVAGE RACING & FUN

BY
PATRICK WIGANS

ONE COULD SAY Dustin Selvage was destined to be involved in motorsports. Growing up the grandson of former Knoxville Raceway track promoter and creators of the Knoxville Nationals points system, dirt track racing is in his blood. For the last two decades Selvage has been a staple in sprint car racing competition across the Midwest. Shortly after the conclusion of the Knoxville Raceway season, we sat down with the driver most commonly known as “The Shocker” to discuss his family roots, and keeping racing fun.

Dirt Empire: What got you into racing and how did you get your start?

Dustin Selvage: I’ve been around it my whole life. My Grandparents, Ray and Naomi Grimes, were a very instrumental part in a lot of things at Knoxville Raceway, so I was born into it. Then we got our first car and trailer in 2005 when

I was a junior in high school and we’ve been doing it every year since.

DE: With your family’s history at Knoxville Raceway, does that make getting to race there more meaningful to you?

DS: Certainly. I mean anytime you can race for 20 plus years at a track that you grew up at with some of your fondest childhood memories definitely makes it special. There’s definitely nowhere else I’d rather race weekly than Knoxville.

DE: How have your goals changed over the years and what are your biggest goals now?

DS: When I was younger and had my own family team, there was a little more stress involved. Doing well to get as big of a paycheck at the pay window every night to kind of keep the team going was obviously a goal, which means winning races and being competitive. As I’ve gone through the years and I’ve done this long enough, the goals have shifted. I’m not getting any younger. I’ve already

essentially achieved everything I’m ever going to achieve in this sport, so I’m just lucky to still be doing it. I’m having more fun now than I ever have. The ultimate goal would be to win a championship. I’ve won features, but I’ve never been able to win a championship, whether that’s at Knoxville weekly or with the Sprint Invaders. That would be the ultimate goal before I retire, but if that doesn’t happen, I just want to keep having fun and stay competitive as long as I can.

DE: When you were starting out were there any particular drivers that you would lean on for advice?

DS: Yeah, just some local guys. My brother-in-law, Frankie Heimbaugh raced and Johnny Anderson, which is Frankie’s cousin and is a good family friend, was racing then. Those were the two closest people to me that I could learn from and ask them questions. My uncle had raced for years in Nebraska, and my cousin was actively racing so I could bounce ideas off them. But I never really had a big name guy take me under their wing per se. Just



Photo: Nicole Signor

close family and friends that would help me through things.

DE: Over the years you've driven your own car and you've had opportunities to drive for other car owners. What are the biggest advantages and disadvantages of both situations?

DS: The biggest advantage of driving your own car is you're never going to get fired. I do some stupid things behind the wheel of a race car and do some fire-able things, but when you're paying your own bills, you're going to show up the next week regardless. That's probably the only good thing about driving your own car. You can sometimes get in an argument with a crew chief or car owner about what direction you want the team to go or over certain setups, and obviously the guy paying the bills has the final say. As far as driving for somebody, everybody I've driven for would be what I would call a friend, so it's been nothing but positive. Not having to pay the bills is a huge, huge relief. The way I've been fortunate enough to do it for the people I've driven for, just kind of on the smaller local scale, I thoroughly enjoy it.

DE: Is there a most meaningful win in your career?

DS: I don't have a ton to pick from but obviously the first one at Knoxville in 2007 in our second full year of racing there was super, super special. Then the goofy win where we lost half the wing and

knocked out poor Justin Clark on the flag stand. I don't know that it was a special win, but it was a crazy win that is a funny story to tell. Those wins all came in my family car so that's super important to me. But a fair amount of my wins have come in someone else's car. Those are quite special to be able to get the job done when somebody hires you and you're able to fulfill your end of the deal.

DE: You've driven for Dennis Gainey for the last few seasons. What has that been like getting to develop that program together?

DS: It's been a lot of fun. Brandon Wimmer has kind of been the head guy. He was the first driver to kick that thing off and steer Dennis in the right direction. It's grown very quickly in a three or four year time span to be a very established team around the Knoxville area and the Midwest. I'm a very, very small part of that deal so I'm just fortunate enough to be part of it, but it's been fun to be one of the constants in that team and being able to keep coming back.

DE: With you having that fun here recently, does it feel kind of like a resurgence of your career? Or how would you describe it?

DS: I feel like an 18-year-old kid again for some reason at 37 years old. I guess I can't quite articulate why, but I think it just comes back to having fun. Dennis as the car owner and everybody that

works on that team is a super fun group to be around. There's no pressure. I was notorious in my own stuff of being an absolute head case and freaking out if we didn't do what I thought we should be able to do on a Saturday night. Then I'd be mad till the following Wednesday or Thursday and be no fun to be around. The past couple of years, for the most part, I'm happy with the results no matter how it went by an hour after the races. It just makes it more fun to show up to the racetrack with nothing to prove, not taking myself so seriously, having fun with family and friends, and still very much enjoying being able to continue doing what I love.

DE: On multiple occasions you've received awards for Sportsman of the Year at Knoxville as well as their Junior Fan Club Driver of the Year. What do those types of awards mean to you?

DS: I don't know. I think the Junior Fan Club was probably rigged one year. I think that was a fan vote and a bunch of people from my hometown put my name down, so I don't know if that was super accurate. The Sportsman of the Year awards were back in my time where I was throwing little immature fits in my trailer every night so I never understood why we won those awards. I was probably not deserving of them. It's kind of been a running joke how I was able to win those. Either way, at the end of the day it's an award and a trophy from Knoxville



Selvage is joked with the most for sticking to the bottom around Knoxville Raceway, however, we've documented here that he still remembers where the cushion is!

Photo: Ben Humphrey

Raceway, and those are always pretty special.

DE: The day after a race on X, you post the "Selvage Household Takes" where your wife and kids have a reaction to your race night. How did these posts come about?

DS: Two years ago I think it was after opening night sitting down with my wife and kids in the camper after the races Sunday morning, I asked them what they thought of the races last night and they all said some pretty funny things. I thought "I should tweet that, it's pretty funny", and that got way more of a positive reaction than I ever would've guessed. So I continued doing it. Here we are two full seasons later and it seems like it's a pretty big hit with the Twitter world. Again, it goes back to not taking yourself too seriously. I don't have corporate sponsors or people that I need to please, so nobody cares to see Saturday night or Sunday morning tweet about how Dustin Selvage won another heat race and finished 12th in the feature and this is where he's going to be next weekend. That's boring and nobody cares, but if they can read my wife and kids just berate me and tell me how bad I am, that's pretty entertaining.

DE: You kind of mentioned this earlier, but are there any plans for your kids to get into racing?

DS: Yeah, I think so. I have no idea what my daughter will do. She's only four, but my son is absolutely ate up with the racing, so we're completely screwed with him. I'm not crazy about it. I don't know why that is because that's all I ever wanted as a kid and I couldn't do it till I was a teenager. I'm pretty heavy on getting him into sports and I think at a young age you can learn a lot in sports socially. I'm certainly pushing for him to go down that path, but to keep him out of a go-kart or micro sprint, or something to that effect, probably is not in our cards.

DE: Is the story about how you got your nickname appropriate, and if so, what is that story?

DS: Yeah, it's probably not appropriate, but the backstory is Knoxville sent out an email years and years ago asking all the drivers to come up with a nickname for the following season, just to get more fan interaction. Some people coined me with the name and it's stuck ever since.

DE: Besides Knoxville, do you have a favorite track?

DS: I love racing at 34 Raceway in Burlington, Iowa. 34 and Knoxville are probably my favorite tracks. That's kind of the problem with my career though. I go to Knoxville then maybe half a dozen to ten Sprint Invaders races where I go to a limited number of tracks. I probably have more that I dislike just because they don't suit my driving style as opposed to tracks that I do like. I mean I honestly like them all to be honest, but the main favorites would be Knoxville and Burlington for sure.

DE: Is there anything outside of being a driver or owner that you'd like to be part of around racing?

DS: My grandpa was the promoter at Knoxville and that part of the sport has always intrigued me. I think it could be a lot of fun, but I don't know. I see how tough it is to promote these races when things go wrong. It's tough in this kind of social media age where you just want to crawl in a hole after something goes wrong. I don't know that I want or need something like that in my life. To promote or co-promote a race, I think could be fun, but I don't know if I think it would be fun enough to actually work towards something like that to be completely honest. ■

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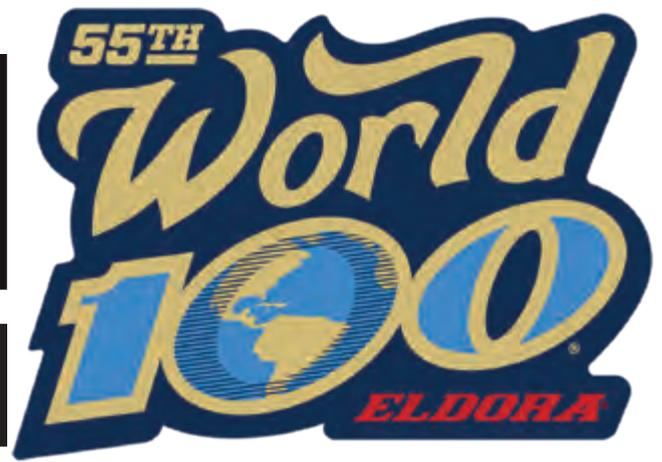
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WHAT DRIVES YOU!®



RICKY THORNTON JR. RULES THE WORLD 100



THE 55TH ANNUAL WORLD 100, held September 4-6 at Eldora Speedway in Rossburg, Ohio, reaffirmed its status as one of dirt track racing's Crown Jewels. Dubbed "The Biggest Dirt Race in the World," this three-day DIRTcar Super Late Model extravaganza drew over 100 elite drivers battling on the iconic high-banked half-mile clay oval, where strategy, stamina, and sheer grit collide under the lights.

Kicking off Thursday, September 4, the format innovated with the return of "Shootouts" and twin 25-lap preliminary features, each paying \$12,000 to the winner. The field split into groups, accumulating points via the "Every Lap Matters" system—rewarding consistency across heats, consis, and mains.

Friday, September 5, amplified the intensity with identical twin 25s, weeding out the field while building inversion lineups for Saturday's showdown.

Drone shows lit the pre-main skies, a an interesting 2025 addition blending tech with tradition.

Climaxing Saturday, September 6, gates swung open for the sold-out crowd at noon for the 100-lap gauntlet, boasting a record \$72,000 top prize—honoring Eldora's 72nd season. All 28 starters pocketed at least \$5,500, with a purse eclipsing \$400,000.

It took until lap 42 for polesitter Ricky Thornton Jr. of Chandler, Ariz., to have his chance at victory, taking away the lead from Davenport. RTJ had been just bidding his time, having slipped to fifth by lap 24, but steadily climbed his way back up to the front. With 11 laps to go things got spicy. Chris Madden, who had been battling for a top spot all race, knocked into the wall, bringing out a caution. Davenport had to head to the pits with a flat tire as well. It was a crushing string of events for both drivers who would have both had a shot at a podium finish were it not for the bad luck.

On the restart with just ten laps to go, RTJ launched out ahead leaving McDowell and Hoffman to battle for second. Hoffman had it for several laps but McDowell was able to get by him in the final laps.

No one was able to catch Ricky Thornton Jr. ruled the World 100 who captured his first victory in the event, pocketing a cool \$72,000 while looking cool doing it. Dale McDowell finished second while Nick Hoffman finished third, rounding out the podium.

It was a nail-biting, edge of your seat race through and through and it played out in front of the enormouse sold-out crowd at Eldora, cementing the World 100 as the can't-miss event of the year for late model racing fans. ■



Dale McDowell drove the 17m relentlessly to secure a second-place finish, out-lasting Nick Hoffman



Nick Hoffman fought hard all race, nipping at the heels of Davenport and eventually McDowell and Thornton Jr. but in the end he had to settle for third.

Jonathan Davenport (49) and Chris Madden (44) were both tangling for top positions all race long until a lap 89 turn of bad luck pushed both back to finish in the field: Davenport 7th, Madden 13th.



Fan favorite Bobby Pierce had an uphill battle in Saturday's feature, starting on the back row, he managed to climb all the way up to 9th place to finish. If it had been the World 150 who knows what would have happened.



A bad wreck in Heat #6 collected five cars when Jason Riggs (81) and Jordan Koehler 114 connected and slid up the track. Tyler Millwood (31), Rusty Ballenger (1G) and Rusty Schlenk (91) couldn't avoid them and got their rides torn up. At first all drivers were reported as okay, but Schlenk came out of the wreck with the worst results. He suffered a broken bone in his foot, bruised ribs and a strained neck, and his number 91, a self-design Domination Race Car was "junk" according to him in a Monday interview. To view the wreck, visit FloRacing's Facebook page, or use your mobile device with the QR code to the right.



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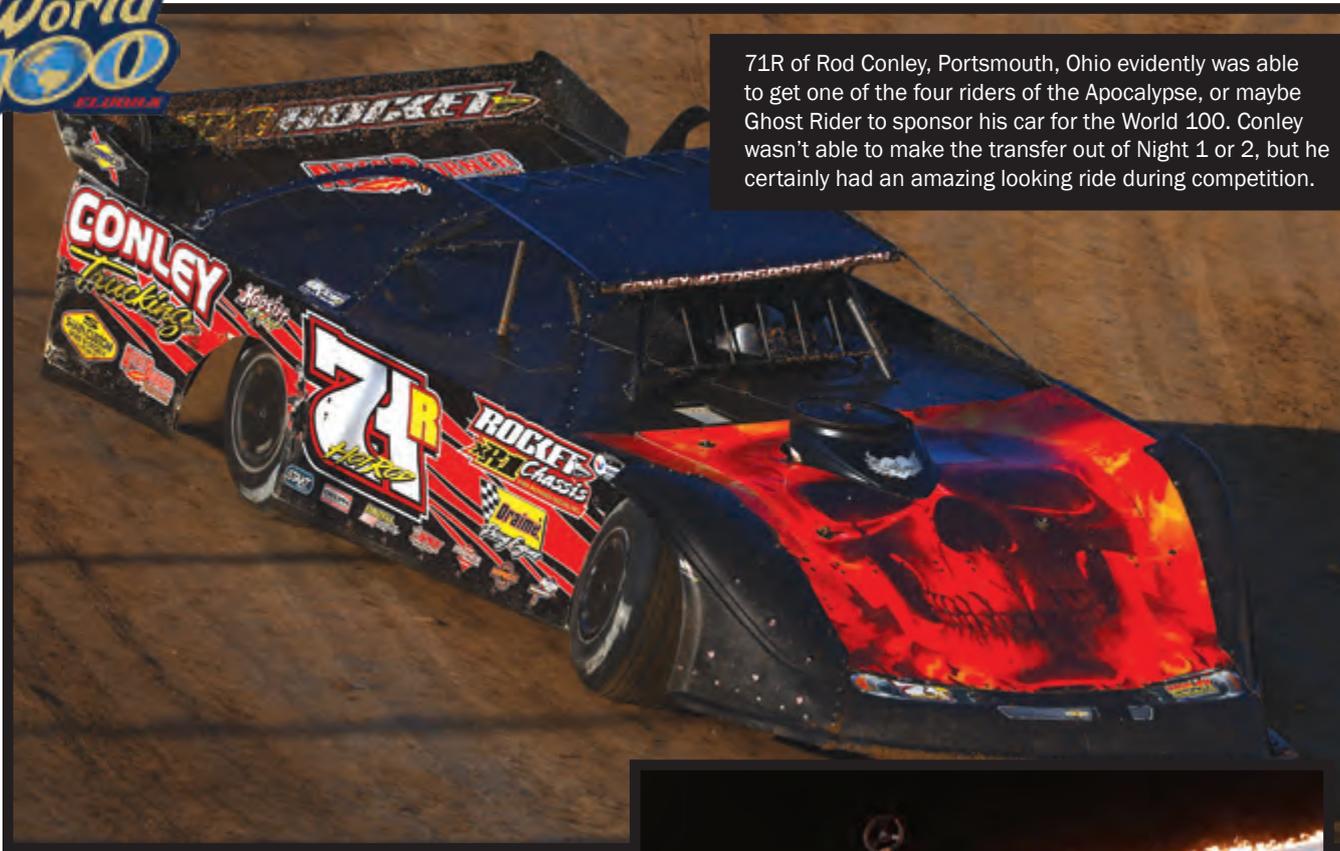
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Photos: Josh James

71R of Rod Conley, Portsmouth, Ohio evidently was able to get one of the four riders of the Apocalypse, or maybe Ghost Rider to sponsor his car for the World 100. Conley wasn't able to make the transfer out of Night 1 or 2, but he certainly had an amazing looking ride during competition.

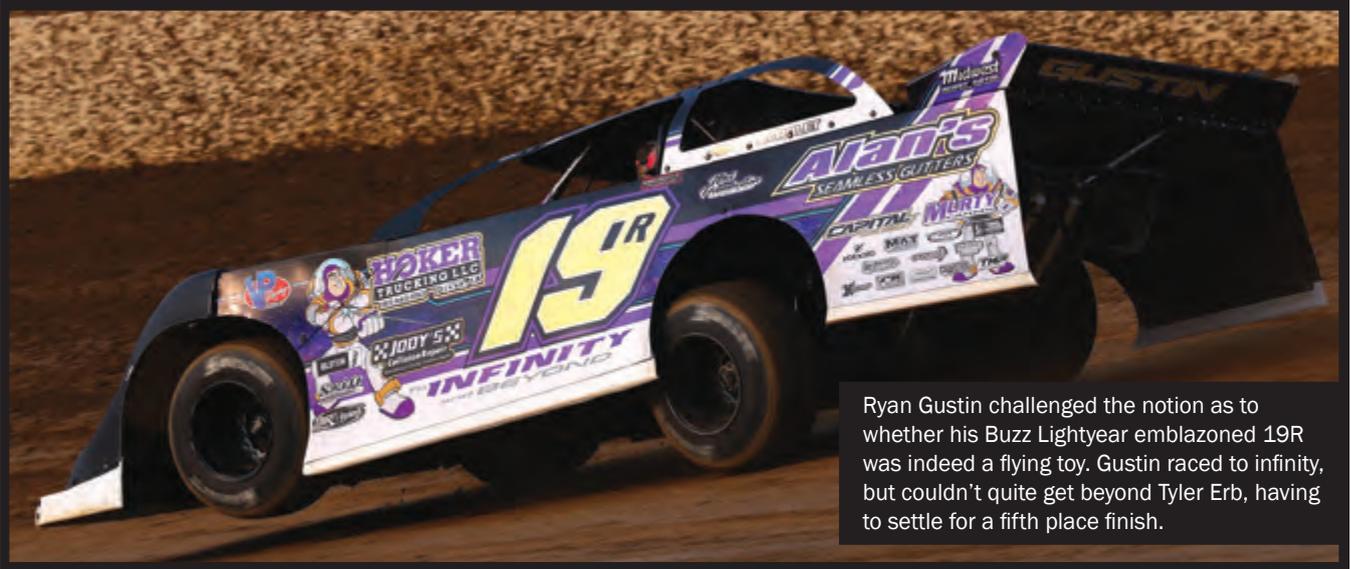


Jonathan Davenport's number 49 absolutely sparkled in the afternoon light of qualifying. He was indeed golden all weekend, winning the second feature on opening night. Davenport looked to take his gilded ride to victory lane on Saturday night, but a right-rear flat with just 11 laps to go cost him a shot at first place and moved him down to a 7th place finish.





Tyler Erb's wrap was used to raise attention and funds for the Texas Children's Hospital in an effort to stamp out childhood cancer. Merchandise and door panels were sold and auctioned off to raise more funds. If you would like to donate, use your mobile device to follow the QR code link:



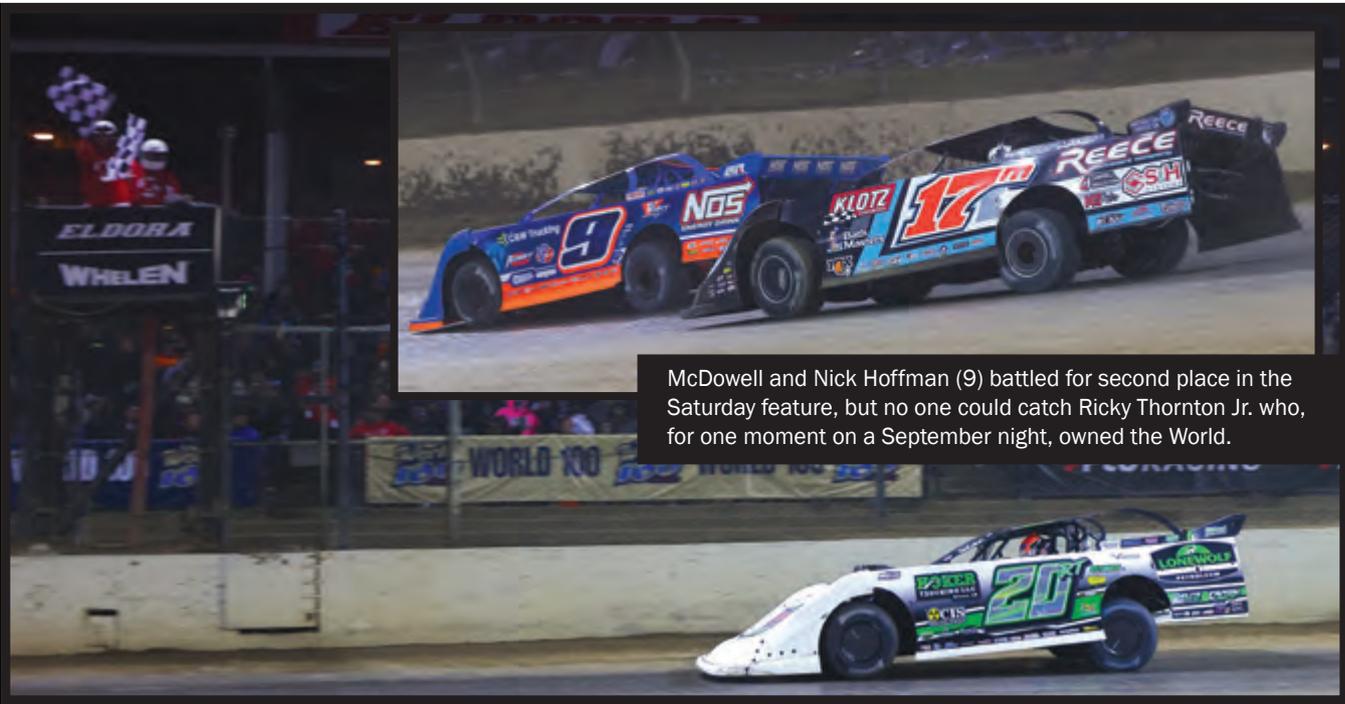
Ryan Gustin challenged the notion as to whether his Buzz Lightyear emblazoned 19R was indeed a flying toy. Gustin raced to infinity, but couldn't quite get beyond Tyler Erb, having to settle for a fifth place finish.



Luke Morey competed in his first World 100 and made the transfer to race into the feature on the first two qualifying nights, but finished at the back of the field in each race. No doubt Morey will build on this first attempt to rule the World and will be back to attempt to mow down the field again.



Dale McDowell (17m) gets bottled up behind Todd Morrow (T1), Ethan Dotson (74) and Haiden Cowan (14). McDowell was able to pop the cork and take the victory.



McDowell and Nick Hoffman (9) battled for second place in the Saturday feature, but no one could catch Ricky Thornton Jr. who, for one moment on a September night, owned the World.

Special thanks to Jones Racing Products for sponsoring this extended bonus section covering the World 100!

If you would like to see (or purchase) even more photos of the event, visit: photos.joshjamesartwork.com, or use the QR code to the right.



PROUD TO BE **WHAT DRIVES** DALE MCDOWELL

Dale McDowell



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dirt CHRONICLES



BY BOB MAYS

SLIDERS



Jud Larson takes the John Pfrommer Offy into Reading's turn one at the usual sideways attitude in a 1956 qualifying run. Larson was a master of the broadside in an era where getting it wrong could have dire consequences. (David Knox photo)



Through archival photos and his vast historical knowledge of dirt track racing, Bob Mays takes us on a journey into the past. The racers of yesteryear come to life in Dirt Chronicles.



Chuck Hulse was a journeyman Indy 500 and sprint car driver for most of his career but he could create a roostertail at a moments notice. Here he blasts into turn three at the Sacramento Mile aboard the Ralph Wilke champ car wrenched by A.J. Watson. (Earl Garrettson photo)





Jon Stanbrough goes full right-rear first with the Fox Brothers sprinter at Grain Valley Missouri in 2011. Soft-spoken Stanbrough had a loud right foot. (Bob Mays photo)



Jake Martens shows that the winged guys could go backwards at a high rate of speed also. Barreling in to turn three at I 80 Speedway in Greenwood, Nebraska during the 2013 season, Martens was always fun to watch! (Bob Mays photo)



engine builder SPOTLIGHT

By



WHAT DRIVES YOU®



RACE 1 ENGINES

CALL HIM THE RELUCTANT Crate Motor builder. Brad Hibbard owner of Race 1 engines, in Poland Ohio, tells the story about how he ended up being the premier Crate engine builder in the northeast.

“It was a Sunday afternoon in 2005 and one of my customers said, ‘Hey, there’s a meeting about Crate engines out at the golf course. Let’s go check it out.’ I didn’t want to go. I wasn’t interested. There were football games on TV and other stuff to do. But my friend nagged me and I gave in and we went to hear what they had to say,” Hibbard said. “After the speech was over I said they talked a good game, but it wouldn’t work around here. I did everything to shoot holes through it. It turned out, I was the only engine builder in the room and they asked me to get the program up and running. I declined initially. But after some convincing days and weeks later I finally decided ‘If nobody else wants to do it, what the heck, I’ll give them a shot. The rest is history.’”

Race 1 initially wasn’t in the race engine

building business. It was an old-school machine shop who’s customers included car and farm equipment dealerships.

Every once in awhile they would work on a hot rod or a street stock or an emod or an asphalt car, but they were not building engines for dirt track late models.

“After really getting into the details of the program, seeing how it was a production engine and we could be really good at it, we saw it was a fit for us. It snowballed into what it is now,” Hibbard said.

Building the Crate program took diligence and effort.

“We dove into it and watched as much racing as we could,” Hibbard said. “There was a bit of a problem – there was no tech inspector in the northeast. And since we were becoming the only Crate engine builder in the northeast at the time, we were naturally asked to be the tech inspector. We stayed transparent and did all we could to make sure everyone knew what we were doing and why.”

“Being a tech inspector on these is not

easy,” Hibbard said. “There are details and nuances to the program that you have to know. I really think engine builders should be the tech inspectors since they’re the ones that actually know the engines. I tell other inspectors out there if you have a question, call me. I’m just a cell phone call away. And send me videos and pictures. I can usually help out that way. I have a vested interest in making sure the Crate program runs well and keeps going. Since I’m in with both feet, if it goes away I have to go back to farm tractors.”

Helping is a way of life for Race 1 and Brad Hibbard. He tries to help drivers and teams as much as the other race inspectors in the business.

“This is how I see it,” he reflected. “If a guy is out there trying and trying and not succeeding, he is only going to do that for so long before he gives up. When people get too frustrated they eventually quit. So,



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the more drivers and teams I can help succeed, the more the sport as a whole will thrive. The more they will stick around and keep racing."

"I take calls from other engine builders and I want them to succeed with this program just as much as me," Hibbard said. "I've seen some terrible situations where a builder didn't have the Crate training and just went by the yellow book or, as I call it the Crate bible. That just provides the specs, but there are some rules you absolutely need to follow or you can get your engine tossed. Nothing is worse than having a guy go out and win with your engine and then he gets DQ'd because the builder didn't follow the rules because he didn't know the rules. I don't want that to ever happen. So, I am always willing to help other builders and steer them through the rules so this whole program thrives."

Over the years Hibbard has helped where he could. He's written rules for tracks, done seminars, gone to track banquets for Q&As, and more. Anything to help. That helpful attitude is contagious. Hibbard tries to reflect the same helpful attitude towards people he works with as he receives from suppliers and others in the racing world.

"We fight this thing together," Hibbard said. "However I can help pit side hopefully helps racing prosper. I get that same feeling from Jones [Racing Products] and CJ over there. When I call him with a problem, it's not a problem. He's always helpful and gets me what I need, sometimes in ways that seem like a miracle. Working with good people is what still makes this the most fulfilling. Success in this business comes from relationships. It's the first ingredient. There are a lot of good guys in this business but CJ is top of that list."

All the same, life is not without its challenges for Race 1. There are price increases from GM and the Crate program that they are dealing with but that doesn't seem to be the biggest problem these days.

"Right now our biggest problem is manpower," Hibbard said. "We have two

shops – the dyno shop and the machine shop. We could probably use another two to three people in each shop. You need people who care and that want to help and hustle. And hustle is different than hurrying. Nobody is pushed here. I would rather disappoint a customer over being late than putting something out that is built half-assed. Hurrying makes mistakes. Hustle does it right with some urgency behind it."

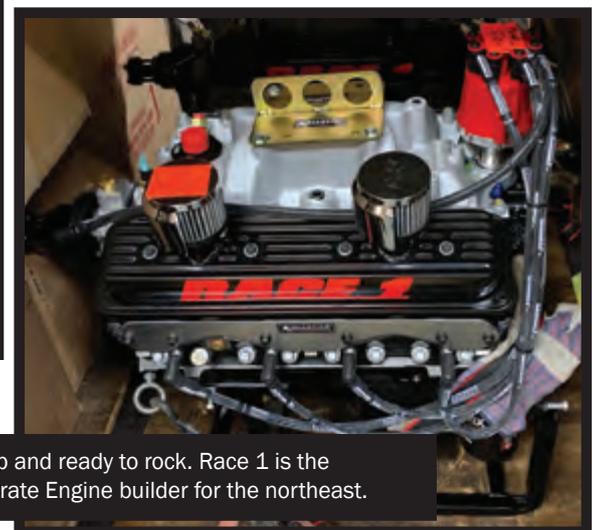
"Of course I've had some good workers

over the years," Hibbard said. "Over twenty years we've built over a thousand engines and rebuilt probably over five hundred 604s. These days we work mostly with new 602s and 604s with some 604 rebuilds still. But there is so much room to do more. This thing has really taken off."

Hibbard mentioned if you are interested in working in the engine building world and have some hustle and care about what you do and who you work with, absolutely give him a call. He will find a place for you. ■



Brad Hibbard is always willing to help out, from tips on carb service on the Race 1 Facebook page, to a checklist for winterizing your engine on their website - Hibbard and Race 1 do everything they can to keep racers racing!



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the business of DIRT



SEVEN YEARS AGO, a group of trade show industry veterans set out to create the ONLY Performance and Racing, B2B racing platform for the industry to use 365 days a year, 24/7.

By taking today's technology, combining that with years of trade show production experience, now the industry has a "space" for manufacturers of racing products, technology and services to showcase (similar to exhibiting) that can now connect with those people that typically walk the aisles of trade shows: dealers, engine builders, distributors, machine shops, professional race teams, fabricators, from all around the world

While attending trade shows is valuable for networking and connecting with racing colleagues, those events are typically

THE FUTURE OF TRADE SHOWS

only a few days at the end of the year. Now, there's a destination where you can find the latest racing innovations in just seconds—whenever you need them, from wherever you are.

Founders Judy Kean and Francisque Savinien both worked alongside Steve Lewis, the founder of the PRI trade show, for many years before launching EPARTRADE. Their approach mirrors Lewis' focus on serving smaller, entrepreneurial racing businesses and generating new business opportunities.

"During the crazy years of Covid, the eyes of the industry really turned to the platform. In fact, it exploded," said Kean.

If you're a racing business or a race team, joining the platform is completely free. It's just like having a trade show badge. Simply register and create your account and join 35,000 racing businesses and 75,000 professionals from around the world already using it.

Kean and Savinien have really created a 'community' for this marketplace

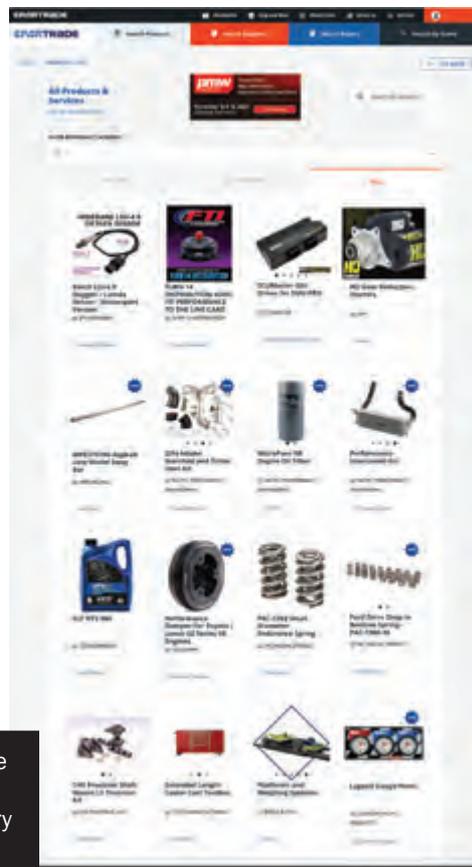
through their newsletter series, Race Industry Now their weekly Technical Webinar series, and the cherry on the cake is very special week they co-produce with RACER.com, Race Industry Week. This special week brings together the entire industry to hear from race sanctioning bodies, promoters, industry leaders and engine builders from grassroot to Formula 1. Including, IMCA Racing, USAC, World of Outlaw, Chili Bowl, Eldora Raceway, Tractor Pulling and more.

The list of speakers is spectacular, and no one else has ever brought together such a diverse group of industry stars and leaders for the community to learn from and enjoy. Check out the Race Industry Now channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/@EPARTRADE>

Kean went on further to share that this platform really is... "the Racing Industry, Every Minute, Every Day!"

To learn more, please visit: www.epartrade.com ■



Epartrade is a digital "trade show" that allows companies to display their products to the racing industry at a fraction of the cost of a traditional show. With easy search options and pricing levels to fit any budget, it makes sense why so many dirt track racing industry manufacturers are portioning some of their marketing budget to Epartrade.com.

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Bryce Bashore



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DIRT

on the lens



MAYBE YOU'VE NOTICED, but we here at *Dirt Empire Magazine* love us some racing pictures. This is our opportunity to honor the great photographers of our sport who are on the road throughout the season shooting race cars and drivers and chronicling history. Most of the photographers deserve hazard pay for the amount of mud and clay they are regularly pelted with in order to get the photo. Thanks for enduring a little dirt on the lens so we can enjoy these shots!

JEREMIAH GREEN



Yahoo! indeed. Jade Avedisan puts it sideways with style, captured with granular detail by Jeremiah Green.

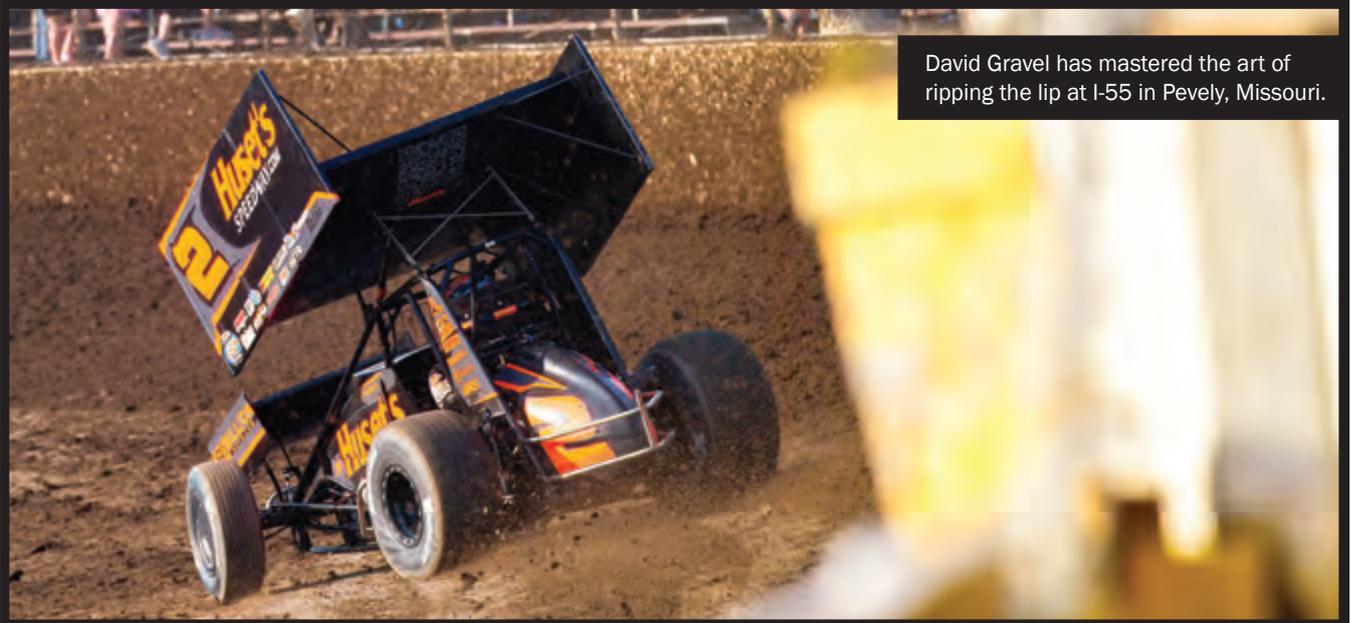


Late models at Arrowhead Speedway are a beautiful sight, coming and going!





The Tulsa Expo Center is never short on race fans or excitement during the Chili Bowl.



David Gravel has mastered the art of ripping the lip at I-55 in Pevely, Missouri.

GET TO KNOW JEREMIAH GREEN

Hometown: Inola Oklahoma

Age: 21

Year Started Shooting: September 2023

First Publication to Print Your Work: *Dirt Empire Magazine*

Favorite Tracks to Shoot: Port City Raceway, Lake Ozark Speedway, Tulsa Expo Center

Favorite Division to Shoot: Midgets

Remaining Bucket List Races: Knoxville Nationals, 24 Hours of Daytona, Daytona 500, Turkey Night Grand Prix, Indy 500, Gateway Dirt Nationals, Kings Royal.

Favorite Thing About Racing Photography: I love the challenge of finding new creative ways to showcase each photo like it's a story.

Outside of race cars, what do you like to photograph: I like to do some wildlife photography, along with portraits.

Camera Equipment: Sony A7IV, Sony RV, 70-200mm, 24-70mm, 135mm, 200-600mm

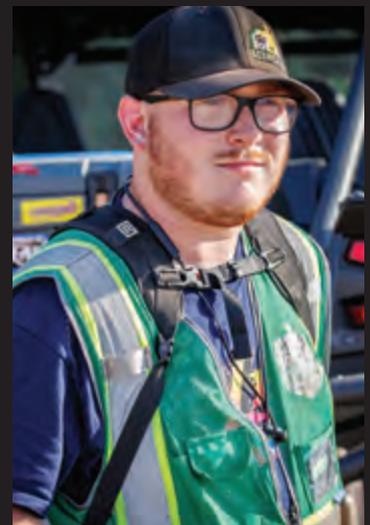
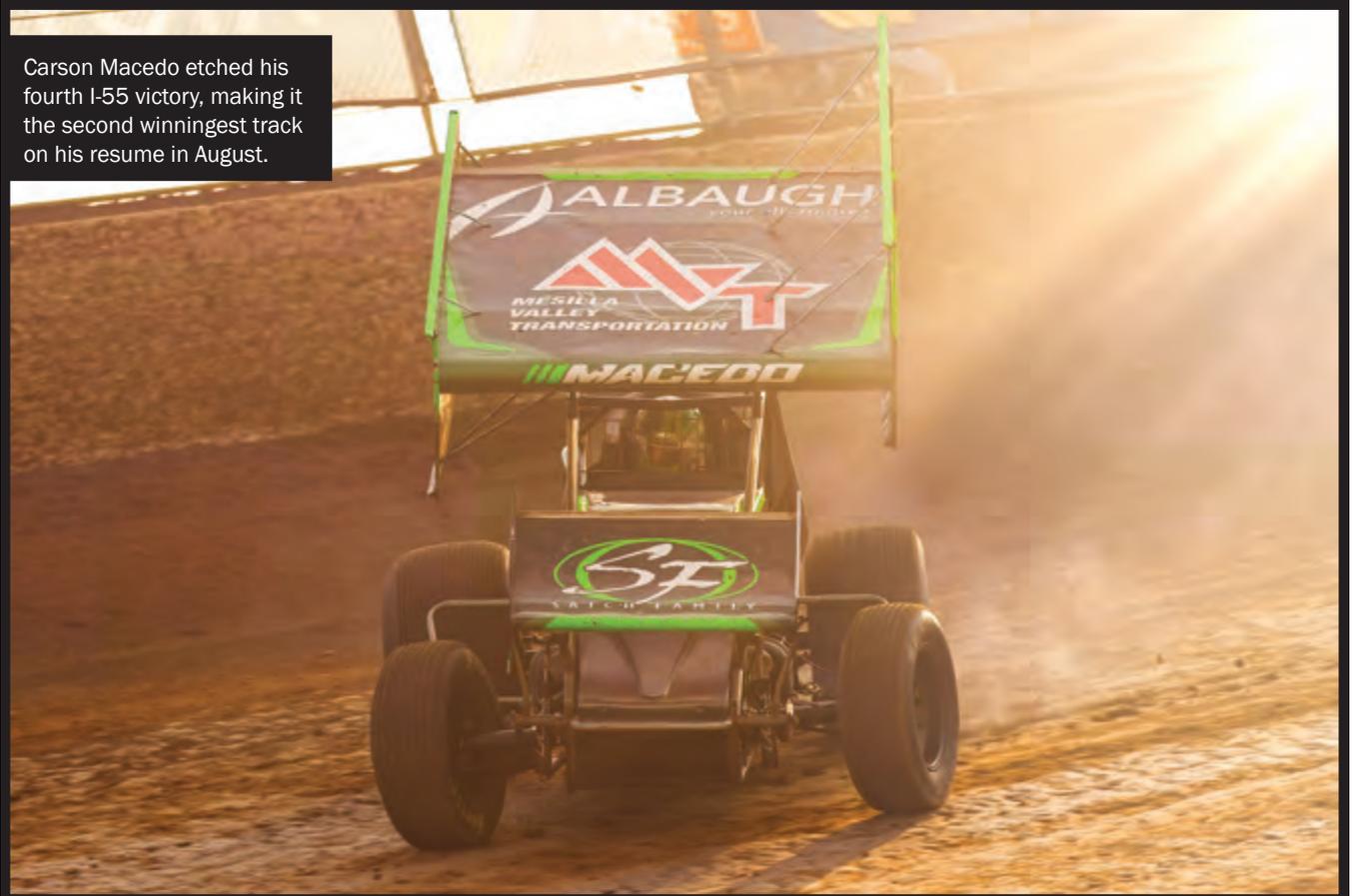


Photo: David Campbell

The stuff of dreams: Jason Martin executing a picture perfect wing dance.



Carson Macedo etched his fourth I-55 victory, making it the second winningest track on his resume in August.





Seth Bergman is locked in and ready at the Salina Highbanks.



Jacob Denney is a perfect example of why the BC39 at Indianapolis Motor Speedway's dirt track is a race made for bucket lists.

the business of DIRT



BY
ADAM CORNELL

DURING THE START of the 2025 racing season, a high percentage of races were cancelled or postponed due to weather. We thought it might be a good idea to check in on weather insurance so tracks and promoters could start working on a gameplan for 2026. Rain, in particular, poses a unique threat to dirt tracks, where even moderate precipitation can turn a race-ready surface into an unmanageable quagmire, endangering drivers and equipment while costing promoters tens of thousands in lost revenue. Traditional insurance often falls short, requiring lengthy claims processes and proof of exact financial losses. Enter parametric weather insurance, a data-driven solution gaining traction in the industry, with providers like Vortex Weather Insurance leading the charge.

What Is Parametric Weather Insurance?

Unlike traditional indemnity-based insurance, which reimburses for verified losses after a lengthy adjustment process,

The skies were angry over Williams Grove Speedway in early 2025.



WEATHER OR NOT? THE PROS AND CONS OF WEATHER INSURANCE

parametric insurance pays out based on predefined triggers using objective, independent data. For dirt track racing, the primary product is rain coverage. According to Vortex Weather Insurance, a policy might specify a rainfall threshold—say, 0.25 inches over a four-hour window during a race event. If NOAA weather stations or other third-party sources record precipitation meeting or exceeding this threshold, the policy's full coverage limit is paid out automatically. No adjusters, no financial audits—just swift cash to offset losses.

Vortex emphasizes hyper-localized data, utilizing radar and other precise location data sources at the track rather than distant airports, reducing discrepancies between reported and actual conditions. Policies are customizable: promoters can choose coverage periods (e.g., a single race night or an entire season), set payout limits to match budgets, and define specific weather perils like rain or extreme temperatures. Pricing hinges on historical weather data—drier periods mean lower premiums, while wetter ones cost more. Vortex aims to keep premiums at 10% or less of the coverage limit, even for high-probability payout scenarios, making it accessible for small and mid-sized tracks.

Why Dirt Track Racing Needs Weather Insurance

Dirt track racing is uniquely vulnerable to weather. Unlike paved circuits, dirt surfaces absorb water, becoming slick or soupy, which can halt events for safety reasons. A single rainout can cost a promoter \$50,000 or more in ticket sales, concessions, and sponsor commitments, with ripple effects on local economies—hotels, restaurants, and vendors all take a hit. In 2023, industry reports noted that 30% of scheduled dirt track events in the Midwest faced weather-related disruptions, with smaller venues hit hardest due to tight margins.

Traditional insurance often fails to address these losses. Indemnity policies require promoters to prove “actual loss sustained,” a process involving receipts, financial statements, and adjuster visits that can drag on for months. Payouts are often reduced if losses are deemed less severe than claimed, leaving promoters short. Parametric insurance sidesteps this by tying payouts to measurable weather events, not financial forensics. For example, a \$100,000 policy might

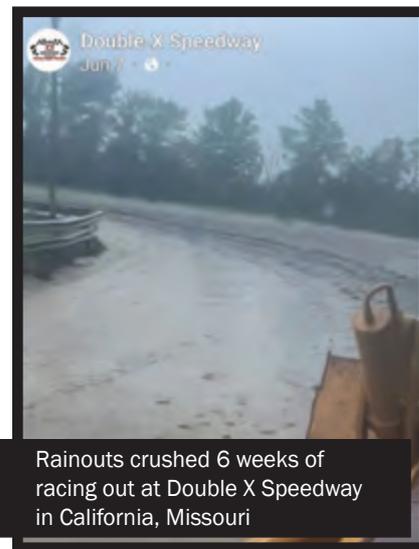
cost \$8,000 for a July race in a region with a 20% historical chance of heavy rain, providing a predictable safety net.

Benefits for the Dirt Track Industry

The advantages of parametric weather insurance are clear, especially for an industry as weather-sensitive as dirt track racing:

1. **Speed of Payouts:** Claims are processed in days, not months, using verified weather data. This rapid liquidity helps promoters cover refunds, pay staff, or reschedule events without crippling cash flow. For instance, a track facing a rainout can receive a full payout within a week, keeping operations afloat.
2. **Transparency and Simplicity:** With payouts triggered by objective metrics, there's no haggling over loss amounts. This eliminates disputes with insurers and reduces administrative burdens, a boon for small tracks with limited staff.
3. **Customizability:** Promoters can tailor policies to their needs—specific dates, hours, or weather thresholds—ensuring coverage aligns with their risk profile. A track in a dry region might opt for lower limits, while one in a rainy area might prioritize higher coverage.
4. **Empowering Growth:** By mitigating weather risks, promoters can confidently book bigger events, secure larger sponsors, or invest in improvements, knowing a rainout won't spell financial ruin.

Vortex's use of independent hyper-localized data further enhances reliability,



Rainouts crushed 6 weeks of racing out at Double X Speedway in California, Missouri

addressing the industry's need for precision in areas where weather can vary dramatically over short distances.

Challenges and Limitations

Despite its promise, parametric weather insurance has drawbacks that promoters must weigh:

1. **Basis Risk:** The biggest pitfall is the gap between policy triggers and actual conditions. If the track purchases a policy with a .50" threshold, and .45" of rainfall is recorded during the risk period, no payout occurs. This "basis risk" can leave promoters empty-handed despite real losses. Although there are alternative structuring options that can reduce this risk.
2. **Premium Costs:** While Vortex targets premiums at 10% or less of coverage, costs can climb in historically wet regions or seasons. For smaller tracks, even a \$5,000 premium per event can strain budgets, especially if no payout is triggered.
3. **Limited Scope:** Parametric policies typically cover specific perils like rain. Other disruptions—high winds, extreme heat, or fog—require additional clauses, increasing complexity and cost.
4. **Data Dependency:** Payouts rely on third-party data accuracy. A malfunctioning weather station or localized anomaly

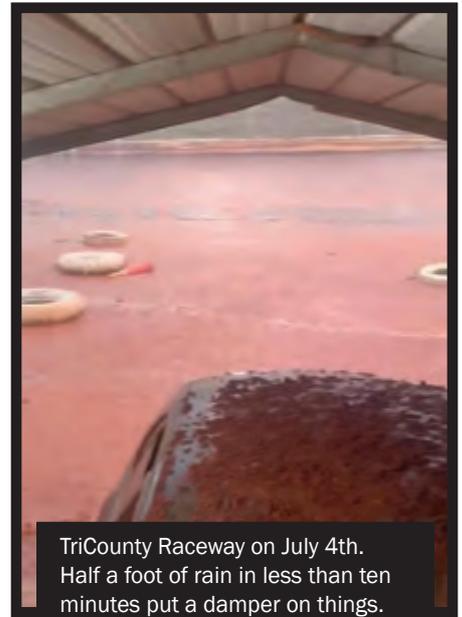
could lead to disputes, though Vortex mitigates this with multiple data sources.

Industry chatter on platforms like X reflects mixed sentiment. Some promoters praise the quick payouts, with one noting, "Saved us \$60,000 last season—worth every penny." Others caution about non-triggered losses, with a post lamenting, "Paid \$10,000 in premiums, got nothing when we canceled for mud but the gauge read dry."

The Road Ahead

Parametric weather insurance is reshaping how dirt track promoters manage risk. By leveraging data from NOAA and other sources, companies like Vortex offer a lifeline in an industry where weather can make or break a season. The ability to secure fast, predictable payouts empowers tracks to plan with confidence, from small-town ovals to regional circuits. However, promoters must carefully assess their local weather patterns and financial thresholds to ensure policies align with their risks.

As climate patterns grow more erratic—2024 saw a 15% increase in unpredictable rainfall across the U.S., per NOAA—parametric insurance's role will likely expand. Tracks adopting it report scheduling more ambitious events, knowing they're insulated from nature's whims. Yet, success hinges on



TriCounty Raceway on July 4th. Half a foot of rain in less than ten minutes put a damper on things.

understanding the trade-offs: the certainty of data-driven payouts versus the risk of uncovered losses. For an industry built on speed and grit, weather insurance offers a way to keep the engines roaring, rain or shine. ■

Note: Inclusion of track photos does not indicate those tracks endorse weather insurance. It's just pictures of rain at tracks.

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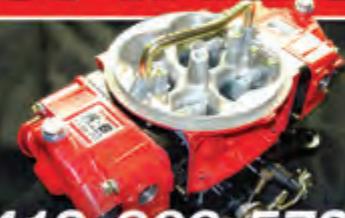
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ONE OF THE THINGS that happens in dirt track racing is those that are new to the sport are expected to have a knowledge base that they don't always have. Everyone assumes you know, and sometimes it feels intimidating to ask simple questions, like what is camber, what is caster and how and why do you make adjustments?

This is Dirt Tech 101 sponsored by RaceKnowHow.com. Here, the only stupid question is the question not asked. So, let's roll through the concept of camber and caster settings specific to modified race cars.

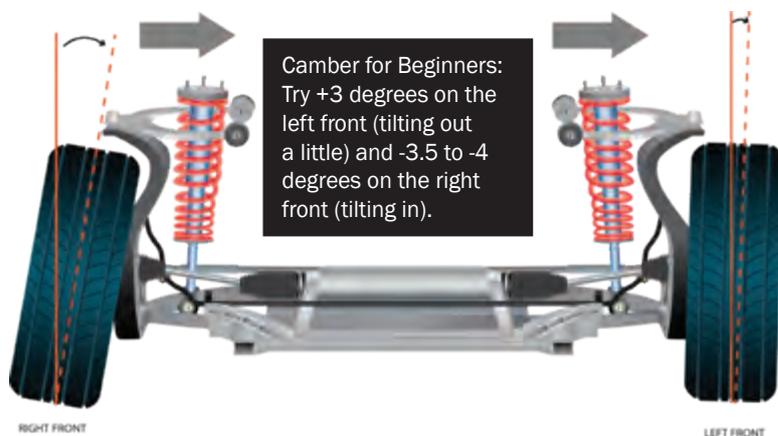
Racing a modified car on a dirt oval track is thrilling. These cars are fast, tough machines built for tight turns and high speeds. But to win, you need more than a powerful engine. The way your car's wheels are angled—called camber and caster—can change how it handles. For new racers, these might sound tricky, but understanding the why's and how's can make for smooth cornering and a winning race car.

This article explains what camber and caster are in simple (maybe overly basic) terms, how they help on dirt tracks, and some easy starting settings to get more grip and speed. We'll keep it straightforward so even if you're just starting out, you can tweak your car like a pro.

WHAT IS TIRE CAMBER? A SIMPLE BREAKDOWN

Imagine looking at your race car's front wheels from straight ahead, like you're facing the car head-on. Camber is how much those wheels tilt sideways. If the top of the tire leans toward the center of the car, that's negative camber. If it leans away, it's positive camber. On most street-driven cars, wheels are usually straight up and down—zero camber—for even wear on the road over thousands of

THE BASICS: CAMBER/CASTER ADJUSTMENTS



miles. But when racing on oval dirt tracks where you turn left and then turn left again, and again, we tilt them on purpose.

Why? Dirt ovals have banked turns, like a sloped hill, and your car wants to slide outward from the speed. Negative camber on the right front tire (the outside one in a left turn) helps fight that slide. It lets the tire flatten out more on the track, creating a bigger “footprint” where rubber meets dirt. That means better grip, like your shoes getting a wider base on slippery ground. On the left front tire (the inside), a bit of positive camber keeps it from lifting off the track when the car leans. Some drivers prefer that left-front lift, others want the grip to prevent sliding up the track. Adjusting suspension helps with that. But that's a whole different Dirt Tech 101 article.

For modifieds this tilt is key. These cars use shims (small metal spacers) or adjustable arms to set camber. But don't overdo it. Too much negative camber wears the tire's inside edge fast, makes it hot on straightaways, and can make braking tricky. On loose dirt, extreme tilts might make the tire dig in too deep, like a shovel in mud, creating ruts that slow you down. Things like how steep the track banks, if the track surface is sticky or slick, and your tire type all play a role. Get it right, and your car sticks like glue in turns, cutting understeer (when the front pushes wide) and providing a balanced, controlled feel through the corners.

Think of it like leaning into a bike turn: a little tilt helps you hug the curve without falling. Too much tilt and you're face down in the dirt wondering what just happened.

In a race, good camber can add seconds to your lap time by letting you carry more speed through corners.

WHAT IS TIRE CASTER? KEEPING THINGS STEADY

Now, picture looking at the car from the side. Caster is the angle of the steering parts, like an invisible line from the top and bottom points where the wheel connects to the car. Positive caster means the top point tilts back a bit, like the fork on your bike that makes the front wheel want to go straight after you turn. Negative caster is the opposite, but racers rarely use it.

In modified racing, positive caster is your friend for steady handling. It gives a “self-centering” feel, so the wheels snap back straight on the front stretch, keeping you from wandering at high speeds. On bumpy dirt tracks, it fights off wobbles. The real magic? Caster changes camber as you steer. When you turn left, more positive caster on the right side adds extra negative camber to that outside tire, boosting grip right when you need it.

Racers love “caster split”—setting more positive caster on the right front than the left. It's like giving the car a nudge to pivot in the middle of a turn, then plant hard on the way out for quick acceleration. On dirt ovals that start grippy but get slick as the race goes on, this split makes your car adapt without constant adjustments. Too much caster, though, makes steering feel heavy, like pushing a shopping cart with locked wheels. Too little, and the car feels loose and scary, especially for beginners.

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"...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us..." Hebrews 12:1



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Dirt Empire Magazine is honored to have the photographic talents of the individuals below in this issue. If you see something you love, contact the photographer direct to inquire about purchasing prints or posters licensing for use.

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It's easy to see the camber adjustment to the right front tire on this Razor Chassis mod that is getting ready for a wind tunnel test.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 86

You adjust caster with metal slugs (like thick washers) or slots in the arms. Use a tool called a caster-camber gauge and turn the wheels a bit left and right to measure. It's like fine-tuning a guitar string—not too tight, not too slack.

EASY STARTING SETTINGS FOR NEW RACERS

Jumping into modified racing for the first time? Don't stress over fancy math. Start simple on a standard dirt oval, say 1/4 to 3/8 mile long. Always set things with the car at normal height, tires pumped to race pressure, on flat ground. A cheap alignment kit helps, or pay a shop for a pro check.

Camber for Beginners: Try +3 degrees on the left front (tilting out a little) and -3.5 to -4 degrees on the right front (tilting in). This is a safe spot for most tracks. The positive left keeps the inside tire down on entry, while the negative right grabs dirt in the turn. If the track's slick, go to -4.5 on the right for more bite, but watch tire heat—use a pyrometer (heat temperature gun) to check even temps across the tread. Pushing too wide on corner entry? Add 0.5 degrees more negative on the right. Is the car loose and wants to spinout? Ease it back. Aim for camber that changes just 1 degree when the suspension bounces—that keeps handling predictable.

Caster for Beginners: Go +2 to +3

degrees on the left front and +4 to +5 on the right, for a 2-degree split. This setup feels stable on straights and helps the car turn without surprises. Newbies, try a bigger split like +1 left and +4-5 right to make it more forgiving—if it gets loose, it'll straighten easier, cutting spin chances. Rough track? Drop to +0.5 left and +2 right for bump control. Smooth, big turns? Crank it up for better steering feel.

Pair these with zero toe (wheels straight) to save speed on straights. Add a tiny 1/16-inch toe-out if you want quicker turns.

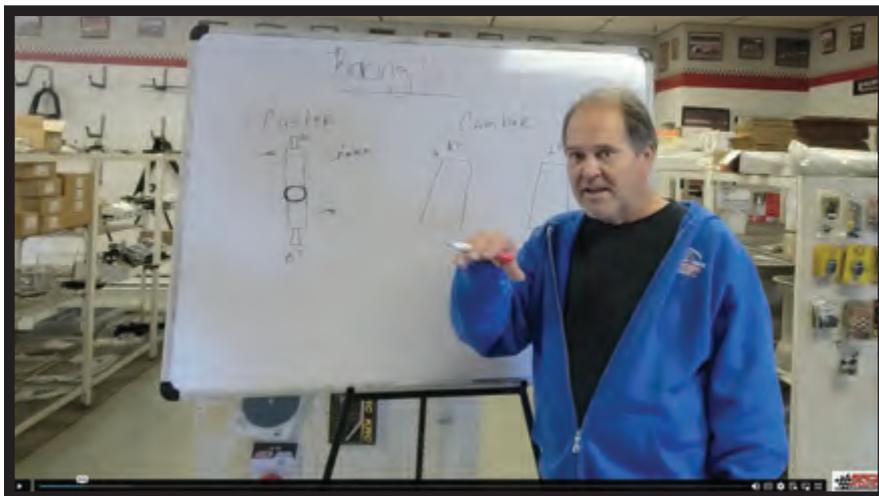
BOOSTING GRIP AND PERFORMANCE STEP BY STEP

These angles don't work alone—they team up. Negative right camber plus positive caster means more tilt gain in turns, like auto-adjusting for max rubber on dirt. That equals killer corner grip, faster laps, and less sliding. On a tacky (sticky) track, test your setup: if it hooks great but loosens later, try softer rear springs or bigger rear tires (stagger) before messing with fronts. Change one thing at a time, note lap times, and feel the difference.

Want more tips? Practice in slow laps first. Feel the car "wedge" (rear sticks, front slides) or "de-wedge" (front bites, rear loose)? Tweak caster split to balance. On banked tracks, less camber might work; flat ones need more. Tire pressure matters too—lower for grip, higher for speed. Especially in cooler climates or during early spring or fall racing, warm the tires properly before hot laps.

Safety first: Bad settings can make your car snap sideways fast. Talk to chassis experts like the folks at RaceKnowHow.com for specific recommendations and make sure to consult the rule book for your track or sanctioning body. Read the rules, know the rules. Remember, consistent setups beat wild experiments.

In the end, camber and caster turn your modified from a wild ride into a corner-carving beast. Start with a basic setting, build from there with track tests and driver feedback. Winning in racing is about learning — tweak smart, stay safe, and chase that checkered flag. Sometimes simple changes make a huge difference and can land you in victory lane. ■



Visit raceknowhow.com for helpful videos for tech tips in modified and late model race car setup as well as driver techniques and other racing-related topics.

REAL RACER PRODUCT REVIEW

BY
SPRINT CAR DRIVER
KELBY WATT

MY FIRST IMPRESSION upon unboxing the NecksGen Rev X Carbon was wow, this thing is light! And that reaction remained the same once I put it on. This is easily the most comfortable head restraint device I've ever worn. The carbon structure makes the Rev X Carbon feel like a feather wrapped around you, and the way it rests on the shoulders and upper back is especially comfortable.

One standout feature of the RevX Carbon is the "X"-style back brace that supports both the shoulders and upper back. With other restraint devices I have not been a fan of back supports—they often caused discomfort during longer races. The RevX Carbon, however, provides excellent support for my back and upper shoulders while staying clear of the spine, resulting in both stability and comfort.

I was initially concerned about the device's ability to remain secure in the racecar, as my prior head restraints used belt loops. However, once I tightened my shoulder belts over the guides, the device felt very stable across my chest and shoulders. The wide 3" belt guides are easy to work with, and the broader shoulder

NECKSGEN REVX CARBON

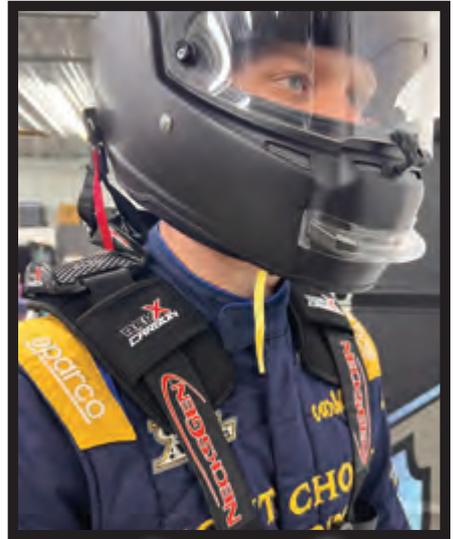
AHEAD IN NECK PROTECTION

structure adds significant stability—giving a strong sense of security.

At first, the device was set tighter than I preferred, so adjustments were necessary. I was unsure of the process and referred to the NecksGen website for instructions. I found that a simple screw on either side of the rear of the device can be loosened with an Allen key to adjust tether length. A small label or indicator near this screw would make the adjustment process more intuitive. The tethers adjust by sliding the screw into different slots, which must be set symmetrically. These slots are available in one-inch increments. While this system works well, I personally would prefer a finer adjustment option, as I am particular about my head placement while driving.

Overall, I am very impressed with the NecksGen RevX Carbon, and I believe it has the potential to become a leading product in the head restraint market. It is exceptionally light, to the point that it feels almost nonexistent when walking around. In the racecar, the new "X" strap design and wide 3" belt grooves deliver excellent stability. Aside from my preference for more precise tether adjustments, nearly every aspect of this restraint feels well executed—making it an outstanding option for drivers competing at the semi-professional to professional level.

For pricing and more info, visit:
necksgen.com/products/rev-x-carbon ■



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