



The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club

Pit Report

April, 2012

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Hearing from Our Home Track!

April 4—Our April meeting featured a visit from Citrus County Speedway (CCS) Owner/Promoter Mike Reed. As most of you know, CCS is generally considered our "home asphalt track," a mere 26.5 miles from our usual starting point at Laurel Manor Rec Center. In its 57th year of operation, CCS has provided great weekly racing for a wide variety of classes, from an entry-level class ("Hornets") to Super Late Models, at a well-maintained 3/8th mile oval. Our club has made many trips over there in the past six years, and many of you will recall our October, 2007 sponsorship deal with Steve Griffin.



Mike opened his comments with a brief history of CCS, and itemized the ten weekly classes they currently run in their Saturday night shows. He welcomed our group's support of the track, and stressed one of CCS's more attractive attributes...the need to honor Citrus County's 11:00 pm sporting event curfew. "At 11:00, we're done racing no matter what," he jokingly noted. "and you're on your way home!" (Based on some of our past experiences at other tracks, it's clear that we welcome this rule.)



L-to-R: Wendy Touchette, Glen Carter, Don Cretty (CCS GM), Mike Reed, John Chance (CCS driver and former flagman), Silky Meegan, Gerry Hafer.

A significant portion of Mike's discussion dealt with the state of short track racing in Florida and it's current trend of decline. At all tracks, he noted, car counts and fan attendance are both down, although CCS has exceeded the average car counts for all Late Model races so far this year. The key, he stressed, is to recognize that tracks are in the entertainment business, and that taking care of the fans is the most critical aspect of managing successfully. Of nearly equal importance, Mike observed, is the need to help the drivers manage their costs. The combination of these two driving forces has been the focus of CCS, and the results have been positive compared to competing facilities in Central Florida.

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Mike closed with an invitation to visit CCS, including the three FUPS series races to be held in 2012.

Update on “Our Car” (New Dixie Racing No. 92)

April 10—One thing’s for certain...the world of motorsports is a world of constant change! Add to that the unpredictability that makes racing sometimes seem like an “anything goes” sport, and you have a recipe for the never-ending variety that we’ve all come to expect. So, with that being said, it probably won’t be much of a surprise to you that “our car” is no longer our car!

Dick Anderson reports that ownership of the No. 92 New Dixie Racing Super Late Model has been sold to Duke Racing, Cooper City, Florida (Miami area). The car will be driven by 18 year old TJ Duke (pictured at right), a veteran World Karting Association, Advance Auto Parts Fast Truck Series, Florida Pro Trucks, NASCAR Nationwide, and NASCAR Camping World Truck Series competitor. Dick describes Duke as “the real deal,” and is optimistic that the car will continue to be a regular fixture in winner’s circles around the state.

A group of us had an opportunity to watch TJ in action April 14 at Citrus County Speedway, and we were not disappointed! Starting on the pole in the feature, TJ led flag-to-flag over a line-up of CCS standouts, including Herb Neumann Jr., Scott Grossenbacher, and Randy Anderson, giving the field a good, long look at our club logo on the rear of the car. With Wayne Anderson calling the shots as TJ’s crew chief, it was an all-Anderson show as TJ and Randy ran 1-2 for 34 of the 35 laps, with Randy losing the runner-up spot to Grossenbacher at the line at the finish. Grossenbacher and Randy collided coming to the flag, with Grossenbacher’s number 09 going airborne to cross inches ahead of Randy, who made a great save narrowly missing the first turn wall.

But has Dick Anderson retired from racing, you ask? Definitely not! He’s busily re-building a car he received in trade as part of the No. 92 deal, with a goal of returning to the track by mid-year. In fact, he’s hinted repeatedly that he may get behind the wheel himself to help establish his “new” car’s pedigree. Many of you may recall his most recent stint behind the wheel, when in 2010 he donned the fire suit and competed six times, winning four. We’ll keep you posted on his progress as the season unfolds.



Above—this is what the rest of the field had to look for the entire feature at CCS. (Left—our club contingent in the grandstands: from left—Gerry Hafer, Jim Boyd, Mike Roemer, John Angiolo, Jerry Conkle, Glen Carter, Jake Loux (partially hidden), and Buster Burt (almost smiling), Missing from photo: Bill Kennedy (who took the picture), Gerry and Gary Greim.

Chef Peter Turns in a Winning Performance at Cook-out!

April 4 – Proving that there is no bottom to the depth of talent in our group, Board Member Peter Tetrault and an able group of club volunteers joined forces before our April 4 meeting to provide an excellent serving of hot dogs and hamburgers for members and guests, compliments of the club. Peter and his “kitchen staff” proved up to the challenge, serving an estimated 50 eager diners at the Colony Cottage picnic area. The byob event generated a substantial amount of enthusiasm, and served as a great warm-up for the meeting. Special guests Mike Reed, Don Cretty, and John Chance arrived in time to join in the festivities, getting a first-hand look at the club in action, eating what many likened to “track food” served up at the race tracks we frequent. Below are some photos of the cookout in progress, compliments of Wendy Touchette.



2012 Prediction Row Segment 1 Heating Up

March 26– The action continues hot and heavy through the first eight races of the season, with our panel of six experts in segment one systematically displaying their forecasting prowess. So far the group has recorded four winning predictions out of a possible 48, for a winning percentage of 8.33%. In addition to that, they've achieved podium (top 3) finishing predictions 27% of the time (13 out of the 48). Top fives and top tens continue to be respectable at 35% and 54%, respectively.

Overall, the group maintains a solid average finishing position score of 11.56 (meaning that, on average, their picks finished better than 12th out of the 43 starters). For starting positions, they fared similarly...their average starting position was outside row six.

While the group's overall performance has been quite commendable, the standout prognosticator continues to be Jerry Conkle, who currently sits at the top of the leader board with a score of 301. Runner-up honors

go to Gary Civiletti, who's coming on fast in the later stages, cutting 17 points off of Conkle's lead in the past two races. The third and final transfer spot is being hotly contested by Fred Coenen and Jim Carter (only seven points separate them after eight races), while Bob Giles and Wendy Touchette continue to duke it out for the cellar.

Segment one ends with the June 3 race at Dover, at which point the top three will take a 13-race break while the second group competes. Stay tuned!

Bodine Family Honored at Watkins Glen

April 5—Watkins Glen International did it the right way...they asked the fans. After re-constructing five new grandstands at International Speedway Corporation's 60+ year old racing facility at the tip of Lake Seneca in New York's Finger Lakes Region, the track's management turned to its fan base to offer suggestions for naming the stands. Hundreds of suggestions poured into the track, indicating that there is indeed a high degree of race-fan affinity for the venerable facility. While the selected names were reflective of various aspects of the track's history, what is most meaningful to our group here in The Villages is that the Bodine family has received the honor of having their name affixed to what was formerly known as the Green Grandstand. Their selection recognizes the regional accomplishments of the three racing Bodine Brothers, who to-date have competed in 40 events there, driving a combined total of 3801 laps on the road course. Geoff Bodine, a soon-to-be-member of our club's Hall of Fame, logged his 18th and final (again, to-date) Cup win in the 1996 Bud at The Glen, while younger brother Todd launched his NASCAR Sprint Cup career in the 1992 Bud at The Glen. Middle brother Brett, now NASCAR's regular pace car driver, also competed many times at the Glen during his 18-year NASCAR career. *(By the way, Wendy, Tony Stewart has the most NASCAR wins at The Glen [5], as well as the best finishing average [7.1]...at least through the 2011 season.)*



Watkins Glen International's newly constructed grandstands (photo source: <http://www.theglen.com/>)

2012 Scholarship Awarded to Fruitland Park Student

April 24—Our club's Board of Directors approved the recommendation of its sub-committee on scholarships to name Sean Hensley of Fruitland Park as our honoree for 2012. Plans are to award the \$500 College Book/Tuition scholarship to Sean at our June 6 meeting.

The 18 year-old Hensley is the brother of 2010 scholarship recipient Scott Hensley, and has been accepted for a Fall, 2012 enrollment at Stetson University in Deland, Florida. His academic credentials are impressive, with a 4.49 GPA in the Honors program at Wildwood Middle High School.

Sean plans to major in Sports Management at Stetson, with a career objective of working as "behind-the-scenes" organizer of sporting events at all levels. With racing in his blood (his dad raced at Asheville Motor Speedway), there's a high probability that we'll see him at a future event!

May Meeting Preview



Mark DiOrio, Daily Sun

Our May 2 meeting promises to continue our streak of fascinating speakers, with Villages resident Denise Sullivan joining us to recount her fascinating career as a well-respected equestrian competitor. This Maryland native will share her experiences as a horse racing jockey at many of the country's most significant venues, as well as her affiliation with some of the best-known trainers in the sport. In addition to describing her uphill battle to gain respect in the male-dominated sport, Denise will provide a bit of a tutorial on the details of track layout and horse racing terminology. She'll also talk about her current efforts to come up to speed in arena polo (and a recently experienced minor setback). This will be another great night for the club. After all, horsepower is horsepower, and racing is racing!

Welcome, New Members

At our March meeting, we added three more racing enthusiasts to our group! Be sure to greet them next time you see them and strike up a conversation about their interest in the wide world of motorsports!



Teresa and Jeff Kelly, from ***The World Center of Speed***...Dawsonville, Georgia! Many of you, of course, know that a certain red-headed NASCAR legend hails from the Dawsonville metropolitan area. Just saying.



David Leedke, from The Village of Alhambra. After our March meeting, of course, David needs no introduction...he's the father of Diana Hubbard, the ESPN personality who delighted us at our March 7 meeting!

As Membership Co-Chair Bob Sherman reported at our April 4 meeting, our roster now includes well over 200 members; however, anyone not paying their 2012 dues (\$10) by April 30 will be dropped from the rolls, so we'll have a more realistic membership count in May. If you haven't renewed at this point, and you wish to do so, give Bob a call at 751-1771 so that you don't miss out on important club announcements, meeting previews, and (of course) this fascinating monthly newsletter!

Local Racing Corner

Track	Location	Telephone	Website URL
Original Speedway Park	Fruitland Park	352-348-4336	originalspeedwaypark.com
Citrus County Speedway	Inverness	352-726-9339	citruscountyspeedway.com
Bubba Raceway Park	Ocala (Zuber)	352-622-9400	bubbaracewaypark.com
Volusia Raceway Park	Barberville	386-985-4402	volusiaspeedwaypark.com
New Smyrna Speedway	Samsula	386-427-4129	newsmyrnaspeedway.org
Orlando Speedworld	Bithlo	407-568-1367	orlandospeedworld.org
East Bay Raceway Park	Tampa (Gibson)	813-677-7223	eastbayracewaypark.com
Marion County Speedway	Ocala	352-812-3922	ocalamicrospeedway.com
Auburndale Speedway	Winter Haven	863-551-1131	auburndaleracing.com
Punta Gorda Speedway	Punta Gorda	941-575-7223	puntagordaspeedway.com
Desoto Super Speedway	Bradenton	941-748-3171	desotosuperspeedway.com

Special Events Roundup



I know it's hard to believe, but we're soon coming up on mid-year, and there's a lot of racing going on. In addition to NASCAR, we have access to some great racing venues within comfortable driving distance from The Villages. Speedway Park, for example, provides twice-a-month great kart racing just about a mile east of Colony Cottage, and Citrus County Speedway (26 miles west of Laurel Manor) has one of the most consistently great asphalt racing in Central Florida. With Bubba Raceway Park just to our north, and Volusia Raceway Park and New Smyrna Speedway to the east of us, there's no shortage of places to go!

Some of the events and activities on tap for May and beyond are shown below. As always, though, we'd love to hear your suggestions for trips and events..., just give me a call!

Wendy

Date/Event	Event Details
Saturday, April 28 R/C Racing	Our radio-controlled racers will be in action on the side parking lot at Colony Cottage, from 9:00 am to noon. Come out and watch (or join in) the fun!
Wednesday, May 2 Regular Club Meeting	Our May meeting will feature Villages resident Denise Sullivan, a former jockey of note. Denise will discuss her career in the equestrian sports. (As we've said repeatedly, "racing is racing, and horsepower is horsepower!")
May 3, 2012 Saddlebrook Golf Course	Nighttime Golf Scramble at Saddlebrook Executive Golf Course (Reservations are closed)
Wednesday, May 9 R/C Racing	Our radio-controlled racers will be in action on the side parking lot at Colony Cottage, from 9:00 am to noon. Come out and watch (or join in) the fun!
Saturday, May 26 R/C Racing	Our radio-controlled racers will be in action on the side parking lot at Colony Cottage, from 9:00 am to noon. Come out and watch (or join in) the fun!
Wednesday, June 13 R/C Racing	Our radio-controlled racers will be in action on the side parking lot at Colony Cottage, from 9:00 am to noon. Come out and watch (or join in) the fun!
Saturday, June 23 R/C Racing	Our radio-controlled racers will be in action on the side parking lot at Colony Cottage, from 9:00 am to noon. Come out and watch (or join in) the fun!
Saturday, July 7 Coke Zero 400 at Daytona	See website homepage for details and downloadable flyer
Friday, July 13 Camp Villages R/C Racing Event	Our club will again be hosting this event at La Hacienda Rec Center. Don Day is coordinating for us, and will need volunteers to staff the crew. Call him at 508-954-8752 to sign up. Time is 8:00 am to noon.

Your Pit Crew

Gerry Hafer, President (751-3643)
 Mike Touchette, Vice President (430-0239)
 Silky Meegan, Corresponding Secretary (259-2029)
 Gerry Greim, Recording Secretary (215-630-1402)
 Tom Horrmann, Treasurer/Official Photographer (430-0195)
 Wendy Touchette, Special Events (430-0239)
 Bob & Camille Sherman, Membership (751-1771)
 Dave Bockman, Member at Large (751-0381)
 Wayne Nolan, Member at Large (750-9082)
 Buster Burt, Technical Consultant (751-4346)
 Jerry Conkle, Technical Consultant (750-1185)
 Peter Tetrault, Member at Large (205-8503)
 Glen Carter, Immediate Past President (751-6442)
 Ed and Janet Ott, Hospitality Coordinators (753-6872)

Something to Consider

Several people have forwarded a quote found on a race fan's Facebook page. While reading it, I thought about Buster, Buddy, Dick, Wayne, Randy, Buzzie, Chuck, Willy, Steve, Matt, Dave, Eric, Austin, Daniel, Nic, George, Mickey, Sam, Marvin, Billy, Carol, Eileen, and Geoff—our Hall of Fame members who have personally experienced exactly what this set of words explains. After reading it, I felt it should be given a spot in our newsletter...enjoy!

Racing is something that most people will never understand. It's not just a sport or something to do on Saturday night and Sunday. It's a way of life!! Once your in it, it's in your blood. Once you make your first run... you can't stop. The track is home away from home. You smell that race fuel, rubber, and when you hear those engines scream.... it's music to your ears. Also the love of the racing family!! Re-post this if you love racing!!

Help Wanted

Here are some areas where we need volunteers:

- July 13 Camp Villages R/C Event (call Don Day at 508-954-8752)
- Focus group to review design of new club website (call Gerry at 751-3643)

Conkle's Corner...

You need to take a trip with us to a race, or join us for breakfast at Bob Evans on a Thursday morning, just to hear firsthand the wit and wisdom of our on-staff historian and purveyor of comic relief, Jerry Conkle. Whether it's the content or the style of delivery, he keeps you chuckling.



Here's Jerry's contribution for this month:

- The Indy 500 is coming up soon, so here's a little known fact: 1992 was the only time two four time winners ever started on the front row. They were Rick Mears, and A. J. Foyt.
- When I was young, I had a Buddy, whose Dad had a funeral home, sometimes he got the hearse, and we would double date and their would be five of us. If I didn't have a date he would dig one up.
- The room was full of pregnant women with their husbands. The instructor said, "Ladies, remember that exercise is good for you. Walking is especially beneficial. It strengthens the pelvic muscles and will make delivery that much easier. Just pace yourself, make plenty of stops, and stay on a soft surface like grass or a path." After a short pause, the instructor continued, Gentlemen, remember -- you're in this together. It wouldn't hurt you to go walking with her. In fact, the shared experience would be good for you both." The room suddenly became very quiet as the men absorbed this information. After a few moments a man at the back of the room slowly raised his hand. "Yes?" said the Instructor. "I was just wondering. Would it be all right if she carries a golf bag while we walk?" *Brings a tear to your eye, doesn't it? This kind of sensitivity just can't be taught.*
- I went to a bookstore and asked the salesclerk, "Where's the self-help section?" The clerk responded, "If I told you, it would defeat the purpose.?"
- If you try to fail and you succeed, which have you actually done?
- If someone with multiple personalities threatens to kill himself, is it considered a hostage situation?
- The reason Santa Claus is so jolly is that he knows where all the bad girls live.
- If the police arrest a mime, do they advise him of his right to keep silent?

Important Announcement!!!

The May 2 meeting will be the last night for cell phone collections for the **"Help Them Call Home Project."**