

## September 10, 2005 Chateau Raceway End of Season Report & Tidbits by Matthew Grage

The final totals are in for the recently concluded 2005 Racing Season at Chateau Raceway in Lansing. 193 Drivers took part in 383 events in the tracks five regular classes over the 21 week season. Of those 193 drivers, 84 of them picked up at least one win over the course of the season, a winning average of about 44 percent. When you add in the drivers who competed in the Northern Vintage Spring Nationals as well as the other special events such as the Powder Puff and Mechanics races 332 drivers competed in 433 events with 123 of those getting at least one checkered flag over the summer. That puts the winning average at around 28 percent.

The class with the most participants was the WISSOTA Midwest Modified Class where 62 drivers took part in at least one show over the season. They also accounted for the most races run by any class with 128 heats, consys and features. The class also had the most different drivers to score at least one win with 31, a winning percentage of exactly 50 percent.

Leading the Track in total wins with 25 was the 2005 Open Modified Track Champion Todd Scharkey of Kasson. Todd also had the most feature wins with 12, one more than the WISSOTA Street Stock Champion Jamie Johnson of Austin. Johnson did however have the longest streak of consecutive weeks with the feature win as he scored the final seven of the season in his class. Scharkey though had the longest streak of consecutive wins including heats and features. Starting on weekend number 4 Todd completed a heat-feature sweep for 5 consecutive weeks giving him 10 straight trips to victory lane. Jamie and Todd were also two of four drivers that won Championships who were second generation drivers at the track. The other second generation drivers to take home titles were Classic Dwarf Driver Drew Jech and WISSOTA Midwest Modified Driver Greg Pfeifer JR both of Austin. The fifth track Champion was Dave Stevens of Albert Lea who took the Chateau Pure Stock Title. It was the first career Championships for all five drivers.

A new track speed record was set during the course of the 2005 season as Tommy Myer of Blooming Prairie turned a fast lap of 15.952 seconds on August 12th to break Todd Scharkeys mark. Todd had reset the record several times over the last two seasons most recently back in the spring but Tommy went to the top of the all time speed chart with his time. Myers average speed for the lap on the three-tenths mile oval was 75.225 miles an hour. Two other individual class speed records also fell during the year. In Chateau Pure Stocks Greg Mattick of Austin lowered the track record for that class to 18.962 seconds on July 29th. That would be an average speed of 63.30 miles per hour for that startup class. And Jamie Johnson in the WISSOTA Street Stock class became the first driver to turn a lap under 18 seconds in that class when he went 17.934 on August 12th. The average speed for that lap is 66.92 miles an hour.

It was a fairly good year for drivers keeping there cars on four wheels as just 8 drivers rolled there cars over the course of the year. A few of those rollovers were a bit scary. On opening night Adam Stowell of Rosemount had has WISSOTA Midwest Modified destroyed when he went sideways in the middle of the pack at the start of the classes feature race. The car rolled sideways and end to end with the tail end of the car from the axle back being torn lose from the car. Track Owner Wally Bustad of Austin totaled his first car of the season on weekend six when his throttle hung out of turn two sending him cart wheeling down the back stretch. And on the final night of the season Melvin Schoenrock of Eyota who had just purchased his Classic Dwarf car that week flipped wildly off turn 1 in his first feature. All three walked away. Mother Nature also did her part in keeping the action coming all season with just one rainout back in Mid-May. There were a few other Fridays where it rained into the afternoon but Track Officials did there best to get every show in.

Chateau Raceway said goodbye to some Old Friends during the course of the season. At the season opener it was announced that former Chateau Pure Stock Champion Dan Gasner of Medford had passed away in March after a short battle with cancer, he was just 38. In July the track lost three members of its racing family. The month started out with the announcement that one of the original drivers at the track when it opened in 1956, Floyd Matter of Lyle, passed away at age 82. That was followed by the passing of another former driver Tim Sauer of Austin who raced in the Street Stock class in the 90's. The month ended with the loss of Dolores Wytaske of Mapleview who passed away at age 72 after a battle with cancer. She was a former track employee and official scorer as well as a fixture in the stands over the years watching among others her husband race, two sons, a son in law, a grandson, four nephews, a grand niece, and two brothers in law.

One of the biggest highlights of the year was the Memorial Day weekend shows. Three days of racing starting with the "8th Annual Mike Guttormson Memorial" on that Friday night that was captured for the fifth time by Todd Scharkey, right through that Saturday and Sunday afternoon with the "1st Annual Vintage Spring Nationals". 78 old Coupes, Super Modifieds, Midgets, Sprints, and Hobby Stock cars, all 1972 or older filled the pits over the weekend for a nostalgic weekend of racing. The group opened the Grandstand to free admission for the two days of racing and put on some very exciting action. The calendar has already been marked for next year for the "2nd Annual Vintage Spring Nationals" the Saturday and Sunday afternoon of Memorial Day weekend to do it all again. Every year one of the biggest shows of the season is the 4th of July Weekend as Chateau Raceway brings in the "Flashing Thunder" Fireworks show to put on a spectacular show for the crowd. This year they even brought them back a second time for the season finale on Labor Day weekend. With the Fireworks being shot up right behind turn number two you can't get a better view of the show. And than with the finale of the big 40 foot plus high ball of flame that goes up in the middle of the infield you can almost feel the heat.

Next Season will Mark the 50th anniversary of full time racing at Chateau. The track which was built over the course of 1955 and early 1956 opened for its first full season of racing action on June 30th 1956 with Howard Smith the Owner/Promoter. The anniversary season will kick off with the annual Car show at Austin's Oak Park Mall next March followed by what should be another exciting year of racing starting as soon as old man winter moves out and allows it. The track is traditionally one of the first to get the racing season started.