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# Jefferson Speedway gears up for another fun-filled summer of events, races

By Beckett Callan Special to Conley Media

CAMBRIDGE - A new vear means a new racing season at Jefferson Speedway on Highway 18 just outside Cambridge. Jefferson Speedway has come a long way since it opened as a quarter-mile dirt track in 1952. When it first opened, cornfields lined the side of the track. It has seen its fair share of upgrades since those days, and this season brings another one.

Turns 1 and 2 have been repaved, allowing for an even cleaner racing surface for this season. There will be plenty of events this year to break in the recentlypaved turns, including four Tournaments of Destruction, Slide Society and a couple of visits from the Madison Sports Car Club.

The Tournaments of Destruction are one of the more unique and fun events at the track, and Jefferson Speedway owner and promoter Terry Tucker is excited for them to get going again.

"It's like all the fun stuff you wish you could have done with your car when no one was looking in a snowy parking lot," Tucker said. "Front wheel cars, vans and trucks get together on a soaped-up slippery race track."

The tournament has multiple events, such as "bump and run" and "spin to win."

"Spin to win' is interesting," Tucker said. "You have to do a 360degree spin on each straightaway during the

"There is also the gauntlet where you have one big car and a bunch of little cars that try to

2024 Season Schedule Jefferson Speedway **APRIL 13: ISS ENDURO** AP APRIL 20: PRACTICE/INSPECTIONDAY Ř APRIL 21: BANDOLERO/ROOKIE PRACTICE DAY APRIL 27 SEASON OPENER: LATE MODEL, SPORTSMAN, HOBBY STOCK, BANDIT, LEGEND MAY 4: LATE MODEL, HOBBY STOCK, INTERNATIONAL, BANDIT, BANDOLERO **MAY 5: SLIDE SOCIETY EVENT** MAY 11: LATE MODEL, SPORTSMAN, INTERNATIONAL, BANDOLERO, LEGEND 3 MAY 17: TRACK ATTACK MAY 18: LATE MODEL, SPORTSMAN, HOBBY STOCK, BANDIT, 6 SHOOTERS MAY 25: SALUTE THE TROOPS 100 ARCA MIDWEST TOUR, SPORTSMAN, HOBBY STOCK, BANDITS MAY 26 (SUNDAY 7PM): TOURNAMENT OF DESTRUCTION JUNE 1: LATE MODEL, HOBBY STOCK, INTERNATIONAL, BANDOLERO, LEGEND JUNE 2: SLIDE SOCIETY EVENT JUNE 8: LATE MODEL, SPORTSMAN, INTERNATIONAL BANDIT JUNE 14: TRACK ATTACK JUNE 15: LATE MODEL, SPORTSMAN, HOBBY STOCK, LEGEND, INTERNATIONALS JUNE 16: MADISON SPORTS CAR CLUB JUNE 22 KIDS NIGHT: SPORTSMAN, HOBBY STOCK, BANDIT, BANDOLERO, 6 SHOOTERS JUNE 29: LATE MODEL, HOBBY STOCK, INTERNATIONAL, BANDOLERO, LEGEND JULY 3: (WEDNESDAY 7PM) TOURNAMENT OF DESTRUCTION JULY 6: LATE MODEL, SPORTSMAN, BANDIT, BANDOLERO, LEGEND JULY 7: SLIDE SOCIETY EVENT JULY 13 STOCK STUB SPECIAL: SPORTSMAN, HOBBY STOCK, INTERNATIONAL, BANDIT, 6 SHOOTERS JUNE 19: TRACK ATTACK JULY 20 ORANGE BLOSSOM SPECIAL TWIN 61 LAP SUPER LATE MODEL EVENT: SUPER LATE MODEL, MIDWEST TRUCK SERIES, LEGEND JULY 27: LATE MODEL, HOBBY STOCK, INTERNATIONAL, BANDIT, LEGEND **AUGUST 3: SPECIAL EVENT TBD AUGUST 9: SLIDE SOCIETY EVENT** AUGUST 10: LATE MODEL, SPORTSMAN, BANDIT, BANDOLERO, LEGEND **AUGUST 13: TRACK ATTACK** AUGUST 17 BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT: LATE MODEL, SPORTSMAN, HOBBY STOCK, BANDOLERO, LEGEND

AUGUST 24: LATE MODEL, SPORTSMAN, INTERNATIONAL, BANDIT, 6 SHOOTERS AUGUST 31 SEASON CHAMPS ROUND 1: LATE MODEL, HOBBY STOCK, BANDIT, BANDOLERO, LEGEND SEPTEMBER 1: (SUNDAY 7PM): TOURNAMENT OF DESTRUCTION

INTERNATIONAL ш **SEPTEMBER 8: MADISON SPORTS CAR CLUB** <u>SEPTEMBER 19 WISCONSIN STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS (THURSDAY)</u>: PRACTICE FOR ALL DIVISIONS SEPTEMBER 20 WISCONSIN STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS (FRIDAY): П ⋜ LATE MODEL, SPORTSMAN, HOBBY STOCK, MIDWEST TRUCK SERIES SEPTEMBER 21 WISCONSIN STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS (SATURDAY): LATE MODEL, SPORTSMAN, HOBBY STOCKS SEPTEMBER 26 WISCONSIN STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS (THURSDAY): PRACTICE FOR ALL DIVISIONS SEPTEMBER 27 WISCONSIN STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS (FRIDAY): INTERNATIONALS, BANDITS, LEGENDS, BANDOLEROS, 6 SHOOTERS SEPTEMBER 28 WISCONSIN STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS (SATURDAY): INTERNATIONALS, BANDITS, LEGENDS, BANDOLEROS, 6 SHOOTERS

SEPTEMBER 7 SEASON CHAMPS AND ALUMNI: LATE MODEL, SPORTSMAN, HOBBY STOCK,

**OCTOBER 6: MADISON SPORTS CAR CLUB OCTOBER 11-13: BLACKJACK BRACKETS OCTOBER 18: TRACK ATTACK** OCTOBER 19: (SATURDAY 1PM) TOURNAMENT OF DESTRUCTION HALLOWEEN EDITION

**SEPTEMBER 6: SLIDE SOCIETY EVENT** 

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# Jefferson Speedway continued



Submitted photo

Close racing action can sometimes go wrong. Three Late Models are in deep trouble during a race at Jefferson Speedway. No drivers were injured but the cars were extensively damaged.

beat the big car into submission so it can't finish the race. We will also have demolition derbies, and for the first time this year we will have motorcycle stunt exhibitions."

On May 25, Jefferson Speedway will host the ARCA Midwest Tour's Salute the Troops 100. Along with the race and other Memorial Day festivities, there will be a special promotion for veterans.

"The ARCA Midwest Tour brings the most expensive and fastest stock cars in the Midwest," Tucker said. "They have a 100-lap race, and the racing is extraordinarily good. It's one of our premier shows of the year."

Other highlights of the racing schedule include Kids Night on June 22, The Orange Blossom Special Super Late Event on July 20 and Back to School Night on August 17.

The Orange Blossom Event honors one of Jefferson Speedway's most (The storied racers, Jerry Eckhardt. Eckhardt has been a staple at the racetrack for over 50 years and still competes on Saturdays. (The every every every every action of the stories of the sto

"Jefferson Speedway has been privileged to have had him race here. He's been racing here since 1968," Tucker said. "Because of his longevity and prowess, we are having a race event in his honor. His car number is 61. so we are running two 61-lap late-model feature races. We are also having Midwest trucks who are running a 61-lap race. It's all meant to say 'thanks for the good times."

The climax of the racing season at Jefferson Speedway is the Wisconsin State Championships, but this year there is a bit of a change to proceedings. For the first time, The Championships have been split up into two weekends, Sept. 20-21 and Sept. 27-18.

"We have held them

(The Championships) every year since 1981," Tucker said. "The event has grown so large that we cannot race all of the cars in one weekend. We expect between 200-300 cars to compete, and last year we had 250. By splitting it into two weekends we are going to make life easier for everyone involved."

The final event of the season will be the Black-jack Brackets. The event is held Oct. 11-13.

"We invite every type of car that exists and split them up into different brackets based on speed," Tucker said. "It's very similar to what they do in drag racing."

There will be a lot going on at Jefferson Speedway this season, and it aims to be another historic year at this historic racetrack.



# IndyCar returning to Milwaukee Mile for first time in nearly a decade

By Rob Reischel Special to Conley Media

WEST ALLIS — The wait is almost over.

For the first time since 2015, IndyCar will return to the Milwaukee Mile — the 1-mile oval track at State Fair Park in West Allis — on Labor Day weekend. The first Milwaukee Mile race is Aug. 31 at 6 p.m., and the second is Sept. 1 at 2:30 p.m.

On-track activities will be held on Aug. 30, followed by IndyCar races the next two days.

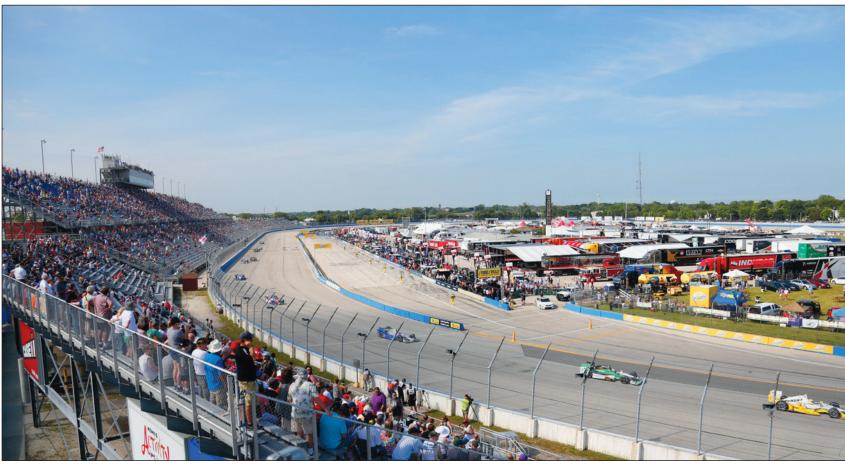
"There has been so much excitement for the return of IndyCar to the Milwaukee Mile," Shari Black, the CEO and Executive Director of Wisconsin State Fair Park said. "We can't wait to deliver an incredible experience for our fans on Labor Day weekend."

The Milwaukee Mile will be the 15th and 16th rounds of the 17-race 2024 season schedule. That means the races should loom large in this season's IndyCar championship battle.

In addition to Indy-Car, the rising stars of racing will also compete at the Milwaukee Mile during the Aug. 30-Sept. 1 weekend.

Roger Penske, chairman of Penske Corporation and owner of both IndyCar and Indianapolis Motor Speedway, was imperative in getting the series back to the Milwaukee Mile. And Penske is optimistic about IndyCar's return to the Milwaukee Mile.

"There is such a great tradition and history of IndyCar racing at the Milwaukee Mile, and we are excited to build on that legacy," Penske said. "We appreciate all the loyal and passionate



AP photo

Fans watch the IndyCar Series race at the Milwaukee Mile in West Allis in a past race.

IndyCar fans in Milwaukee and across the state of Wisconsin, and thanks to our partnership with the Wisconsin State Fair Park, we can't wait to return to the Mile."

For several years, this event was held in early June — just one week after the Indy 500.

The track began struggling mightily with attendance, though, and stopped holding events altogether in 2010 amid financial turmoil. They returned in 2011, then were left off IndyCar's original 2012 schedule before becoming a late addition that year with the help of Michael Andretti.

Andretti promoted the race from 2012-15, but eventually his presence couldn't help fix sagging



Racers take the green flag at the start of the IndyCar Series race at the Milwaukee Mile in West Allis in a previous

## Jefferson Speedway continued

attendance numbers and the series was stopped in Milwaukee. Wisconsin so racing fans, as well as our employees and customers, can

Penske Corp. excels, though, in the corporate sponsorship world, and in late February landed Hy-Vee as its primary sponsor. Hy-Vee includes stores in eight Midwestern states and is the primary sponsor for the highly popular Hy-Vee IndyCar Weekend at Iowa Speedway.

"With our in-store activations and events to promote Hy-Vee IndyCar Race Weekend in Iowa already in the works, adding our name to the Milwaukee Mile 250s weekend fits into our plans for the racing season," said Anna Stoermer, Chief Marketing Officer, and Executive Vice President at Hy-Vee. "We look forward to supporting this event in

Wisconsin so racing fans, as well as our employees and customers, can continue to be a part of the excitement of Indy-Car in 2024 and beyond."

The Milwaukee Mile was built as a privately owned horse track in 1876 and hosted its first automobile race in 1903. It's the oldest continuously-operating motor speedway in the world.

Many historic racing moments have taken place at the Milwaukee Mile, and auto racing icon A.J. Foyt competed in more races there than any other facility.

Those worried about the Mile eventually shutting down began a social media campaign on X (formerly Twitter), Facebook and Instagram, as well as the website savethemile.org.

Now, getting the Indy-

Car series back could be the jumpstart the oval track needed.

Black acknowledged that while getting the races back to Milwaukee is exciting for all parties, it's also a huge challenge.

"Of course it's daunting," Black said. "Certainly, it's a challenge. It's almost, well, it's similar to planning another fair, maybe not quite as big, but it's a big deal."

Once that challenge is met, though, it should be an exciting weekend for racing fans everywhere.

"Great track, the best kind of racing when you get a mile flat like this," Penske said. "It's just a great spot. The racing and the visibility, you know from the grand-stand, you see everything and that's what's key."

# **2024 INDYCAR SCHEDULE**

Car series back could be Sunday, March 10 - Streets of St. Petersburg, NBC, Peacock

Sunday, March 24 - The Thermal Club \$1 Million Challenge, NBC, Peacock

Sunday, April 21 - Streets of Long Beach, USA Network, Peacock

Sunday, April 28 - Barber Motorsports Park, NBC, Peacock

Saturday, May II - Indianapolis Motor Speedway (road course), NBC, Peacock

Saturday, May 18 - Indianapolis 500 Qualifying Day 1, NBC, Peacock

Sunday, May 19 - Indianapolis 500 Qualifying Day 2, NBC, Peacock

Sunday, May 26 - Indianapolis Motor Speedway (oval), NBC, Peacock

to planning another fair, Sunday, June 2 - Streets of Detroit, USA Network, Peacock

Sunday, June 9 - Road America, NBC, Peacock

Sunday, June 23 - WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca, USA Network, Peacock

Sunday, July 7 - Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, NBC, Peacock

Saturday, July 13 - Iowa Speedway Race I, NBC, Peacock

Sunday, July 14 - Iowa Speedway Race 2, NBC, Peacock

Sunday, July 21 - Streets of Toronto, Peacock

Saturday, Aug. 17 - World Wide Technology Raceway, USA Network, Peacock

Sunday, Aug. 25 - Portland International Raceway, USA Network, Peacock

Saturday, Aug. 31 - Milwaukee Mile Race 1, Peacock

Sunday, Sept. I - Milwaukee Mile Race 2, USA Network, Peacock

Sunday, Sept. 15 - Streets of Nashville, NBC, Peacock





# Historic Road America doesn't rest on its laurels

By Jim Hoehn Special to Conley Media

ELKHART LAKE — Well aware of its unique place in racing history, Road America manages to preserve its fabled traditions while continuously moving forward with innovations geared toward adding new fans to an already loyal audi-

"Founded in 1955, this is our 69th season," said John Ewert, communications director at Road America. "The tradition is incredible. There are people who have met their wives here, who have brought generations of families here, and we're talking two or three generations.

"And when you look changes at the lineage of racers, you don't really have to know a lot about racing, but the names such as Andretti, Unser, Penske, David Hobbs, Parnelli Jones. If you go down the book of greatest racers in history, they all cut their teeth here at Road America. So, when you think about a rich history, that's definitely Road America."

Among the marquee events slated at Road America include the SVRA Vintage Festival Weekend in mid-May, XPEL Grand Prix Pre-

June and the WeatherTech International Challenge with Brian Redman in mid-July.

However, the schedule also includes a wide range of events that caters to fans and participants across the racing spectrum, including sprint cars, vintage cars, motorcycles, go-karts and sunset cruises open to the public.

Although the 14-turn, 4.048-mile course is almost the same as originally conceived by Clif Tufte, the business and entertainment aspects of Road America have to keep pace in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

"The old joke was, it overnight," Ewart said. "Now, it changes minute by minute. And, we listen to our fans. We're very, very well-connected with our fans. And again, our fan base is generations of fans, so they understand this place.

"They understand what they don't want taken away from them, and they understand what they want put in," he said. "So, we listen really closely to the feedback. We have well over a thousand season pass holders, so we have season pass luncheons, we

sented by AMR in early have fan forums where we basically have an open mic. We listen to our shareholders. If they say, 'We love the jumbo screens, but could we have one here?' 'Or we love the campsites, is it possible to have electric and water?"

Ewart said they study how people like to get their information, whether it's print, digital or social media, and rely heavily on analytics. They also pay close attention to ticket prices with the hopes of providing affordable entertainment, he said.

"About seven or eight years ago we said, 'Hey, let's allow people 16 and under in free," he said. "People said, 'You guys are nuts.' The reason why we want 16 and under in free is eventually those people will be driving cars, and having kids, and hopefully bringing their kids to the track."

In addition to the racing events, Road America also offers 19 Motorplex Open Track Days, where the track is open to the public for karts and motorcycles; the sunset cruises where participants can make a low-speed, three-lap trip around the course in their own car; 4 Miles of Fitness, where people



Photo credit: Les Tension

Pictured are drivers competing in the 2022 Ariens Art on Wheels Vintage Weekend. The event returns on Sept. 13-15 this year at Road America in Elkhart Lake.

can bike, walk or run the course; as well as hiking trails throughout the 640arce site.

Information on the various on-site camping options are featured on the Road America website. There also are cabins available, as well as a five-bedroom chalet.

Another tradition that has continued over the years has been the appearance of celebrities, who are not there in the context of being famous. The late Paul Newman, who was a professional racer and team owner as well as an award-winning actor, was one of the visitors, as well as the likes of David Letterman, Tom

Cruise, Patrick Dempsey, Tim Allen and Michael Jordan.

"And sometimes there's not an entourage, either. It's fascinating," said Ewart, adding that the racing fans usually acknowledge the privacy the celebrities. "There's a level of appreciation and respect ... you'll hear the whispers and murmurs, but they don't approach the person. They realize the person is there to enjoy themselves, potentially there to compete."

Main events on the 2024 schedule include: SVRA Vintage Festival Weekend, May 17-19; Moto-America Superbikes & Vintage MotoFest, May 31-June 2; XPEL Grand Prix Presented by AMR, June 6-9; WeatherTech Chicago Region SCCA June Sprints, June 21-23; Trans Am SpeedTour, June 28-30; Weather Tech International Challenge with Brian Redman, July 11-14; GRIDLIFE - Summer Apex Music & Motorsports Festival, July 26-28; IMSA Sports-Car Weekend, Aug. 1-4; Fanatec GT World Challenge, Aug. 16-18; Ariens Art on Wheels Weekend Featuring VSCDA, Sept. 13-15; and the SCCA National Championship Runoffs, Oct. 4-6.

A complete schedule can be found at https:// www.roadamerica.com/ calendar.





# Summer at Slinger once again highlighted by Nationals

By Michael Grennell Special to Conley Media

year of racing at Slinger Speedway is already underway, but there's still a lot left to see this season.

The first race of the year came on April 21 with the Jerry "Bear" Priesgen Memorial, and the next event is scheduled for May 17 which will be Rookie Night. That will be the first of the remaining 22 events scheduled for the season, as the two Slamfest events and the wellknown Slinger National race look to highlight the schedule.

"The Slinger Nationals is arguably one of the top three marquee short track events in the country. It's a big deal," Slinger Speedway owner Todd Thielen said. "We expect all the same drivers that came last year. We don't pay these guys to come in, and it's not a touring deal, so it's hard to say at this point who's coming and who's committed. But we expect a very similar group as last year."

NASCAR Hall of Famer Matt Kenseth and NASCAR driver Chase Elliott both took part last

track race, which has also seen racing celebri-SLINGER — The 77th ties Kyle Busch, Lowell Bennett, Conrad Morgan and Dick Trickle, among others, compete in the annual event. The threeday event will kick off with the Prelude to the Nationals on July 7, followed by practice and kickoff party on July 8 before the main event on July 9.

After Rookie night, there will be two more events in May with the 7th Annual Keith's Marina Race Against Cancer Benefitting Chix4ACause on May 19 and the 32nd Annual EH Wolf Memorial Day race. Thielen noted that the Memorial Day event would be the first of three holiday events this year to include fireworks shows, along with Independence Day and Labor Day.

June will feature Graduation Celebration night (June 2) where all 2024 high school graduates will receive free admission with student ID. Johnson & Sons Paving Remembrance Night (June 9) where "Friends of Slinger Racing" who have died over the past year will be remembered, and PMF Landscape Supply 24th

year in the famed short- Annual Scout Night (June 16) where all uniformed scouts and their leaders receive free admission. The first Slamfest event of the year will be on June 21, with another event on June 23 before the Independence Day event will be held on June 30.

After the Nationals, there will be three more events that month with Small Car Nationals on July 14, Wolter Tech College Night on July 21 and Bike/Backpack/Body Panel Night for Kids on July 28. The 6th Annual Carl Wegner Memorial is slated to open up the following month on Aug. 4, and after another event on Aug. 11, the second Slamfest of the year will take place on Aug. 17.

The final stretch of the season will begin on Aug. 23 with the Rusty Wallace Racing Experience and is followed two days later by the Alan Kulwicki Memorial. which will also be Alumni Night at the track and feature the Wall of Fame Induction. The final race of the year will take place on Sept. 8, with Monster Truck Throwdown concluding the 2024 season at the Speedway on Sept. 14.



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