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Slinger Speedway enters new era with new ownership

By Michael Grennell
Special to Conley Media

SLINGER – As the 2025 schedule kicks off at Slinger Speedway, there are some changes going on at the track. But fans can still expect the fun-filled racing events they’ve come to expect at the Speedway.

This year marks the beginning of a new era at the track, as longtime Slinger Speedway owners Todd and Elizabeth Thelen sold the track to Travis and Kelsey Dassow - two veteran racers at the Speedway - back in early March.

The first race of the

year came on April 27 with the Jerry “Bear” Priesgen Memorial, and the next event is scheduled for May 15, 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 well-known Slinger National race look to highlight the schedule.

NASCAR Hall of Famer Matt Kenseth and NASCAR driver Chase Elliott have both participated in the famed short-track race in the past, which has also seen racing celebrities Kyle Busch, Lowell Bennett,

Conrad Morgan and Dick Trickle, among others, compete in the annual event. The three-day event will kick off with the Prelude to the Nationals on July 6, followed by practice and a kickoff party on July 7 before the main event on July 8.

After Rookie night, there will be two more events in May with the 8th Annual Keith’s Marina Race Against Cancer Benefitting Chix4ACause on May 18 and the 33rd Annual EH Wolf Memorial Day race. The Memorial Day event is the first of three holiday events this year to include fire-

works shows, along with Independence Day and Labor Day.

June will feature the Johnson & Sons Paving Remembrance Night (June 1), where “Friends of Slinger Racing” who have died over the past year will be remembered; Graduation Celebration night (June 8), where all 2025 high school graduates will receive free admission with student ID; and PMF Landscape Supply Father’s Day Tradition (June 15).

The first Slamfest event of the year will be on June 20, with Tech College Night at the

track on June 22 before the Independence Day event to be held on June 29.

After the Nationals, there will be three more events that month, with Small Car Nationals on July 13, HOG Night on July 20 and the 7th Annual Carl Wegner Memorial on July 27.

Bike/Backpack/Body Panel Night for Kids is slated to open up the following month on Aug. 3, and after the Fox Brothers Piggly Wiggly Memorial Go-Kart Tribute Night on Aug. 10, the second Slamfest of the year will take place on Aug. 16. The Speedway will

also be open on Aug. 23 as it will be part of the course for the Slinger Kiwanis Heads UP 5K Run/Walk through Slinger.

The final stretch of the season will begin on Aug. 24 with the Alan Kulwicki Memorial, which will also be Alumni Night at the track and feature the Wall of Fame Induction. That will be followed by the IBEW Local 494 Labor Day Celebration on Aug. 31, with the final race of the year taking place on Sept. 13.

The Monster Truck Throwdown will wrap up the 2025 season at the Speedway on Sept. 13.

Jefferson Speedway gears up for another action-packed season

By Beckett Callan
Conley Media

CAMBRIDGE – Jefferson Speedway is a unique race track. Sitting at only a quarter mile long, its short distance makes for action-packed races, derbies and other motor sports events.

As the Speedway readies for the 2025 season, track owner and promoter Terry Tucker is excited for what this year has to bring.

“It has long been known as Wisconsin’s Action Track,” Tucker said. “This moniker has been well earned over the years due to the track’s extraordinary ability to provide intense competition on a regular basis.”

After repaving turns one and two at the beginning of last season, the track is primed and ready as racers from all over bring their vehicles every Saturday to the small track just outside Cambridge.

The Late Model class typically gets top billing at the Speedway, and this

year is no different.

“The Late Model class is stacked with heavy hitters from top to bottom,” Tucker said. “Last year’s champion, Shaun Scheel from Lake Mills, will have his work cut out for him in his quest to repeat as champion.”

Tucker predicts that the Late Model class will again be highly competitive, and he believes there are several drivers who will be serious contenders to take home the 2025 championship, including Michael Gruenberg from the Wisconsin Dells.

“(He) came within a whisker of winning last year’s Late Model Championship,” Tucker said. “A couple of poor finishes relegated him to second place in 2024. He is determined to take home the 2025 championship trophy this year.”

One of the hometown heroes, Jason Erickson from Jefferson, is another driver Tucker believes has a shot at taking home the title.

“A multi-time track champion, (he) is charging again after another

championship season in 2025,” Tucker said. “Long known for his smooth and methodical approach to getting to the front of the field, Erickson looks to be a force to be reckoned with again in 2025.”

The Late Models class is just one of the seven classes fans can expect at Jefferson Speedway this summer. In addition to the Late Models, Sportsman, International, Hobby Stock, Bandit, Legends and Bandoleros will be back at the track this season. Tucker says trying to predict a champion in any of these classes would be a “monumental task.”

The first of the showpiece events of the 2025 season is the Salute the Troops 100 on May 24. Part of the ARCA Midwest Tour, the Salute the Troops 100 is one of the Speedway’s biggest and most attended events.

As the season rolls on, more special events will take up the calendar, like Kids Night on June 28, the Orange Blossom Special on July 19, Back to School Night on Aug. 9

and the Super Late Special on Aug. 16.

The postseason starts with back-to-back Season Champs weekends on Aug. 30 and Sept 6. The Wisconsin State Championships will again be a two-weekend event and have been held at Jefferson Speedway since 1981. Tucker expects between 200-300

cars to compete over the two weekends.

Rounding out the 2025 season is the Blackjack Brackets from Oct. 10-12. It is a unique event at the track as the Speedway invites every type of car and splits them up into different brackets. Tucker compared the Blackjack Brackets to drag racing.

The 2025 season aims to be another fast and furious campaign at Jefferson Speedway. Racers from all over will descend upon the small track just outside Cambridge, all with the hopes of walking away with a championship come season’s end.



Photo courtesy of Jefferson Speedway

Two of the top Sportsman racers, Mike Lambert (26) and John Ovadal (71), will be among a large field of competitors seeking the Sportsman Championship in 2025 at Jefferson Speedway.



SEASON SCHEDULE

2025



MAY 16-18

*Spring Vintage
Weekend
with SVRA*

MAY 30-JUNE 1

*MotoAmerica
Superbikes &
Vintage MotoFest*

JUNE 6-8

*WeatherTech
Chicago Region
SCCA June Sprints*

JUNE 19-22

*INDYCAR XPEL
Grand Prix
Presented by AMR*

JUNE 27-29

*Cheese Capital Cup
featuring Trans Am
SpeedTour*

JULY 17-20

*WeatherTech Vintage
Weekend with Brian
Redman*

JULY 25-27

*GRIDLIFE Summer
Apex Music &
Motorsports Festival*

JULY 31-AUGUST 3

*SportsCar Weekend
with IMSA*

AUGUST 15-17

*GT World Challenge
America*

SEPTEMBER 12-14

*Ariens Art on Wheels
Vintage Weekend
with VSCDA*

OCTOBER 3-5

*SCCA National
Championship
Runoffs*



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SUN JUL 13
RACERS' REUNION NIGHT



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MIDWEST LEGENDS DIRT SERIES

SUN JUL 27
SALUTE TO BRYAN GAPINSKI



BUMPER BUMPER IRA
BADGER

SUN AUG 10
KING OF THE PARK



BADGER
MCA
WWW.RACING
DIRT KINGS
WYAM

SUN AUG 17
CORN FEST RACING



ZIMBRICK Chevrolet
BUMPER BUMPER IRA
BADGER

SUN AUG 31
40TH FIREMEN'S NATIONALS



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With Indy back, Milwaukee Mile tries to build on momentum

By Rob Reischel
Special to Conley Media

The task was monumental, and went off about as well as anyone could have hoped.

Now, after last year's return of IndyCar to the Milwaukee Mile, organizers of the event are hoping to build on that momentum.

This year's race takes place Aug. 24 at 6 p.m. at the 1-mile short oval track at Wisconsin State Fair Park. On-track activities will be held on Aug. 23.

"Bringing IndyCar racing back to the Milwaukee Mile was no small feat," said Tess Kerksen, the director of marketing and communications at Wisconsin State Fair Park. "Not only did our teams – some of whom hadn't experienced an IndyCar race before – have to learn this new world, but we were also re-introducing IndyCar at the Milwaukee Mile to the fans and community. Our passionate Mile fans were

with us every step of the way, excited from the moment we announced to the final seconds of the race weekend."

IndyCar returned to the Milwaukee Mile last year for the first time since 2015. And the two-day doubleheader drew a crowd of 42,000, which was encouraging to all.

"My expectations were so widely exceeded because I was cautious," said Penske Corporation President Bud Denker. "Expectations were exceeded on so many fronts."

"The crowd was there for one thing – IndyCar racing. It wasn't some \$5 million music act to get them there. They were there to see IndyCar racing. I was just so pleased to see that authentic people were at a great event."

Getting IndyCar back to Milwaukee was exciting for all parties.

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

The track began

2025 NTT INDYCAR SERIES

March 2 – Streets of St. Petersburg

March 23 – The Thermal Club

April 13 – Streets of Long Beach

May 4 – Barber Motorsports Park, FOX

May 10 – Indianapolis Motor Speedway (road course), FOX

May 25 – Indianapolis 500, FOX

June 1 – Streets of Detroit, FOX

June 15 – WorldWide Technology Raceway, FOX

June 22 – Road America, FOX

July 6 – Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, FOX

July 12 – Iowa Speedway Race 1, FOX

July 13 – Iowa Speedway Race 2, FOX

July 20 – Streets of Toronto, FOX

July 27 – WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Series, FOX

Aug. 10 – Portland International Raceway, FOX

Aug. 24 – Milwaukee Mile, FOX

Aug. 31 – Nashville Superspeedway, FOX

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 attendance numbers and the series was stopped in Milwaukee.

Roger Penske, chairman of Penske Corporation and owner of both IndyCar and Indianapolis Motor Speedway, was integral in getting the series back to the Milwaukee Mile.

This year's race is sponsored by Snap-on after Hy-Vee – a supermarket chain in nine Midwestern states – scaled back its IndyCar involvement, including sponsorship of the Milwaukee Mile.

Despite the change in sponsors, race organizers believe they can build on what they restarted last year.

"Bringing in a new event challenged us to think differently, to think bigger, and ultimately made us better – not just for Milwaukee Mile, but for the Fair Park as a whole," Kerksen said. "We know what the fans want to see, and we know how to provide a top-tier event weekend."

Shari Black, CEO and executive director of Wisconsin State Fair Park, agreed.

"We were so excited

2025 INDY NXT SERIES

March 2 – Streets of St. Petersburg, FS1

May 4 – Barber Motorsports Park, FS1

May 9 – Indianapolis Motor Speedway (Road Course) Race 1, FS1

May 10 – Indianapolis Motor Speedway (Road Course) Race 2, FS1

June 1 – Streets of Detroit, FS1

June 15 – World Wide Technology Raceway, FS1

June 22 – Road America, FS1

July 6 – Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, FS2

July 12 – Iowa Speedway, FS1

July 26 – WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca Race 1, FS2

July 27 – WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca Race 2, FS1

Aug. 10 – Portland International Raceway, FS1

Aug. 24 – Milwaukee Mile, FS1

Aug. 31 – Nashville Superspeedway, FS1

to bring IndyCar back to the Milwaukee Mile," Black said. "IndyCar has a great history of racing in Milwaukee, and we were thrilled to see so many passionate fans. We look forward to building on this new era of racing at the Milwaukee Mile."

Of course, everything begins and ends with the race itself.

During last year's two-day event, Arrow McLaren's Pato O'Ward won on Aug. 31 and Team Penske's Scott McLaughlin drove into victory lane on Sept. 1.

This year, stakes will be high again as the event will host the 2025 season's second-to-last round of racing for both the NTT IndyCar series and INDY NXT by Firestone.

"We've seen an uptick in interest in IndyCar racing without a doubt," Kerksen said. "It's been incredible to be out in the community in a new way, engaging with new fans. Having drivers visit Milwaukee ahead of the race weekend has been amazing to see the fans meet drivers at local events."

There is plenty of additional entertainment, as well.

The Free Fan Zone – located in the heart of the Wisconsin State Fair Park, just outside the Milwaukee Mile Grandstands – seemed to be a hit last year. Fans could get food or merchandise before the race itself.

The Bank Five Nine Amphitheater is located within the Free Fan Zone and had concerts last year from Ian Munsick and Quiet Riot. No tickets were required last year.

This year's musical act has yet to be announced.

Fans are also able to buy a garage pass, which gives them access to their favorite drivers and to watch officials inspect each car and work around the track.

Overall, everyone associated with the race is expecting this year to be even more successful than 2024.

"If you know anything about us at State Fair Park, it's about building on that success without taking away from the wins of the year prior," Kerksen said. "We've become pros at this with the State Fair – blending the tradition with the innovation at every level."



Associated Press

Drivers pass under the green flag as they start an IndyCar auto race on Sept. 15, 2024, at Nashville Superspeedway in Lebanon, Tenn.

Road America celebrating 70th anniversary with loaded calendar

By Jim Hoehn
Freeman Correspondent

In typical Road America fashion, the historic race track always casts an appreciative glance at its tradition-rich rear-view mirror, while barreling full throttle into an event-filled 70th anniversary season.

Since its debut in 1955, the track known as America's National Park of Speed has grown into an annual destination for multiple generations of racing enthusiasts, proudly embracing its history while constantly evolving to attract new fans.

"We like to kind of call ourselves a living museum and our 70th anniversary is a prime aspect of that," said John Ewert, communications director at Road America. "Anybody that's an enthusiast, or maybe even not an enthusiast, develops an affinity once they come here because they get to see not only great vintage cars and classic cars, and understand this great place while they're moving around the grounds, but they get to see the most recent technology."

In 1955, the Major League Baseball team down the road was the Milwaukee Braves. The pro basketball team in Milwaukee was the Hawks. On the national landscape, the first McDonald's opened in Illinois; Disneyland opened its magical doors in California.

Road America also has changed with the times, but it's still comfortably consistent.

After earlier races were held on the streets of nearby Elkhart Lake, Cliff Tufte's vision of a permanent facility became a reality with the first race a SCCA National in September 1955, won by Phil Hill in a

Ferrari on the new four-mile track.

"We're kind of unique in our own way because 70 years ago, they kind of built the facility backwards," Ewert said. "What I mean by that is, if you go to American Family Field or Lambeau Field, you park outside and then you walk in. Here, you drive inside, you're able to move around the grounds and watch from several different viewing locations – find your favorite concession stand, your favorite shade tree, your favorite section of grass and still be immersed in the whole environment."

"If you kind of close your eyes and hear a car go by, you're stepping back in time," he said. "If you open your eyes and another car goes by, you're in the modern era. It's a neat kind of transition. It's a living time capsule, so to speak."

Fittingly, the 2025 season gets underway with the Spring Vintage Weekend with the Sportscar Vintage Racing Association (SVRA) May 16-18, with races featuring cars spanning several decades.

Two other hugely popular vintage events:

The WeatherTech Vintage Weekend with Brian Redman, one of the largest vintage racing events in the country, features more than 400 vintage and historic race cars competing July 17-20. Comedian, actor and motorsports enthusiast Adam Carolla also will be doing a comedy show that Thursday.

Ariens Art on Wheels Vintage Weekend with VSCDA combines vintage car racing with the art world Sept. 12-14.

There also is a vintage component to one of the motorcycle events with the MotoAmerica Superbikes & Vintage MotoFest, which includes a varied mix of Euro,

Japanese, and American vintage motorcycles from May 30-June 1.

Other signature events in June include the WeatherTech Chicago Region SCCA June Sprints, June 6-8; INDY-CAR XPEL Grand Prix Presented by AMR, June 19-22; and the Cheese Capital Cup featuring Trans Am SpeedTour, June 27-29.

From July 25-27, the GRIDLIFE – Summer Apex Music & Motorsports Festival combines live music with a racing weekend, followed by SportsCar Weekend with IMSA, July 31-Aug. 3; the all-sports car GT World Challenge America, Aug. 15-17; and the Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) National Championship Runoffs, which returns to Road America Oct. 3-5 for Sportscar, the 61st running of the annual event.

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

In addition to racing, Road America also hosts a variety of other programs, including motorcycle schools; a teen driving program; the 4 Miles of Fitness each Monday and Wednesday evening where participants can walk, run or bike the track; and the Sunset Cruise, a low-speed three-lap outing in their private vehicle.

Road America's longevity is a point of pride for many, including from the original shareholders up to the current group.

"Our ownership, our leadership, our stewardship, is doing the right thing and making the right decisions to keep this place here for potentially another 70 years," Ewert said. "We don't have any intentions of selling or moving or changing the original race course configuration."



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SP=PDTR 360 Sprints	IRA=IRA 410 Sprints
LM=PDTR Late Models	AM= A Mods
GN=PDTR Grand Nationals	LEG=INEX Legends
BM=PDTR B Mods	LS=Lightning Sprints
SS=Street Stocks	WL=Wisconsin WingLESS Sprints



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April 26	SP-GN-BM-LEG
May 3	SP-GN-BM-LM
May 10	SP-GN-BM-LM
May 17	IRA-SP-LS
May 24	No Racing
May 30	Friday Dairyland Classic Motorcycle Race
May 31	SP-GN-BM-LM
June 6	Friday - WOO Sprints-SP
June 14	SP-GN-BM-SS
June 21	"Road America Challenge at PDTR" IRA-SP-WL
June 28	SP-GN-BM-LM
July 5	No Racing
July 12	SP-GN-BM-LM-Vintage Mods
July 19	SP-GN-BM-LM + High School Racing Assc.
July 26	SP-GN-BM-WL
Aug. 2	SP-GN-BM-LS
Aug. 9	SP-GN-BM-LM
Aug. 16	SP-GN-BM-AM + High School Racing Assc.
Aug. 22	Friday SP-GN-BM-Dirt Kings Late Models
Aug. 29	Friday Sheboygan County Fair IRA-SP
Sept. 20	"Jim Wildman Classic" featuring Dirt Kings Late Models
Sept. 27	Wisconsin Sprint Car Championships IRA-SP-MSA-WL-LS

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SCHEDULE IS CURRENT AS OF 5/5/2025. ADDITIONAL EVENTS MAY BE ADDED THROUGHOUT THE SEASON. PLEASE VISIT WISTATEFAIR.COM FOR THE MOST UP-TO-DATE SCHEDULE.