



The Race: Miller Lite 140

The Place:
Riverhead Raceway

The Date: August 4

The Time: 8:30 p.m. (ET)

Track Layout: .25-mile paved

Race Purse: \$56,762

2005 Winner: Ted Christopher

2006 Pole: Ted Christopher

NO	Driver	Pts
1	Lia	1104
2	M. Hirschman	1051
3	Szegedy	1025
4	Civali	983
5	Silk	964
6	Ji. Blewett	951
7	Christopher	922
8	Stefanik	891
9	Flemke Jr.	854
10	Tomaino	843
11	Marquis	820
12	Sylvester	792
13	Savary	771
14	Beers	767
15	Houlihan	754

Schedule:

Saturday: Practice, 1:30-3 p.m. Time Trials, 5:15 p.m. Twin 25-lap Qualifying Races, 6:30 p.m.

Track Contact:

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- *Lia's Title Hunt Takes Him Back Home*
- *Christopher Has Mastered Riverhead*
- *'Retired' Ewanitsko Enjoying His Time Away*
- *News & Notes: 'Flash' Format To Set The Field*



Championship Dreams Bring Lia Back To Long Island

When Donny Lia climbed from his car in Victory Lane at Riverhead Raceway in 2003, it was a dream come true.

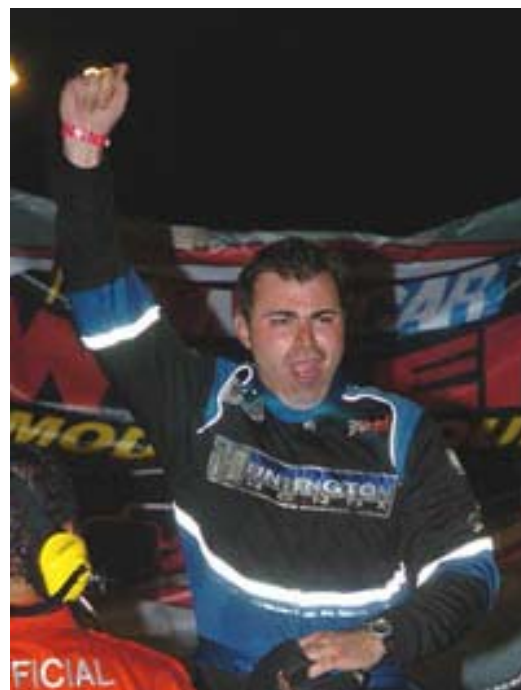
Not only was it his first win on the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour, but the scene of the win held a special place in his heart.

The Jericho, N.Y. native learned to race running on a weekly bases on the Long Island quarter-mile. In 2001, Lia was the track's Modified rookie of the year.

"It really meant a lot to me when I won there," Lia said. "Not only because it was my home track – to win in front of them was great – (but also because) we were competitive, but we definitely weren't winning material at the time. We came out of nowhere really and to win that race was amazing."

Lia (No. 4 Mystic River Marina Dodge) returned to Victory Lane at Riverhead again in 2004 and 2005. After getting caught up in an early wreck during last year's event, Lia is looking forward to the Whelen Modified Tour's return to the track Saturday for the third "Flash" event of the season.

He comes home having already won four times this season and in firm possession of the championship



Donny Lia found Victory Lane for the third time at Riverhead in Aug. 6, 2006. (Howie Hodge)

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Christopher never takes the easy road to the front

To call Ted Christopher's 2006 season one of upheaval would be an understatement.

Circumstances beyond his control left him searching for a ride after just the second race, and the longtime NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour driver proceeded through a year of transition. His first run with car owner Ed Whelan ended in Victory Lane in Jennerstown (Pa.) Speedway. When he arrived at Riverhead Raceway five races later, he was still running for Whelan, but business obligations kept crew chief Richie Niemiec home.

The communication between Christopher and Niemiec burned up the phone line after practice and again following qualifying. The changes worked. Christopher earned the pole, redrew eighth and used the high line to work his way to the front. He went around race leader Chuck Steuer on lap 65.

"There aren't too many people to do that at Riverhead," said Christopher of the outside passing to get to the lead. "I don't want to brag, but that was

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➤ News & Notes



➤ **The race:** This event is the eighth of 16 races on the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour schedule. It is the third and final race to be run under the "Flash Race" qualifying format.

➤ **The procedure:** The starting field is 28 cars, including provisionals. The top 20 percent of cars in time trials will earn starting positions, and there will be a redraw for those spots. The rest of the field will be set by two 25-lap qualifying races. The race will be 140 laps.

➤ **The track:** Built in 1949, Riverhead Raceway is one of the oldest stock car tracks in the country. The ¼-mile, asphalt, high-banked oval includes a Figure 8 course. The raceway is located one-mile east of the last exit on the Long Island Expressway and just minutes from the Hampton resort area. The facility, owned by Jim and Barbara Cromarty, has been a NASCAR Whelen All-American Series track for nearly all of its existence.

➤ **The history:** Of active drivers, Mike Stefanik (No. 16 Diversified Metals Pontiac) has the best track record. In addition to six wins, he has four seconds. Jerry Marquis (No. 00 Reynolds Auto Wrecking Chevy) has two wins and three seconds. There have been 44 races and 19 different winners. The Whelen Modified Tour stop always includes a number of local drivers in the field.



Mike Ewanitsko won a record 11 NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour races at his home track – Riverhead Raceway. (Howie Hodge/NASCAR)

Ewanitsko Enjoying His Time At Track And At Home

Mike Ewanitsko last raced in New Smyrna, Fla. in February of 2006, when he broke his left foot in a crash.

But when he walked back into Riverhead Raceway last week to watch some action, it was almost as if he never left.

"We walked in there with the kids Saturday night," Ewanitsko said, "people were still coming up, saying 'You were the bomb here.' It was great. It's good for the ego."

The truth is very few were better than Ewanitsko at Riverhead, and certainly none have come close to matching the 11 NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour wins he recorded at the ¼-mile track.

For the North Babylon, N.Y. driver, nothing beat winning at home.

"To be at a home race track like that," Ewanitsko said, "and have the good luck, and end up in Victory Lane the amount of time we did, I couldn't ask for anything better."

"There's nothing better than winning in front of your home fans."

Ewanitsko scored his first Tour win at Riverhead in 1987, when he took two of the three races there that season.

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Jimmy "Showtime" Blewett failed to qualify for last year's Riverhead event. (Howie Hodge)

2007 SUNOCO ROOKIE OF THE YEAR STANDINGS

Driver	Points
1. Richard Savary	52
2. Billy Pauch Jr.	47
3. Bobby Grigas	46
4. Rowan Pennink	38
5. Ryan Preece	37
6. Bobby Santos III	30
7. Anthony Sesely	28
7. Joseph Hartmann	28
9. Danny Sammons	26



Christopher: Recent success at Riverhead hasn't come easy

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pretty impressive."

Christopher led the rest of the race to pick up his third career Riverhead victory.

"To win that race there was huge," Christopher said. "For the team, the crew and everybody."

Saturday, Christopher (No. 36 **Al-Lee Installations Chevy**) returns to the track where he's had so much success – six top fives in the last eight races there. And, oh yeah, he has another crew chief in Brad LaFontaine, who teamed with Christopher for the last part of 2006.

"I already talked to him about it," said Christopher with a laugh. "I told him you have some big shoes to fill. You can't get much better than (last year)."

Christopher's first win at Riverhead came in

2002. But they don't get much harder than the one in 2005, when the car broke a strut rod. Christopher said the upper four-link bolt came off.

"The stinking thing was doing some weird stuff under caution," said Christopher. "The left rear was raising itself eight inches. ... I hung on for 20 laps like that."

Despite the mechanical issues, he was able to stay out front of runner-up Eric Beers.

Christopher is currently seventh in championship points in 2007 and still searching for his first win. The former NASCAR Whelen All-American Series national champion has a fourth- and fifth-place finish in the first two races run under the 'Flash' format.

Ted Christopher has six top fives in his last eight races at Riverhead. (Howie Hodge)



How To Run Riverhead

Mike Ewanitsko (11 wins): "The car's really got to turn in the middle. You really want the car straight coming off the corner. What tends to happen is, you're tight in the corner and then you step on the gas, then the thing just whips sideways coming off the corner."

Donny Lia (three wins): "Save your stuff, because you can really hurt your tires there in a hurry. It's an easy track to overdrive. It's just flat and tight. There's a little bit of banking in three and four. ... You really have to get a good drive off the corner. If you mess up your entry and middle at all, you're really doomed off the exit. They always say slower is faster. That couldn't be more true, especially at Riverhead."

Ted Christopher (three wins): "(You need a) good car that gets in and turns good and gets good bite off."

Ewanitsko: 'My plate is fuller now than when I was racing'

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He won at least once a year from 1987-92, except for '91. In the four races spanning 1997-98, he had three wins and a runner-up finish.

"It's a great thing to say, they're all good memories," Ewanitsko said.

His racing career took a detour several years ago when he began to suffer side-effects from diabetes, which he was diagnosed with when he was 12. He had successful eye surgery in 2005. He is currently awaiting a kidney transplant.

"My girlfriend, Linda, is actually going to give me a kidney," Ewanitsko said. "We're going to do that hopefully in the beginning of winter."

In addition to his three kids – Nicole, 9, and twins Michael and Paige, 8 – Ewanitsko's girlfriend has a daughter, Ashley, 13, and son,

Sean, 9. Between all of the kids' activities from playing sports to dancing, Ewanitsko said he is staying plenty busy.

"I'm contemplating the future," said Ewanitsko, who lives in Miller Place on Long Island and works for the printing company, Mutual Engraving and Printing Company, owned by his father and uncle. "Is the race chapter of my life over? I don't know. ... My plate is fuller now than when I was racing."

"I try to stay away because I miss (racing) so much. Then when you do go, you see all your old friends," said Ewanitsko, who finally went back for the 'Tribute To Our Legends' event in memory of Richie Evans, Charlie Jarzombek and Tommy Baldwin Sr. last week. "I got to see Tommy (Baldwin) Jr., a bunch of old friends and my crazy fans in turn 2."

Lia: Coming home has its rewards

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point lead as the season reaches the halfway point. Lia enters the eight of 16 races on the 2007 schedule with a 53-point lead over Matt Hirschman and 79-point lead over former champion Todd Szegedy.

"I'm really looking forward to it," said Lia, in his first year running for longtime car owner Bob Garbarino. "We have a really good car this year and they've been really great all year."

Lia is coming off a fourth at Twin State

Speedway in Claremont, N.H. July 8.

The Whelen Modified Tour has been visiting Riverhead since July of 1985, running three events the first year. Former NASCAR NEXTEL Cup Series driver Jimmy Spencer won the first two and the late Richie Evans won the final race. Lia's three victories at the track ties him for third with Ted Christopher. Only Mike Stefanik (six wins) and Mike Ewanitsko (11 wins) have more.

Lia's experience at his home track last year, however, wasn't so great.

"Last year was tough," Lia said, "because we had a car that could have won."

Instead, he was caught up in an early wreck and spent nearly every caution period on pit road trying to get the car fixed. He would up finishing three laps down in 19th.

"It was kind of a mess really," Lia said. "The key there is staying out of trouble and keeping your nose clean."

If he can do that, it wouldn't be a surprise to see Lia back home – in Victory Lane.



NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour Special Awards Standings

➤ BUD POLE AWARD

Ted Christopher	1
Matt Hirschman	1
Tony Hirschman	1
Richard Savary	1
Ronnie Silk	1
Todd Szegedy	1



➤ WHELEN ENGINEERING WINNER OF THE RACE AWARD

Donny Lia	4
James Civali	2
Jimmy Blewett	1



➤ SUNOCO ROOKIE OF THE RACE AWARD

Bobby Grigas	2
Bobby Santos III	2
Billy Pauch Jr.	1
Ryan Preece	1
Richard Savary	1



➤ FEATHERLITE MOST IMPROVED DRIVER

John Blewett III	2
Jimmy Blewett	1
Ted Christopher	1
James Civali	1
Mike Stefanik	1
Zach Sylvester	1



➤ POWERADE POWER MOVE OF THE RACE

Eric Beers	1
Jimmy Blewett	1
John Blewett III	1
Joseph Hartmann	1
Richard Savary	1
Mike Stefanik	1
Todd Szegedy	1



For more information,
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