



# News & Notes

RACE 3 | TSI HARLEY-DAVIDSON 150 | STAFFORD MOTOR SPEEDWAY

TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2008



**The Race:** TSI Harley-Davidson 150

**The Place:** Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway

**The Date:** Friday, May 23

**The Time:** 9 p.m. ET

**Track Layout:** .5-mile flat oval

**Race Purse:** \$89,010

**2007 Winner:** Donny Lia

**2007 Pole:** Tony Hirschman

Rk	Driver	Points
1	Hossfeld	335
2	Christopher	314 (-21)
3	Civali	305 (-30)
4	Pennink	288 (-47)
5	Szegedy	284 (-51)
6	Abele Jr.	267 (-68)
7	Flemke Jr.	262 (-73)
8	Tyler	255 (-80)
9	Beers	249 (-86)
10	Sesely	248 (-87)

**Schedule:**

Friday, May 23

Practice: 2-3:30 p.m.

Time Trials: 6 p.m.

**Track Contact:**

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- Tour Returns to Stafford for TSI Harley-Davidson 150
- Seven-Time Champion Stefanik to be Honored at Stafford
- Christopher Returns to Victory Lane at Spring Sizzler
- Home Tracks: Pitkat, Summers Lead the Way
- Five Questions: Mike Stefanik



## Modified Tour Returns to Stafford for TSI Harley-Davidson 150

For the second time in as many events, the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour will visit Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway and take the green flag for the TSI Harley-Davidson 150 on Friday, May 23.

Following a month layoff since the last race, also at Stafford on April 27, the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour will get back on the half-mile track for the one-day show.

Action will begin with an afternoon practice session and evening qualifying that will precede the first night race of the 2008 season.

**Donny Lia** is the reigning winner of the 150-lap race as he led 38 laps to take the checkered flag just half a second ahead of **James Civali**. The victory was the second of six for Lia in 2007 en route to his first

NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour title.

**Ted Christopher**, who led the most laps in this race last year, made it to Victory Lane in the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour's last outing this year, the Tech-Net Spring Sizzler at Stafford.

With 98 career wins at the track between weekly and touring starts, Christopher will be a strong contender to extend his track record win total and move one step closer to the century mark.

The TSI Harley-Davidson 150 will be the third of 16 races for the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour in 2008 and the second of four at the historic Stafford Motor Speedway. There have been a total of 87 NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour races at Stafford since the inception of the series in 1985.

## Seven-Time Champion Stefanik to be Honored at Stafford

As part of a season-long celebration of 60 years of Modified champions, seven-time NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour titlist Mike Stefanik will be honored at the TSI Harley-Davidson 150 on Friday, May 23 at



Seven-time Modified champion Mike Stefanik.

Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway.

A resident of Coventry, R.I., Stefanik is the winningest driver in the history of the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour and he was also named one of the NASCAR All-Time Modified Top 10 Drivers in 2003.

Since the tour's inception in 1985, Stefanik has experienced unparalleled success. His seven championships are two more than Tony Hirschman's total and his record 68 wins are 24 more than second-place Reggie Ruggiero's 44.

"I'm not a big nostalgic person and into statistics and all of that, but someday it's going to be very exciting for me to realize that [the accomplishments] and enjoy it for what it is," Stefanik said. "I've had a very nice and rewarding career."

Stefanik captured his first NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour championship in 1989 when he edged Ruggiero by just six points, the second-smallest margin in the division's history. During the course of the next 12 years, Stefanik ran a full schedule nine times and

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## Seven-Time Champion Stefanik to be Honored at Stafford

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captured the series title in five of those campaigns (1991, '97, '98, 2001, '02). His seventh title came in 2006 when he registered just one victory but finished in the top 10 in 15 of 16 races.

He was also voted the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour's Most Popular Driver in 1997, 1998 and 2001.

Although the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour is where he has experienced the most success, Stefanik is an accomplished driver in other series as well. He has tallied nine poles, 12 wins and 102 top-10s in 164 career starts in the NASCAR Camping World Series East. Stefanik also made 26 starts in the NASCAR Nationwide Series from 1992-2000 and had the same amount of starts in the NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series during the 1998-99 seasons. Stefanik earned Raybestos Rookie of the Year honors in 1999 when he finished 13th in the NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series standings.

In one of the more dominant two-year runs of any driver in the history of NASCAR racing, Stefanik captured back-to-back titles in both the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour and the NASCAR Camping World Series East in 1997 and 1998. In a

Modified, Stefanik compiled 22 wins and 30 top-fives in 55 races en route to his third and fourth championships in that division. During that same time span in the stock cars of the NASCAR Camping World Series East, he recorded six wins and 31 top-10s in 39 starts to earn consecutive points titles.

With his seven NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour titles and two NASCAR Camping World Series East crowns, Stefanik is currently tied with the late Richie Evans for the most championships in the history of NASCAR racing. Evans earned nine Modified titles, including the inaugural NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour championship in 1985.

Stefanik, who will turn 50 on May 20, has no intention of slowing down anytime soon. He finished fourth in the Spring Sizzler at Stafford on April 27 and is just two years removed from his most recent points title.

"I'm thrilled just to be racing anything, and to be involved with the program that we have is fantastic," Stefanik said. "I'm just going to keep doing it and enjoying the rest of my time behind the wheel because it's now more enjoyable than ever."

## Christopher Returns to Victory Lane in Spring Sizzler

**Ted Christopher** captured the second event of the 2008 NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour season when he drove to victory in the Tech-Net Spring Sizzler at Stafford Motor Speedway on April 27.

Christopher moved to the front on Lap 172 following the 10th caution of the day and never relinquished the lead.

"We worked on the motor program this winter," Christopher said. "The motor is good. It's got a lot of power. That thing comes off the bottom and never stops pulling."

The victory was the 28th of Christopher's

career and his eighth at Stafford.

Runner-up **Eric Beers** was followed by **Chuck Hossfeld**, **Mike Stefanik** and **James Civali**. With his second top-five finish, Hossfeld has assumed a 21-point lead over Christopher in the standings.

**Rowan Pennink**, **Richard Savary**, **Jamie Tomaino**, **Todd Szegedy** and **Glenn Tyler** rounded out the top 10.

- **Ryan Preece** earned his first career Coors Light Pole Award ... At 17, he became the youngest winner of the award.
- Stafford weekly racing regulars **Rob Summers** and **Frank Ruocco** started on the front row after Saturday's redraw. It was Summers' 110th career NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour start. Ruocco will drive the No. 00 in each of the tour's four events at Stafford in 2008.
- Past NASCAR Modified champions **Ernie Gahan** (1966) and the late **Red Byron** (1948) were honored prior to the race as part of the celebration of 60 Years of Champions. Gahan was in attendance for the ceremonies.



Christopher won his eighth tour race at SMS.

## News & Notes



**The Race** ... The TSI Harley-Davidson 150 will be the third race of the season and the first one-day show. This will also be the second of four stops for the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour at Stafford in 2008.

**The Procedure** ... Starting Positions 1- 26 will be determined from time trials. The field is limited to 31 starters including provisional positions.

**The Track** ... A half-mile flat oval, Stafford Motor Speedway began as a horse racing track in the 1870s. After seven decades as a horse track, the half-mile dirt oval started holding auto races following WW II. Stafford became a NASCAR track in 1959 and was paved for the first time in 1967.

**The Beginning** ... In the first NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour event at Stafford, the 1985 Spring Sizzler, **Richie Evans** took the checkered flag and **Jimmy Spencer** won the pole. It was an 80-lap, green flag-only event.

**Race Winners** ... There have been 26 different race winners at Stafford, led by **Mike Stefanik's** 19 victories, which is 10 more than **Reggie Ruggiero**, who is second on the Stafford wins list. **Ted Christopher** had the longest win streak in the history of the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour at Stafford with four-straight victories from Sept. 30, 2001 to Aug. 23, 2002. **Todd Szegedy** is the last driver to lead wire-to-wire at SMS as he took the Oct. 28, 2006 checkered flag from the No. 1 starting position.

**Pole Winners** ... There have been 34 different pole winners at Stafford, led by Stefanik's 14. Two of the 87 all-time events at Stafford have no record of a pole winner. Last year's Spring Sizzler saw **Matt Hirschman** set a new track record by recording a qualifying time of 18.009 seconds (99.905 mph).

### Sunoco Rookie of the Year Standings

Rk	Driver	Points
1	Abele Jr.	19
2	Reen	19
3	Patterson	8



## News & Notes

**Disappointment for Preece at Iowa ...** Second-year NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour driver **Ryan Preece** landed a ride for the combination race between both NASCAR Camping World Series' at Iowa Speedway this past weekend. Unfortunately, the 17-year-old was not able to even attempt to qualify as his right front tire blew in practice and the car suffered too much damage to return to the track.

**Five Test at NHMS ...** A total of five NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour drivers tested at New Hampshire Motor Speedway on May 12 alongside 18 NASCAR Camping World Series East teams. **James Civali, L.W. Miller, Rowan Pennink, Glen Reen and Todd Szegedy** made the most of the opportunity to practice at the "Magic Mile" in advance of the tour's June event at the 1.058-mile paperclip track.

**Extended Test at Loudon ... Miller and Szegedy,** both past champions in NASCAR's

Modified divisions, stuck around for a second day of testing at New Hampshire. The additional session was to determine the rear end gear ratio and the appropriate restrictor plate for the SPEC motor in preparation for the tour's June 28 race at the track. NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour cars have utilized a 1.125-inch restrictor plate for built engines at New Hampshire in each of the 46 all-time races at the track.

**Dupuis in the Running for Grant ...** NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour's **Renee Dupuis** is one of 18 female race car drivers in the running for entrepreneur and former Indy 500 driver Lyn St. James' Project Podium. Project Podium is a new grant program under St. James' Women in the Winners Circle Foundation, a non-profit organization that is designed to empower active, young female race car drivers to help further their early professional careers.

## Up Next: New England Dodge Dealers 75 at Thompson

The fourth race on the 2008 schedule for the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour will take place in familiar territory. The tour will return to Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway, site of the season-opener, for the New England Dodge Dealers 75 on June 19.

A Thursday night affair, the June 19 event will be the second of four dates for the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour in 2008 that is scheduled to run under the lights.

The race will run under a unique format ... it will conclude upon the completion of 75 green-flag laps as those run under caution will not be tallied. This will be the first of four races during

2008 that will run an alternative format. Events at Chemung, Riverhead and Spencer will feature heat races prior to the feature.

In this race last year, **Donny Lia** drove to Victory Lane as he took the checkered flag ahead of **Ted Christopher**. After four lead changes early, Lia took the lead on Lap 34 and never relinquished it. The 150-lap race was halted after 100 laps due to rain.

**Richard Savary** earned his first career Coors Light Pole Award prior to last year's race.

**Mike Stefanik** has a record 14 wins at Thompson and has captured nine career poles at the track, the most among active drivers.

## Five Questions: Mike Stefanik

### How did you get started driving Modifieds?

My brother Bobby, who was 15 years older than I was, raced Modifieds at Riverside Park and I kind of got into it that way. I started out racing Late Models and didn't get into Modifieds until about 1980.

### Were there any drivers that you looked up to, or that you patterned your driving style after?

My brother, Bobby, was the first one. I watched him my whole life and I don't ever remember seeing his car get pulled off on a wrecker. He was incredible at missing accidents on those bull rings. Obviously, I learned a lot by watching him. And, of course, Buggy Stevens. I was in his fan club as a young boy. Then there was Richie Evans. As I got a little older, I wanted to imitate his lifestyle at the track as

far as building his own cars, racing for a living and being his own person.

### Of your seven NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour titles, is there one that is the most memorable?

They all had special meanings for different people [car owners and crew members], but I'd say the first one. Because it was the first one, and I raced a legend in Reggie Ruggiero. To beat him out by luck, or whatever you want to call it, just to win it and have him finish second was remarkable. I'd say the first one was the most dramatic [six-point margin of victory] and I was definitely very excited.

### Are there any other drivers in the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour today that you could envision winning multiple titles?

## Friday Night Lights: Pitak, Summers Lead the Way

Rob Summers and Woody Pitak are both entered in the TSI Harley-Davidson 150. They also hold the distinction of being the track's points leaders in the SK Modified Division and



Late Model Division, respectively, thanks to their wins in the Spring Sizzler and three weeks of rain.

Summers won the track's feature division race, a 40-lap SK Modified event, over Pitak and Chris Jones back on April 27. Frank Ruocco and Doug Coby rounded out the top five, while defending division champion and winner of the Spring Sizzler NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour race, Ted Christopher, opened the season with a 23rd-place finish.

Pitak came back to win the 30-lap Late Model event race over Mike Quintiliano and teammate Ryan Posocco. Pitak is running in Friday night's NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour as a teammate of James Civali for car owner Don King.

Since the Spring Sizzler, Stafford's first three scheduled Friday night shows have been disrupted by rain.

Chris Matthews (SK Light), Bill Davis (Limited Late Model), and Norm Sears (DARE Stock) also picked up wins at the Spring Sizzler.

There are definitely some drivers that could do that. It's an ever-changing world. Usually the young guys come along and they don't want to stay in the Modifieds long enough to set any of those type of records because they want to head down south and make some big money. But if someone is satisfied with racing Modifieds and gets in there at a young enough age, they definitely could do it. That's what records are kept for—for other people to beat them.

### You've ran in the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour since it began in 1985, how much longer do you see yourself getting behind the wheel?

I still feel like a kid when I get ready to go to the race track. I'm just going to keep doing it and enjoying the rest of my time behind the wheel.



**2008 NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour Special Awards Standings**

**COORS LIGHT POLE AWARD**

James Civali 1  
Ryan Preece 1



**FEATHERLITE MOST IMPROVED DRIVER**

Joe Hartmann 1  
Jamie Tomaino 1



**SUNOCO ROOKIE OF THE RACE AWARD**

Tom Abele Jr. 1  
Glen Reen 1



**WHELEN ENGINEERING WINNER OF THE RACE AWARD**

Ted Christopher 1  
Ed Flemke Jr. 1



**POWERADE POWER MOVE OF THE RACE**

Tom Abele Jr. 1  
Glen Reen 1



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**2008 NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour Schedule / Results**

DATE	RACE	FACILITY	2008 POLESITTER	2008 RACE WINNER
April 6	Icebreaker	Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway	James Civali	Ed Flemke Jr.
April 27	Tech-Net Spring Sizzler Presented by Carquest	Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway	Ryan Preece	Ted Christopher
DATE	RACE	FACILITY	2007 POLESITTER	2007 RACE WINNER
May 23	TSI Harley-Davidson 150	Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway	Tony Hirschman	Donny Lia
June 19	New England Dodge Dealers 75*	Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway	Richard Savary	Donny Lia
July 28	New England 100	New Hampshire Motor Speedway, Loudon, N.H.	Ted Christopher	Donny Lia
July 12	NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour	Spencer Speedway, Williamson, N.Y.	---	---
Aug. 2	Miller Lite NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour	Riverhead (N.Y.) Raceway	Ted Christopher	Donny Lia
Aug. 8	New England Dodge Dealers 150	Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway	Tony Hirschman	Ted Christopher
Aug. 14	Budweiser 150	Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway	Todd Szegedy	Todd Szegedy
Aug. 23	NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour	Mansfield (Ohio) Motorsports Park	Donny Lia	James Civali
Sept. 7	Sunoco Modified Mania	Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway	Donny Lia	Ronnie Silk
Sept. 13	New Hampshire 100	New Hampshire Motor Speedway, Loudon, N.H.	Todd Szegedy	Todd Szegedy
Sept. 20	Made in America Whelen 300 **	Martinsville (Va.) Speedway	Donny Lia	Donny Lia
Sept. 28	Carquest Fall Final	Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway	Eric Beers	Mike Stefanik
Oct. 4	NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour	Chemung (N.Y.) Speedrome	---	---
Oct. 18	World Series	Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway	Tony Ferrante, Jr.	Bobby Santos

\* Green Flag-Only Laps

\*\* Combined Race With Whelen Southern Modified Tour