



The Race: Xtra Mart World Series of Speedway Racing

The Place: Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway

The Date: Sunday, Oct. 19

The Time: 3:30 p.m. ET

Track Layout: .625-mile oval

Race Purse: \$92,101

2007 Winner: Bobby Santos

2007 Pole: Tony Ferrante Jr.

2008 STANDINGS

Rk	Driver	Pts
1	Ted Christopher	2,111
2	Matt Hirschman	2,056
3	Todd Szegedy	1,958
4	Chuck Hossfeld	1,916
5	Mike Stefanik	1,875
6	Ronnie Silk	1,831
7	Eric Beers	1,826
8	Rowan Pennink	1,748
9	Jimmy Blewett	1,743
10	Ryan Preece	1,727

Schedule:

Saturday
Practice: 10:30 a.m.-noon
Time Trials: 2:30 p.m.

Track Contact:

Russ Dowd
(860) 923-2280 or
pitcrew@thompsonspeedway.com

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Just 35 points separate leader *Ted Christopher* (left) from second place *Matt Hirschman* (right) with one race remaining.

And Then There Were Two: Christopher, Hirschman Vie For Title

Fifteen races and 2,153 laps have not been enough to decide the 2008 NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour championship, so it will all come down to the season finale this Sunday, Oct. 19 at Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway.

As the series heads to Thompson for the fifth and final time in 2008, the championship trophy is assured to go home with a first-time winner as **Ted Christopher** and **Matt Hirschman** are the only two contenders mathematically left standing after last Sunday's race at Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway. With a runner-up finish at Stafford, Hirschman drew within 35 points of the lead that Christopher has maintained since Aug. 23 when he took the checkered flag at Mansfield (Ohio) Motorsports Park.

With so few points separating the top two drivers heading into Sunday's Xtra Mart World Series, there is a vast array of scenarios that could play out in the 150-lap race that will field a starting lineup of 32 cars. The only definitive outcome is that Christopher would clinch the title if he finishes seventh or better,

regardless of what Hirschman does.

Christopher has six career wins at Thompson and his best placing in this year's previous four trips was a runner-up to **Ronnie Silk** in June. Hirschman has three top-10s at the track this year, including a runner-up to Silk in August.

"I'm looking forward to Thompson, we usually run pretty good there," Christopher said. "Last time we were there we led 125 laps. We'll bring the same car we had last time and we've got a better motor than last time, so hopefully it will be a good race for us."

A series crown would be the first of the respective careers of Christopher and Hirschman. Christopher, a veteran who debuted in the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour in 1988 and is currently in his 15th full-time season, has been the championship runner-up twice in his career. He finished 50 points behind **Mike Stefanik** in 2001 and 18 back of Matt Hirschman's father **Tony Hirschman** in 2005.

In 2005 Christopher led the elder Hirschman by 36

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Stevens To Be Honored At Thompson

As part of the season-long celebration of 60 Years of Modified Champions, three-time NASCAR Modified titlist **Bugs Stevens** will be honored at the Xtra Mart World Series on Sunday, Oct. 19 at Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway.

Stevens, of Rehoboth, Mass., became the first driver to earn three championships in the NASCAR Modified division, and he did it in consecutive years from 1967-69. NASCAR will also recognize the accomplishments of deceased champions **Fred DeSarro** (1970) and **Bill Widenhouse** (1955).

Stevens piloted the No. 3 "Ole Blue" Modified for car owner Len Boehler to each of his titles. In 1967 he took the checkered flag 10 times and finished 1,261 points ahead of fellow Massachusetts native Don MacTavish for his first NASCAR Modified crown. His second championship in 1968 was a dominating effort that featured 29 victories and a 1,930-point margin in the national title chase against Fred DeSarro. Stevens' third title in a row came in 1969 as he passed **Jerry Cook** late in the season and finished 262 points ahead of the future series champion on the strength of 20 wins.

Stevens, whose legal name is Carl Bergman, is a member of the inaugural class of the New England Antique Racers Hall of Fame and was named to the "NASCAR Modified All-Time Top 10" list in 2003.

DeSarro, of Hope Valley, R.I., captured the 1970 title in the "Woodchopper" for owner Sonny Kozzela as he finished 808 points ahead of Cook. His national championship title run included 25 wins and 54 top fives in 78 starts. Like his buddy Stevens, DeSarro was also an inductee in the first class New England Antique Racers Hall of Fame in 1998 and was named to the "NASCAR Modified All-Time Top 10" list. DeSarro passed away from injuries suffered during a racing accident in 1978.

The final driver to be recognized as part of NASCAR's season-long program will be 1955 titlist Widenhouse. From Midland, N.C., Widenhouse won the eighth championship in the series' young history at the time.



Bugs Stevens (left) and Fred DeSarro (right) won four-straight NASCAR Modified titles from 1967-70.

Christopher, Hirschman Vie For Title (cont.)

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points heading into the season finale at Thompson only to get caught up in an accident early in the race. He finished 30th and was passed in the standings.

"The one time [2005] it was pretty much taken away from me in the last race and I wasn't too happy about that," Christopher said. "We were dominant that year with wins, top fives and top 10s. We had the most of everything, we just didn't win the championship. It was pretty depressing that way, when you had the best car every time and in every category except for the end. We'll see what happens this year."

Matt Hirschman, meanwhile, is still early in his NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour driving career. Now in his third full season, Hirschman finished 11th in the season standings as a rookie

in 2006 and improved to third a year ago.

Despite his lack of experience in a down-to-the-wire championship race as a driver, the younger Hirschman was the crew chief for his father's back-to-back title campaigns in 2004 and 2005.

Neither Christopher or Hirschman have reached Victory Lane in the first four races of the season at Thompson, but **Ed Flemke Jr.**, Silk and **Todd Szegedy** have. Flemke captured the season-opening Icebreaker on April 6, Silk won consecutive races at the track on June 19 and Aug. 14 and Szegedy was a victor on Sept. 7.

Practice and qualifying for the Xtra Mart World Series will take place on Saturday, Oct. 18. The 16th and final race of the 2008 NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour season is set to go green on Sunday at approximately 3 p.m.

News & Notes



The Race ... The Xtra Mart World Series will be the 16th and final race in 2008. This will also be the final of five stops for the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour at Thompson International Speedway.

The Procedure ... Starting positions 1-27 will be set from time trials. The remaining five will be filled through the provisional process. The race is 150 laps (93.75 miles).

The Track ... A .625-mile banked oval that opened in 1940, TIS was the first asphalt track in the nation, and the largest in New England until New Hampshire Motor Speedway opened in 1990.

Race Winners ... There have been 29 different race winners at TIS, led by **Mike Stefanik's** 14 victories. **Ed Flemke Jr.** won the first race at TIS this year on April 27 and **Ronnie Silk** captured the second and third on June 19 and Aug. 14, respectively. **Todd Szegedy** captured the most-recent race at TIS. The entry list for this race will feature at least nine drivers who have reached Victory Lane at the track before.

Pole Winners ... There have been 35 different pole winners at Thompson, led by **Jeff Fuller** and **Tony Hirschman's** 13. **James Civali** and **Bobby Grigas III** were able to nab their first career poles at the track earlier this year. Qualifying was rained out for the August and September races. Szegedy set the qualifying record at Thompson prior to the 2007 Icebreaker at 18.457 seconds (121.905 mph).



Like the 2008 season, voting for the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour Most Popular Driver will conclude this Sunday, Oct. 19. Fans can log on to nascarihometracks.com and vote once daily through Sunday. The top vote-getter from online balloting will be named the 2008 NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour Most Popular Driver at the series' postseason banquet on Saturday, Dec. 13 at the Mohegan Sun Resort in Uncasville, Conn.



Rocco Looks To Make Debut At Thompson

Keith Rocco, who finished fourth in the NASCAR Whelen All-American Series national standings in 2008, will attempt to make his NASCAR Whelen Modified debut this weekend at the Xtra Mart World Series.

Longtime NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour car owner Joe Brady will give Rocco a shot in his No. 00 Modified in the series' season finale at Thompson International Speedway.

"I've always liked guys who are a little aggressive," Brady said. "He's had a lot of success and I wanted to give him a shot."

Rocco, of Wallingford, Conn., is coming off a very successful 2008 season campaigning Modifieds across three short tracks in Connecticut.

This past Sunday Rocco wrapped up the SK Modified title at Stafford Motor Speedway by finishing 36 points ahead of defending track champion Ted Christopher. He finished sixth at Thompson driving in the Sunoco Modified division and came home third in the season standings at Waterford Speedbowl in the SK class.

All told, Rocco's 2008 season has featured 11 wins and 38 top 10s in 49 starts. Those numbers earned him the NASCAR Whelen All-American Series Connecticut State championship.

Last Time Out—Fall Final

- **Mike Stefanik** registered his first win of 2008, the 69th of his career, his 20th at SMS and his eighth in the Fall Final.
- Stefanik led all but 21 laps of the 150-lap race.
- Stefanik earned his first Coors Light Pole Award of the season.
- **Matt Hirschman** was the race runner-up and gained 20 points on Ted Christopher to draw within 35 points of the championship lead.
- **Anthony Sesely** (eighth) and **Glenn Tyler** (ninth) recorded their best finishes of the season.

Up Next: Toyota All-Star Showdown

The NASCAR Toyota All-Star Showdown, the "Daytona 500 of short-track racing," will be held Jan. 23-24, 2009 at the Toyota Speedway at Irwindale, Calif.

In its five-year history, the NASCAR Toyota All-Star Showdown – held at one of NASCAR's premier racing facilities – has quickly become a showcase of top short-track racing.

The race includes protected starting spots for the champions of each of the NASCAR developmental series. The move of the race from the fall to January allows for increased preparation and provides greater exposure for the teams and drivers.

Each race winner during the 2008 NASCAR Camping World Series season became eligible for a protected starting spot in the sixth running of the NASCAR Toyota All-Star Showdown.

The 2008 series champions of NASCAR's regional touring series – the NASCAR Camping World Series East (Matt Kobyluck), NASCAR



Camping World Series West, NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour, NASCAR Whelen Southern Modified Tour (Brian Loftin), NASCAR Canadian Tire Series (Scott Steckly), and NASCAR Mexico Series – and the 2008 national champion for the NASCAR Whelen All-American Series (Philip Morris) are also eligible for protected starting spots.

In addition, the all-star weekend will include a pair of NASCAR Whelen All-American Series races: the 150-lap Super Late Model race and, new this year, a 75-lap Late Model race.

Five Questions: Ted Christopher

How did you get started racing?

Go-karting, after I got out of high school. Basically we just fooled around in the church parking lot and stuff like that until we found a place to race. I raced go-karts until I was like 26, then they started the SK's at Stafford. When I started racing, with [Richie] Evans and those guys, those were full-blown Modifieds, and I could never afford anything like that.

What has been your favorite moment in a race car to this point in your career?

Driving that Super Modified at Thompson a few years back. It was something that I had never driven before in my life. I practiced it for 20 minutes, started dead last and won with it. There is a bunch of stuff that I've been happy I've done, but that was probably one of the main things because I had never driven anything like that before.

You're a polarizing figure in the world of Modified racing. Does that fuel your desire for success?

I guess it does a little bit. A bunch of people hate me, and a bunch of them love me, so it's fun to be like that.

Your team has had a very consistent 2008 campaign. To what do you attribute the

success?

Last year we were together, but this year is like the first full year that everybody has been on board. Everything has been going pretty good and I've been driving a little smarter. The last couple races have been a little disappointing, but Chemung wasn't my fault, it was somebody else's and the race at Stafford was just a track position race.

You've accomplished many things in your racing career. How much would it mean to you to win the title this year?

We'll see what happens, and I'll tell you after. It would mean a lot, but I'll probably do it again next year, too, so we'll see. Hopefully we can get it done this weekend.



Ted Christopher has more wins, top fives, top 10s and laps led than all other drivers in 2008.



2008 NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour Special Awards Standings

COORS LIGHT POLE AWARD

Eric Beers	2
Ryan Preece	2
James Civali	1
Bobby Grigas III	1
Matt Hirschman	1
Chuck Hossfeld	1
Jan Leaty	1
Ryan Newman	1
Bill Park	1
Mike Stefanik	1



FEATHERLITE MOST IMPROVED DRIVER

Eric Beers	2
Ed Flemke Jr.	2
Ronnie Silk	2
Jimmy Blewett	1
Joe Hartmann	1
Ryan Preece	1
Glen Reen	1
Reggie Ruggiero	1
Mike Stefanik	1
Todd Szegedy	1
Jamie Tomaino	1



SUNOCO ROOKIE OF THE RACE AWARD

Erick Rudolph	5
Glen Reen	5
Tom Abele Jr.	4
Gary McDonald	1



WHELEN ENGINEERING WINNER OF THE RACE AWARD

Ted Christopher	3
Jimmy Blewett	2
Matt Hirschman	2
Chuck Hossfeld	2
Ronnie Silk	2
Ed Flemke Jr.	1
Ryan Preece	1
Mike Stefanik	1
Todd Szegedy	1



POWERADE POWER MOVE OF THE RACE

Mike Stefanik	3
Tom Abele Jr.	1
Ted Christopher	1
Wade Cole	1
Jeff Fuller	1
Ken Heagy	1
Carl Pasteryak	1
Rowan Pennink	1
Woody Pitkat	1
Ryan Preece	1
Glen Reen	1
Reggie Ruggiero	1
Bobby Santos	1



SUNOCO ROOKIE OF THE YEAR POINTS STANDINGS

Glen Reen	135
Tom Abele Jr.	108
Erick Rudolph	58
Gary McDonald	36
Sean Patterson	17

For more information, contact:
Jason Cunningham, NASCAR Public Relations, (704) 201-6658 or jcunningham@nascar.com

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
May 23	TSI Harley-Davidson 150	Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway	Chuck Hossfeld	Chuck Hossfeld
June 19	New England Dodge Dealers 75 presented by Charter*	Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway	Bobby Grigas III	Ronnie Silk
June 28	New England 100	New Hampshire Motor Speedway, Loudon, N.H.	None-rain	Chuck Hossfeld
July 12	Mason Farms 100**	Spencer Speedway, Williamson, N.Y.	Jan Leaty	Matt Hirschman
Aug. 2	Miller Lite 140**	Riverhead (N.Y.) Raceway	Bill Park	Jimmy Blewett
Aug. 8	New England Dodge Dealers 150	Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway	Eric Beers	Jimmy Blewett
Aug. 14	New England Dodge Dealers 150 pres. by Budweiser	Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway	None-rain	Ronnie Silk
Aug. 23	Whelen 150	Mansfield (Ohio) Motorsports Park	Eric Beers	Ted Christopher
Sept. 7	Sunoco Modified Mania 150	Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway	None-rain	Todd Szegedy
Sept. 13	New Hampshire 100	New Hampshire Motor Speedway, Loudon, N.H.	Ryan Newman	Ted Christopher
Sept. 20	Made In America Whelen 300 ***	Martinsville (Va.) Speedway	Ryan Preece	Ryan Preece
Oct. 4	Chemung 120**	Chemung (N.Y.) Speedrome	Matt Hirschman	Matt Hirschman
Oct. 12	CARQUEST Fall Final	Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway	Mike Stefanik	Mike Stefanik
DATE	RACE	FACILITY	2007 POLESITTER	2007 RACE WINNER
Oct. 18	Xtra Mart World Series	Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway	Tony Ferrante Jr.	Bobby Santos

* Green Flag-Only Race

** Qualifying Format Race

*** Combined Race With Whelen Southern Modified Tour