



WHELEN MODIFIED TOUR

# News & Notes

RACE 3 | STAFFORD MOTOR SPEEDWAY

## FAST FACTS

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

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

**The Date:** Friday, May 22

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

**The Distance:** 100 laps / 50 miles

**2008 Winner:** Chuck Hossfeld

**2008 Polesitter:** Chuck Hossfeld

**Event Schedule:**

Practice 2 - 3:30 p.m.; Tire Scuff 5:30 - 6 p.m.; Qualifying 6 p.m.

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- Christopher Looks To Continue Historic Run
- Preece Strives To Break Through At Home Track
- Stafford's Pallai To Test Tour Waters



Ted Christopher enters the TSI Harley-Davidson Classic on a three-race win streak.

## Christopher Looks To Continue Historic Run In Return To Stafford

In the world of NASCAR Modified racing, **Ted Christopher** is king.

The Plainville, Conn., racing veteran earned his first NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour championship in 2008 on the strength of four wins and has rolled that momentum over to the current season where he has put a stranglehold on not one, but two divisions.

There have been two NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour races to-date in 2009, and Christopher has his name all over both. In the opener at Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway on April 5, Christopher earned the Coors Light Pole Award and then went on to lead 111 of 154 laps en route to his second trip to Victory Lane in a row at the track where he closed 2008 with a win. Christopher then moved on to Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway and dominated yet again with another pole and race win

on April 26.

In the process, Christopher has become the first driver in the 25-year history of the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour to win each of the first two races to start a season, and he is the first Tour driver to earn three-consecutive wins since **Donny Lia** in 2007. The last driver to earn four or more victories in a row was **Mike Stefanik**, who tied **Richie Evans'** Tour record in 1997 with five straight triumphs.

And all of that just concerns his full-time title chase in the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour. Christopher has also dominated the NASCAR Whelen Southern Modified Tour in a limited schedule to start 2009 as well.

The NASCAR Whelen Southern Modified Tour runs a top-heavy schedule with five races on the slate

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## 2009 DRIVER STANDINGS

Rk	Driver	Points
1	Ted Christopher	360
2	Todd Szegedy	325
3	Ryan Preece	325
4	Donny Lia	315
5	Jimmy Blewett	308
6	Mike Stefanik	306
7	Ron Silk	292
8	Woody Pitkat	252
9	Bobby Grigas III	252
10	Jamie Tomaino	251



## News & Notes

**The Race** ... The TSI Harley-Davidson Classic will be the third of 14 races on the 2009 NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour schedule. This will also be the second of four stops for the series at Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway.

**The Procedure** ... Starting positions 1-26 will be set from time trials. The remaining five will be filled through the provisional process. The race is 100 laps (50 miles).

**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 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.

**Race Winners** ... There have been 28 different race winners at Stafford, led by **Mike Stefanik's** 20 victories. **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. Christopher won the first race of the year at Stafford, the Tech-Net Spring Sizzler presented by CARQUEST, on April 26.

**Pole Winners** ... There have been 34 different pole winners at Stafford, led by Stefanik's 15. Christopher captured the Coors Light Pole Award for the Spring Sizzler.

## Preece Strives To Break Through At Home Track

**Ryan Preece** may have earned the first win of his young NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour career at Martinsville (Va.) Speedway in 2008, but Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway has been a place to call home.

A recent high school graduate from nearby Berlin, Conn., Preece's familiarity with the local asphalt oval has provided a level of comfort and confidence that he has at few other places.

"I've been coming here since I was a little kid," Preece said. "When I come here, I feel like it's home. It's 30 minutes from my house; I can come here and watch a race every week. I just get this feeling that when I come here [to race], that I'm not alone, like somebody's there with me in the car and I can just put it on cruise control and drive this track all day long."

Preece led more laps than any driver at Stafford a year ago, and he was strong once again in the

first 2009 stop at the track with nine laps lead and a third-place finish in the Tech-Net Spring Sizzler presented by CARQUEST. Preece also earned his first career Coors Light Pole Award at the track in 2008, but the goal that still remains is a win at the historic half mile.

"I always come back here [Stafford] looking up because I know we have a real good car here," Preece said. "Every race we come here we just get it better and better."

While Preece is hungry for his first NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour win at his home track, the teen also remains focused on the big picture.

"Hopefully the next race, we'll be the one in Victory Lane, but if not, a top five or top three will be good enough for me," Preece said. "I'm looking for that championship win, the big No. 1. That means you get bragging rights for the whole year, not just week-to-week."



Ryan Preece (3) and Ted Christopher (36) battle for the lead during the Spring Sizzler.

## Christopher On A Roll

*(Continued from page 1)*

before May, an opportunity that Christopher annually takes advantage of. This year he won the Southern Tour's season opener at Concord (N.C.) Speedway on March 21. He missed the second race of the Southern Tour season because he was busy winning up north at Thompson, but in his second start down south Christopher wound up in Victory Lane once again, this time at Caraway Speedway on April 11 in Asheboro, N.C. Christopher tasted defeat for the only time so far in 2009 on April 18 when he led 34 laps at Lanier National Speedway in Braselton, Ga., but finished seventh.

Christopher's NASCAR Whelen Southern Modified Tour ventures now appear over as he

concentrates solely on another championship in a row in his regular No. 36 Al-Lee Installations Chevrolet up north. He will take all of that momentum from both series back to Stafford - where he is the winningest competitor in track history - for the third race of the 2009 NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour season.

The TSI Harley-Davidson Classic will be the third race on a 14-event schedule, and the second of four stops for the Tour at Stafford in 2009. Action will begin on the track with practice at 2 p.m. and qualifying at 6 p.m. Green flag for the 100-lap event is scheduled for approximately 9 p.m. For TSI Harley-Davidson Classic ticket and race information, please visit Stafford's official web site, [staffordmotorspeedway.com](http://staffordmotorspeedway.com).

## Stafford NWMT Win Leaders

Mike Stefanik .....	20
Ted Christopher .....	9
Reggie Ruggiero .....	8
Tony Hirschman .....	6
Jeff Fuller/Rick Fuller .....	5

## Stafford NWMT Pole Leaders

Mike Stefanik .....	15
Reggie Ruggiero .....	7
Donny Lia .....	6
Tony Hirschman .....	5
Jan Leaty/Steve Park/Rob Summers .....	4



## Last Time Out: Stafford Spring Sizzler

The last time the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour took to the asphalt was the Tech-Net Spring Sizzler presented by CARQUEST on April 26 at Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway.

**Christopher Makes it Two-for-Two** ... Much like the season opener at Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway on April 5, **Ted Christopher** dominated the weekend. The veteran captured his 20th career Coors Light Pole Award during qualifying on Saturday and nabbed his 33rd career race victory on Sunday.

**Pasteryak Most Improved** ... In addition to the unfortunate injury to crewman John McKenna during a pit stop in the opener at Thompson, the No. 52 team and driver **Chris Pasteryak** had to settle for a 33rd-place finish. Fortunes for the team turned right around at the Spring Sizzler as Pasteryak piloted the car to a fifth-place finish and the Featherlite Most Improved Driver Award.

**Goodale's on the Move** ... Saturday's time trials were not the highlight of the weekend for brothers **Kevin and Eric Goodale**, but the pair

performed much better in Sunday's 200-lap race. Kevin, who started 33rd, came across the finish line 14th to earn the Coca-Cola Move of the Race Award. Eric started 29th and finished 11th. While he was bested by his older sibling by one position for the Coca-Cola award, Eric did come away with Sunoco Rookie of the Race honors.

**Preece Stays Consistent** ... Third-year driver **Ryan Preece** has served notice that 2009 could be a strong points finish for the No. 3 'Ole Blue' team. The 18-year-old finished fourth in the Thompson Icebreaker and followed that with a third-place effort at Stafford. Although the season still has a long way to go, Preece is third in points after two races, the highest standing of his young career.

**Pennink's Tough Luck Day** ... Like Preece, third-year driver **Rowan Pennink** has been climbing the standings recently. Pennink led the first laps of his career in the Spring Sizzler and was running up front consistently throughout the day before a wreck on Lap 176 prematurely ended what looked to be a top-five effort.

## 25 Seasons Running: Stafford A Tour Staple

As the 25th season of the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour is celebrated in 2009, events and individuals who have carried the series from its historic first season in 1985 to the present day will be highlighted. The third edition will take a look at the history of one of the Tour's mainstays: Stafford Motor Speedway.

Long before NASCAR, or auto racing, or even automobiles, Stafford had a racing oval. The Stafford Springs Agricultural Park opened in 1870 as a destination for New Englanders to see the latest and greatest in the agricultural field. The venue also featured a half-mile horse-racing track that was a popular draw.

Stafford converted to automobile racing following World War II, a decision that launched one of the most distinguished venues in racing.

Stafford became a NASCAR-sanctioned track in 1959 and countless standout drivers have earned race, track and national titles at the venerable half-mile in the five decades since.

The racing surface was paved in 1967 and a new era of auto racing was born at Stafford. In the decades since famed drivers such as **Jerry Cook**, **Fred DeSarro**, **Richie Evans** and **Bugs**

**Stevens** reached Victory Lane on multiple occasions on their way to NASCAR Modified national crowns. Under the NASCAR Whelen All-American Series banner, **Ted Christopher** also earned a national championship in 2001 with Stafford as his home track.

Jack Arute Jr. took ownership of Stafford Speedway in 1969 and began what was a revolutionary way to operate a race track and it's divisions – a tradition that continues today with the late Arute's son, Mark, who is the chief operating officer and general manager.

The modern day NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour was established in 1985. Stafford's 1985 Spring Sizzler was the first of what currently stands as 91 all-time Tour races at the track. The late, great Evans won the first two NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour events at Stafford and Christopher - the track's winningest driver when combining all divisions - won the 91st Tour race on April 26.

Stafford's 91 NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour races are second only to the 107 that have been contested at Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway. Stafford has held at least three Tour races in all but one of it's years of existence – 1988.



## Home Tracks: SK Driver Pallai To Test Tour Waters

**Richie Pallai Jr.**, a regular competitor in Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway's SK Modified Division, is set to make his NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour debut at his home track in the TSI Harley-Davidson Classic.

While he has found success in auto racing at an early age and experience level, the senior at Berkshire School in Sheffield, Mass., has spent most of his life focused on hockey, a sport he will play collegiately this winter at Connecticut College.

"Growing up, I was big into hockey, so I really never had racing on the agenda," Pallai said. "But I also grew up around the Modifieds."

Pallai's father, Rich Sr., is the vice president of marketing for CARQUEST Auto Parts. The elder Pallai took his son to many events over the years and that's where he caught the racing bug.

In 2005, Jack Arute Jr. helped get the younger Pallai into racing as he competed in Mini Sprints. Pallai moved up to an SK Light Modified in 2006 and quickly graduated to the SK Modifieds – Stafford's premier NASCAR Whelen All-American Series division – the following year.

Pallai, from Yorktown Heights, N.Y., earned his first career Stafford SK win on April 26 in the Tech-Net Spring Sizzler presented by CARQUEST.

Pallai will make his NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour debut as a teammate to **Todd Szegegy** for Mike Smeriglio Racing.

"I'm looking forward to getting into the show. I've never time-trialed before," Pallai said. "If we can get in the show, get some laps and some seat time and run consistently throughout the race, then we'll be happy."

Pallai also plans to team up with MSR for the remaining two races at Stafford along with possible additional dates at Chemung (N.Y.) Speedrome and Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway.



# WHELEN MODIFIED TOUR *News & Notes*

**Whelen Winner of the Race Award**  
 Ted Christopher.....2



## Up Next: New England 100

An annual highlight on the schedule, New Hampshire Motor Speedway will welcome the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour on June 27 for the first of two stops in 2009.



**Coors Light Pole Award**  
 Ted Christopher.....2



The New England 100 will be the 49th event in the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour's 25-year history at the 'Magic Mile.' **Mike McLaughlin** won the inaugural NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour race at New Hampshire in 1990 and **Tony Hirschman** has found Victory Lane more times than any competitor, with seven Tour wins.

**Coca-Cola Move of the Race Award**  
 Kevin Goodale.....1  
 Bobby Grigas III.....1



The 2008 New England 100 featured the closest race in NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour history as **Chuck Hossfeld** edged **Ted Christopher** by .001 seconds. Christopher won the rematch in September for his fifth Tour win at New Hampshire. It was Christopher's 10th victory overall at Loudon, which extended his track record.

**Featherlite Most Improved Driver Award**  
 Bobby Grigas III.....1  
 Chris Pasteryak.....1



NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour action will begin for the New England 100 with practice and qualifying on June 25. The race will be held on June 27 at 1 p.m. and will be followed by the NASCAR Nationwide Series Camping World RV Sales 200 presented by RVs.com race at 3 p.m.

**Sunoco Rookie of the Race Award**  
 Eric Goodale.....2



**Sunoco Rookie of the Year Standings**  
 Eric Goodale.....20  
 Tommy Farrell III.....18



## 2009 NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour Schedule

DATE	RACE	FACILITY	2009 POLESITTER	2009 RACE WINNER
April 5	Icebreaker	Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway	Ted Christopher	Ted Christopher
April 26	Tech-Net Spring Sizzler presented by CARQUEST	Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway	Ted Christopher	Ted Christopher
DATE	RACE	FACILITY	2008 POLESITTER	2008 RACE WINNER
May 22	TSI Harley-Davidson Classic	Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway	Chuck Hossfeld	Chuck Hossfeld
June 27	New England 100	New Hampshire Motor Speedway, Loudon, N.H.	None-rain	Chuck Hossfeld
July 11	NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour at Spencer	Spencer Speedway, Williamson, N.Y.	Jan Leaty	Matt Hirschman
Aug. 1	NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour at Riverhead	Riverhead (N.Y.) Raceway	Bill Park	Jimmy Blewett
Aug. 7	Town Fair Tire 150	Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway	Eric Beers	Jimmy Blewett
Aug. 13	Budweiser 150	Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway	None-rain	Ronnie Silk
Aug. 19	UNOH Perfect Storm at Bristol *	Bristol (Tenn.) Motor Speedway	---	---
Aug. 29	NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour at Chemung	Chemung (N.Y.) Speedrome	Matt Hirschman	Matt Hirschman
Sept. 19	New Hampshire 100	New Hampshire Motor Speedway, Loudon, N.H.	Ryan Newman	Ted Christopher
Sept. 27	Made In America Whelen 300 *	Martinsville (Va.) Speedway	Ryan Preece	Ryan Preece
Oct. 4	CARQUEST Fall Final	Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway	Mike Stefanik	Mike Stefanik
Oct. 18	Xtra Mart World Series	Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway	Eric Beers	Ted Christopher

\* Combined Race With Whelen Southern Modified Tour