



WHELEN MODIFIED TOUR

# News & Notes

RACE 10 | THOMPSON INTERNATIONAL SPEEDWAY

## FAST FACTS

The Race: Budweiser 150 pres. by New England Dodge Dealers

The Place: Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway

The Date: Thursday, Sept. 3

The Time: 8:45 p.m. ET

The Distance: 150 laps / 93.75 miles

Race Purse: \$84,168

2008 Winner: Ron Silk

2008 Polesitter: None-rain

### Event Schedule:

Practice 2 - 3 p.m.; Tire Scuff 5:15 p.m.; Qualifying 5:30 p.m.

### Track Contact:

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

### NASCAR PR Contact:

Jason Cunningham  
(704) 201-6658  
jcunningham@nascar.com

## 2009 STANDINGS

Rk	Driver	Points
1	Ted Christopher	1,262
2	Todd Szegedy	1,233
3	Ryan Preece	1,230
4	Donny Lia	1,180
5	Rowan Pennink	1,128
6	Woody Pitkat	1,072
7	Eric Beers	1,040
8	Jimmy Blewett	1,039
9	Ed Flemke Jr.	1,034
10	Chris Pastreyak	1,008

- Championship Race Still Wide Open
- 25 Seasons Running: TIS In September
- Home Tracks: Pitkat Closes On Rocco's Lead



*Ted Christopher returns to Thompson as the tour points leader.*

## Christopher Brings Points Lead To Thompson

Ted Christopher (No. 36 Al-Lee Installations Chevrolet) may have come up just short of the victory at Bristol (Tenn.) Motor Speedway, but he still finds himself in the driver's seat in the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour points standings.

Barely.

After rain washed out a trip to Chemung, N.Y., this past weekend, the Tour will resume this Thursday at Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway with a makeup date for the Budweiser 150 presented by New England Dodge Dealers. The race was originally slated to run prior to the combination race at Bristol.

Instead, it will serve as the tour's return to the track. Christopher, from Plainville, Conn., will return to the .625-mile banked oval where he opened the defense of his championship with a victory in April. He will carry a slight 29-point lead over **Todd Szegedy (No. 2 Wisk/Snuggle Ford)** of Ridgefield, Conn.

A third Connecticut driver, **Ryan Preece (No. 3 Mizzy Construction/Reynold's Auto Wrecking Chevrolet)**, from Berlin, has won two of the last

three races and is just three points behind Christopher.

In fact, the top five are all within 134 points of the lead.

**Donny Lia (No. 4 Mystic Missile Dodge)**, who passed Christopher late in the Bristol race for the win, has moved up to fourth. The Jericho, N.Y., driver is 82 points behind Christopher and finished third behind Christopher and **Jimmy Blewett (No. 12 TS Haulers Chevrolet)** at Thompson in April.

**Rowan Pennink (No. 93 Monk Mechanics Hand Cleaner Chevrolet)** of Huntington Valley, Pa., is enjoying a breakout season and sits fifth.

Thursday's visit is particularly significant to the points chase because the next time the tour returns to Thompson, it will be for the season finale in October.

Christopher and the rest of the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour competitors will get the action going on race day at Thompson with practice at 2 p.m. Time trials are set for 5:30 p.m. and the 150-lap race is scheduled to go green at approximately 8:45 p.m.



## News & Notes

**The Race** ... The Budweiser 150 presented by New England Dodge Dealers will be the 10th of 14 races on the 2009 NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour schedule and the second of three stops for the series to Thompson International Speedway. This race was originally scheduled to run on Aug. 13, but was rained out.

**The Procedure** ... Starting positions 1-30 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, Thompson 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 Thompson, led by **Mike Stefanik's** 14 victories. **Ron Silk** is the defending winner of this race and **Ted Christopher** was victorious in the season's first race, the Icebreaker.

**Pole Winners** ... There have been 36 different pole winners at Thompson, led by **Jeff Fuller's** 13. Christopher earned the Coors Light Pole Award for the Icebreaker. **Eric Beers** set the Thompson qualifying record in last year's World Series at 18.429 seconds (122.080 mph).



*Ted Christopher took the pole and the win in the first race of the year at Thompson.*

## Thompson Rewind

Ted Christopher started his title defense back in April the same way he ended his 2008 championship run: In Victory Lane at Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway.

Christopher kept his **No. 36 Al-Lee Installations Chevrolet** out front for a race-high 111 laps.

The win was just in keeping with Christopher's mastery at Thompson — the track where he won a NASCAR Whelen All-American Series national championship at in 2001. It was Christopher's eighth NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour win at Thompson and his third in the track's Icebreaker. He also won the traditional season opener in 2004 and 2005.

Christopher also capped his first NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour championship by winning the season finale at Thompson to close out 2008.

April's win didn't come without its late-race drama. Jimmy Blewett (**No. 12 TS Haulers Chevrolet**) passed Christopher on the restart to a green-white-checkered finish that extended the race to 154 laps. Christopher, however, was able to use a crossover move to get back by Blewett.

**Donny Lia** (**No. 4 Mystic Missile Dodge**), returning to the tour full time, followed Blewett



*Before April's race at Thompson, NASCAR unveiled 14 Silver Anniversary Tissot watches to be given out to race winners in 2009.*

home in third. **Ryan Preece** (**No. 3 Mizzy Conststruction/Reynold's Auto Wrecking Chevrolet**) and **Todd Szegedy** (**No. 2 Wisk/Snuggle Ford**) rounded out the top five.

Szegedy led the most laps (47) in last year's Budweiser 150 but problems caused him to finish 20th with only 132 laps complete.

It was **Ron Silk** who edged **Matt Hirschman** for the victory in the event — Silk's second straight win at Thompson. **Bobby Santos**, Christopher and **Mike Stefanik** (**No. 16 Diversified Metals/Ace Moldings Pontiac**) rounded out the top five.

## 25 Seasons Running: TIS In September

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 recognized. Highlighted in the following paragraphs is the role that the September races at Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway have had in determining champions.

While the first week of September is still more than a month away from the annual crowning of a NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour champion, this week's race could go a long way toward determining a winner.

In the first 24 years of the Tour, Thompson has had a September date in 21 of those seasons. In six of those years, the race winner also went on to capture the season crown. **Richie Evans** was the first to do in in the Tour's inaugural season and **Jimmy Spencer** followed in his footsteps in 1986. **Mike Stefanik's** championship seasons of 1989, 1998 and 2002 all featured September Thompson wins, as did **Tony Hirschman's** title campaign of 1999.

If not a predictor of who will win the season

title, September Thompson races can usually provide a winner that will be in championship contention. Of the remaining 15 races in which the winner did not go on to capture the title, they finished in the top three in the standings seven times.

The crowning of the champion traditionally does come at Thompson with the World Series, but history has proven that the track's September events can also go a long way toward shaping the title picture.



*Mike Stefanik has won 14 times overall at Thompson, including four in September.*



## Tour Tidbits

**Modified Fans Tune In** ... Modified fans who didn't get an opportunity to take the trip to Bristol, Tenn., for the inaugural visit to the high-banks of the 'World's Fastest Half Mile' took advantage of the broadcast on SPEED, which drew a .5 rating — which translates to 348,000 households/394,000 viewers.

**Points Battle Heats Up** ... The tight points battle isn't just at the front of the pack. **Woody Pitkat**, who, like points leader **Ted Christopher** races in the NASCAR Whelen All-American Series at Thompson on a weekly basis, is sixth. Just 69 points separate him from 11th-place **Mike Stefanik** and the logjam includes **Eric Beers**, **Jimmy Blewett**, **Ed Flemke Jr.** and **Chris Pasteryak**. Stefanik, the seven-time NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour champion, has never finished outside the top 10 in any season in which he's run a full schedule. However, he's coming off his third straight DNF following engine troubles at Bristol.

**Silk out, Civali in** ... Following a 33rd-place finish at Bristol, **Ron Silk** announced he was vacating the **No. 79 Hill Enterprises/Coors Light/Sunoco Pontiac** seat. He will be replaced for the remainder of the year by **James Civali**.

Civali, of Meriden, Conn., is a veteran of 41 tour races and has four wins, including at Thompson's Icebreaker in 2007. Prior to the move, Civali had already reached an agreement with the team to run a select number of races in a secondary car. He made his 2009 debut at Bristol but was caught up in the Lap 1 accident.

**Preece Coming On** ... Just two years ago, **Ryan Preece** did not qualify in the first two events of the season. Now, the 18-year-old is putting that experience to good use. He has two wins and a third place in the last three events, and has moved up to third in points. While his results at New Hampshire have been uneven (24th, third and eighth in the last three races there), the Berlin, Conn., driver owns wins at two of the other tracks remaining: Martinsville and Stafford.

**Lia Lurking** ... While he's not in the top 3, **Donny Lia** is still in pretty good position as he looks to follow up his 2007 championship with a second title. Lia's only win at Thompson came in April 2007, but he has two wins and a third in his last four races at New Hampshire, won at Martinsville in his last race there and has been consistently strong at Stafford.

## Up Next: New Hampshire 100

Following the Budweiser 150 presented by New England Dodge Dealers on Thursday at Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway, the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour will make the second of two trips this year to New Hampshire Motor Speedway in Loudon, N.H.

The New Hampshire 100 is set to go green on Saturday, Sept. 19 at 1 p.m. The NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour's second visit to the 'Magic Mile' could prove to be a crucial event in deciding the season championship as there will be only three races remaining on the schedule upon its conclusion.

In addition to being the winningest driver in NHMS history, **Ted Christopher** is also the defending winner of the New Hampshire 100. He used last year's triumph to strengthen his title bid, and will look to keep himself out front in this year's standings with another strong performance.

In addition to Christopher, **Donny Lia** also figures to be a contender in Loudon. The 2007 NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour champion won the New England 100 in June and has captured the checkers in four of the last six races in which

he has competed at national series tracks (NHMS, Bristol Motor Speedway and Martinsville Speedway.)

The race week will commence for the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour on Thursday with practice and qualifying. The New Hampshire 100 will proceed the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series race on Saturday.



*Donny Lia won at NHMS in June.*

## Home Tracks: Rocco Leads At Thompson

Three of the past four Sunoco Modified races at Thompson have seen a NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour regular in Victory Lane. **Woody Pitkat** picked up the win Aug. 27. Prior, **Ted Christopher** (Aug. 6 and Aug. 20) earned wins. Pitkat's win allowed him to pull within two points of **Keith Rocco** for the overall points championship. Rocco, who is ranked third in the most recent NASCAR Whelen All-American Series points standings, has three wins to Pitkat's two.

Thompson runs six NASCAR Whelen All-American Series divisions as part of its 'Thursday Night Thompson Thunder' program. In the headline division - the Sunoco Modifieds - Rocco currently has a 12-point lead thanks to three wins.

NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour drivers **Jimmy Blewett**, **Rowan Pennink** and **Christopher** are currently rank third through fifth in the Sunoco Modified standings.

As of racing through Aug. 24, here are the other Thompson division leaders:

- Super Late Model: **Derek Ramstrom**
- Late Model: **John Materas**
- Thompson Modified: **Brian Sullivan**
- Limited Sportsmen: **Larry Barnett**
- Mini Stock: **Scott Michalski**

## Most Popular Driver

### Voting Now Open

For the second year in a row it will be up to the fans to determine the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour Most Popular Driver. In the inaugural season of online balloting, **Ted Christopher** came away victorious in a close vote. Fans can vote now through the end of the season on Oct. 18.

Just go to [www.nascarhometracks.com](http://www.nascarhometracks.com) to vote for your favorite NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour driver, and cast votes for NASCAR's other touring series as well while you're there.





## Contingency Standings

### Whelen Winner of the Race Award

Ted Christopher .....	2
Donny Lia .....	2
Ryan Preece .....	2
Jimmy Blewett .....	1
Erick Rudolph .....	1



### Coors Light Pole Award

Ted Christopher .....	3
Eric Berndt .....	1
Doug Coby .....	1
Ryan Preece .....	1



### Coca-Cola Move of the Race Award

Eric Beers .....	1
Eric Goodale .....	1
Kevin Goodale .....	1
Bobby Grigas III .....	1
Ken Heagy .....	1
Danny Knoll Jr. ....	1
Woody Pitkat .....	1
Erick Rudolph .....	1



### Featherlite Most Improved Driver Award

Bobby Grigas III .....	2
Eric Beers .....	1
Ted Christopher .....	1
Chris Pasteryak .....	1
Erick Rudolph .....	1
Reggie Ruggiero .....	1
Ron Silk .....	1



### Sunoco Rookie of the Race Award

Eric Goodale .....	8
--------------------	---

### Sunoco Rookie of the Year Standings

Eric Goodale .....	80
Tommy Farrell III .....	35
Rob Fuller .....	9



## 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 pres. by CARQUEST	Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway	Ted Christopher	Ted Christopher
May 22	TSI Harley-Davidson Classic	Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway	Ted Christopher	Jimmy Blewett
June 27	New England 100	New Hampshire Motor Speedway, Loudon, N.H.	Doug Coby	Donny Lia
July 11	Spencer Speedway 155 *	Spencer Speedway, Williamson, N.Y.	None	Erick Rudolph
Aug. 1	Riverhead 175 *	Riverhead (N.Y.) Raceway	Ryan Preece	Ryan Preece
Aug. 7	Town Fair Tire 150	Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway	Eric Berndt	Ryan Preece
Aug. 19	UNOH Perfect Storm 150 +	Bristol (Tenn.) Motor Speedway	None-rain	Donny Lia
Aug. 29	Chemung 120 *	Chemung (N.Y.) Speedrome	PPD. Rain	
DATE	RACE	FACILITY	2008 POLESITTER	2008 RACE WINNER
Sept. 3	Budweiser 150 pres. by New England Dodge Dealers	Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway	None-rain	Ron Silk
Sept. 19	New Hampshire 100	New Hampshire Motor Speedway, Loudon, N.H.	Ryan Newman	Ted Christopher
Sept. 27	Made In America Whelen 200 +	Martinsville (Va.) Speedway	Ryan Preece	Ryan Preece
Oct. 4	CARQUEST Fall Final	Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway	Mike Stefanik	Mike Stefanik
Oct. 18	World Series	Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway	Eric Beers	Ted Christopher

\* Qualifying Format Race

+ Combined Race With Whelen Southern Modified Tour