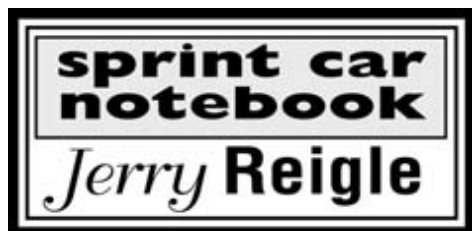


He Ain't A 16-Year-Old Driver - He's An Eckert



Fred Rahmer can be a quote machine. Nothing's canned. He's genuine--a straight shooter.

So when asked last Thursday night at Susquehanna Speedway Park what it was like to race with a 16-year-old high school sophomore, Rahmer unleashed a phrase unlike any other.

"He ain't a 16-year-old driver," Rahmer said. "He's an Eckert."

Rahmer was describing Cody Darrah, a kid who competed in his fourth career 410 Sprint Car race and darn near won.

The box score will read that Darrah finished eighth, but he fell seven laps shy of possibly become the youngest driver to win a sprint car feature at Susquehanna Speedway Park.

So, what goes through the head of a kid who has Rahmer, Lance Dewease, Greg Hodnett and Chad Layton knocking on the door for a key \$3,500 prize?

"It was nerve wracking," said Darrah, the nephew of dirt Late Model driver Rick Eckert. "I'm leading the race and we're under caution."

"I look at the scoreboard and saw those guys' car numbers. Mine is in first place. It gave me too much time to think. I didn't want to screw up. I mean...these guys have raced longer than I've been alive."

And Darrah was beating them.

It's a far cry from four weeks ago when Darrah went barreling into turn 1 and nearly rolled the No. 89 on its side.

"We've been getting the car freer each week," Darrah said. "Scrub [Eckert] has helped me out and Lee Stauffer's given me some pointers."

In this case, Darrah's a quick learner.

It came quickly.

"We planned to get a sprint car within a year," Darrah said. "Things got pushed up a bit when Chad Layton was hired to drive the Apple Motorsports car."

"So we got a car earlier than expected. Susquehanna's a good track to learn. It still gives us time to run the micro-sprints on Friday and Saturday nights."

Darrah plans to race on Thursday nights at the Grove and this Sunday night at Trail-Way Speedway. Also, Darrah said visits to Williams Grove Speedway might be made as the season progresses and when he's on summer break from school.

Darrah is a sophomore at Red Lion High School in southern York County.

"It's a bit hectic nowadays," Darrah said. "I go to school, go home and go right to the shop."

Last Friday morning, Darrah woke up a bit grog-

gy. Nearly 10 hours earlier, he almost became the third different driver to win at Susquehanna Speedway Park this season.

He didn't win, but he sure gained the respect of his competitors.

Just ask Fred Rahmer.

Ending it with the Final 50:

1. Don't know if you know this, but Fred Rahmer is five wins away from matching Steve Smith's all-time wins at Lincoln Speedway and five away from matching John Mackinson Sr.'s all-time wins at Susquehanna Speedway Park. Question is, which one will he get to first?

2. Todd Hestor had a unique piece of equipment holding his front wing on at Port Royal Speedway. He used a bungee chord.

3. Per No. 2: Hestor said he would like to get a 358 Sprint Car engine to race in the Joe Whitcomb Memorial at Selinsgrove Speedway.

4. Lincoln Speedway canceled its May 27 show that would have went head-to-head against the World of Outlaws show at Williams Grove Speedway. Lincoln will race on May 28 with 358 Sprints, super sportsman and legends.

5. Kevin Swindell finished 21st in the ARCA race at Winchester Speedway on Sunday.

6. From Tuesday through Saturday, it was Danny Lasoski's week. He won a National Sprint Tour race at Davenport Speedway last Tuesday, then a WoW 360 Sprint Car main at Bolivar Speedway on Friday followed by an unsanctioned big sprint race at Knoxville Raceway on Saturday.

7. 358 Sprint Car driver Chad Criswell guesstimates he'll be out for two to four weeks. He crashed at Lincoln Speedway last Saturday night.

8. Billy Kimmel should be absent for another weekend. He started a new job.

9. By now you heard about the great race at Williams Grove Speedway last Friday night. Jimmy Siegel, Chad Layton and Lance Dewease made it worth the price of admission.

10. In a span of three heat races at Port Royal Speedway last Saturday night, four cars flipped. All were okay except for Mike Wagner. His status is on these pages of Area Auto Racing News.

11. Craig Keel competed in a winged sprint at Susquehanna Speedway Park and Williams Grove Speedway then went wingless with USAC on Saturday at Canandaigua Speedway.

12. Don't know officially but Bob Bennett's ninth at Williams Grove Speedway last Friday night might have been his best.

13. Jimmy Siegel is the 203rd different driver to win a sprint car race at Williams Grove Speedway.

14. Rick Lafferty is the 149th different driver to win a sprint car race at Port Royal Speedway.

15. In two weekends of racing Derek Locke has two top 10s at Trail-Way Speedway. His fourth this past Friday night is a career best.

16. Williams Grove Speedway is supposed to kick off this Friday night's race action at 7:30. The postponed late model feature from April is scheduled.

17. Eric Stambaugh might forego Susquehanna Speedway Park this Thursday night and race at Williams Grove Speedway. It is a possibility.



Cody Darrah (No. 89) leads Alan Krimes (No. 87) off the corner at Susquehanna Speedway Park. (Photo by Len Cobosco)

18. Kyle Purks won in a Dan Richcreek-owned 358 Sprint Car last Friday night at Williams Grove Speedway. He ran the same car at Selinsgrove Speedway on Saturday evening. Also, interesting to note Purks said his recent conditioning (running) regiment helped him hold off Cory Haas.

19. Pat Cooper was at Susquehanna Speedway Park last Thursday but he drove in the spectator drag races.

20. Talk has it that contracts are being pushed on NST drivers to sign. It's not a bad thing as long as the guarantees are followed through.

21. Don't forget the World of Outlaws make a stop at Grandview Speedway next Tuesday.

22. Blane Heimbach and Mike Walter are tied at Selinsgrove Speedway for the No. 1 spot in points with 1410 each.

23. A driver named Tom Haxall finished 18th in the Golden State Challenge main this past weekend at Reno-Fernley Speedway. Don't know if that was the former super sportsman driver Tom Haxall.

24. Per No. 24. Jonathan Allard won the race. He should be with a national touring series.

25. Kudos to the World of Outlaws which took part in a parade in Brandon, South Dakota, before Sunday's race at Huset's Speedway.

26. Here's one for you: AVSS has a policy that if a driver jumps a start, he/she will be put back two spots at the next caution. Well, Jimmy McCune was running first at Auto City Speedway this past weekend. He jumped a start and the race finished without caution. He was moved back to third and Tommy Fedewa won.

27. Twenty-six of the 46 drivers to take time last Saturday night at Knoxville Raceway were under the already-established track record.

28. Bob Anderson's victory at Trail-Way Speedway last Friday night was his second there.

29. Tyler Walker substituted for Sammy Swindell in the Guy Forbrook-owned car this past weekend. Swindell should be back in the car.

30. I know this is a sprint car column but super sportsman driver Joe Biasi drove an asphalt modified last Saturday at Mahoning Valley Speedway.

31. All Star Circuit of Champions points leader Greg Wilson won an unsanctioned race at Attica Raceway Park last Friday night.

32. Always nice to see Roger Fickett racing a sprint car. That's what he did last Saturday night at Port Royal Speedway.

33. After viewing the shots of Cris Criswell's crash at Lincoln Speedway last Saturday night, I really believe a HANS or some other restraint system should be mandatory or highly recommended.

34. Doug Dodson crashed at Selinsgrove Speedway two weeks ago. He returned as a spectator this past weekend. Dodson is still enlisted.

35. Chad Blonde's sprint car victory at Butler Speedway came after four cars flipped. Not good.

36. Three great runs this weekend: Chad Layton's back row to second at Susquehanna Speedway Park. Fred Rahmer's 13th to first at Lincoln Speedway. Mark Smith's 20th to fifth at Port Royal Speedway.

37. Florida racers Danny Martin and Kenny Adams should take part in the 360 Sprint Car at Williams Grove Speedway next month.

38. I have to write this. You probably don't know or every heard of Marcus Van Meter, but after watching him smash the right pedal for 15 laps in

a hobby stock at The Rock (Cumberland Speedway) Sunday night I think he should be offered a sprint car ride...even if it's for one night.

39. Mike Piersig won the last Limited Sprint feature at Bridgeport Speedway last season and opened up this season (Saturday night) with a victory.

40. Darren Hagen won the USAC Sprint Car race at Lernerville Speedway last Friday night. He learned how to run Lernerville by practicing on the World of Outlaws video game.

41. Joe Deihl pulled off a fifth place finish at Sharon Speedway last Saturday night.

42. Jac Haudenschild gave car owner Rick Wright his first career WoO victory as a car owner last Friday night at US 36 Speedway.

43. Open for King Richard, of course.

44. Brooke Tatnell was voted No. 1 in the Australian Sprint Car poll. American racers Donny Schatz was second, Jason Johnson was fifth and Dean Jacobs was eighth.

45. Don't forget the All Star Circuit of Champions will visit Port Royal Speedway next Saturday night (May 20).

46. This week's big kudos goes to Williams Grove Speedway for rattling off a two-division show in less than three hours.

47. With his win in last Saturday night's 358 Sprint Car main at Lincoln Speedway, Jeff Rohrbaugh has Lincoln wins in the super sprint, semi late, thundercar and now the 358 Sprint Car class.

48. Duane Mausteller's victory at Selinsgrove Speedway last Saturday was his first in less than three times at the track.

49. Dean Jacobs is driving Ray Pullins' sprint car. In his second USA race this season, DJ won a race. This one happened at Fremont Speedway this past weekend.

50. Rookie Jordan Frontz finished fourth in Saturday night's 358 Sprint Car feature at Selinsgrove Speedway. That's a career-best.

CAR COUNTS: Knoxville Raceway (46); Fulton Speedway (ESS/44); Ventura Speedway (41); Knoxville Raceway (360 Sprints/41); US 36 Raceway (WoO/39); Fremont Speedway (ASCoC/38); Williams Grove Speedway (358 Sprints/37); Crystal Motor Speedway (SOD/ASCS/37); Lincoln Speedway (358 Sprints/37); Raceway at Powercom Park (IRA/35); Silver Dollar Speedway (34); Lincoln Park Speedway (34); Port Royal Speedway (32); Williams Grove Speedway (32); Selinsgrove Speedway (358 Sprints/32); Huset's Speedway (WoO/32); Gas City Speedway (31); Attica Raceway Park (30); Jackson Speedway (Champ Sprints/29); Attica Raceway Park (305 Sprints/29); Lernerville Speedway (USAC/26); Hesston Speedway (305Sprints/26); Davenport Speedway (NST/26); Manzanita Speedway (ASCA/26); Auto City Speedway (AVSS/25); Lincoln Speedway (25); Limaland Speedway (NRA/25); Trail-Way Speedway (358 Sprints/24); Reno-Fernley Speedway (24); Toledo Speedway (WsoA/23); Bolivar Speedway (WoW/22); Sandusky Speedway (305 Sprints/21); Ventura Speedway (Senior Sprints/21); Bridgeport Speedway (Limited Sprints/21); Brighton Speedway (SOS/21); Thunderhill Raceway (305 Sprints/20); Mercer Raceway Park (20); Princeton Speedway (VSS/20); USA Race Park (19); Sharon Speedway (18); Canandaigua Speedway (USAC/18); Susquehanna Speedway Park (18); KC Raceway (17); North Florida Raceway (FSCA/14); Tri City Speedway (14); Meridian Speedway (12). Paris Speedway (RO); Mid America Speedway (ASCS/RO); 81 Speedway (WoO/RO); Texarkana Speedway (ASCS/RO); Fast Trax Speedway (ASCS/RO); Jetmore Motorplex (RO); I30 Speedway (RO); Gator Moto Speedway (RO); Riverside Speedway (RO); Skagit Speedway (RO); Santa Maria Speedway (RO).

News can be sent to 27 Stephen Road, Camp Hill, PA 17011 or GREIGLE88@aol.com

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