

Dewease Home In Pennsylvania

LIVERPOOL, PA.

For Pennsylvania sprint-car veteran Lance Dewease, there's no place like home.

For the first time in his career, Dewease spent this season racing on the road and not full-time in central Pennsylvania.

He competed with the All Star Circuit of Champions and finished second in points to Dale Blaney. He only won two races — one at Attica in Ohio and one at Butler Speedway in Michigan. For the most part he was competing on tracks he'd never seen before. He did get a big win against the World of Outlaws at The Dirt Track @ Lowe's Motor Speedway in Concord, N.C.

"We had a lot of fun going to new places," Dewease said. "Probably 90 percent of the racetracks we went to I've never been to before. It was a learning experience. I had a lot of fun racing with those guys and we enjoyed doing it."

Since the All Stars are done for the season, Dewease has been back in central Pennsylvania and swept races at Williams Grove Speedway and Lincoln Speedway Oct. 3-4.

The victories earned the 43-year-old racer more than \$9,000. At the Grove, where Dewease is a five-time champion, it was career win No. 68.

That's good enough for second all-time. The Lincoln win was No. 31. He won the Lincoln title when he drove for Al Hamilton in 2003.

Dewease said he enjoyed his time on the road, but missed his home track and running Pennsylvania's higher-paying shows. He says that won't happen next year. The team will travel, but will be home more, especially when big money is on the line.

Dewease said his plans for next season are not final and will wait until all schedules are released before the team makes a final decision.

"I don't think we are going to run full time

CHASING THE POSSE



TODD HEINTZELMAN

with the All Stars," Dewease said. "I think we are going to pick and choose. I missed a good many shows here at tracks that I love. We're not going to do that next year."

He said they will run more World of Outlaws races. Dewease moved from Pete Postupack's sprinter into Donny Owens's car at the end of last summer. His first night out in the car resulted in a win at Susquehanna Speedway.

The team decided to chase the \$50,000 top prize with the All Stars instead of going after local point championships in Pennsylvania. It looked at the beginning like Dewease would win the title and he led the points for most of the season.

It will be good for Posse fans if Dewease stays home more next season, especially for Pennsylvania Speedweek and other major events. He's always been a fan favorite and was missed this season. Dewease wasn't the only Pennsylvania driver to spend 2008 on the road. Lucas Wolfe raced with the World of Outlaws this season. His year has been difficult with a broken back setting him back about two months during the busiest part of the season. He has recorded runner-up and third-place finishes with the Outlaws recently.

While nothing is concrete right now, the rumor mill has several Posse drivers considering more traveling next season over staying home and racing for points. Even "Fast Freddie" Rahmer said he may not chase points next year.

Sprint-car champions this season include Rahmer at Williams Grove for the record eighth time; Todd Shaffer at Port Royal for the fourth time; and Brian Montieth at Lincoln for his first-career track title.

Look for many of the top teams from central Pennsylvania to make the trip to North Carolina for the World Finals at the end of the month.

Economy Will Hurt Racing

SHAMOKIN, PA.

The last time I wrote about how things were going financially, it turned out to be a pretty negative column. I even said that some highly funded teams have to do business with the white-collar Wall Street thugs we've now come to mistrust.

Yes, that's what I said. Well, things have worsened. I can't even find the words to describe what these Wall Street CEOs, 401K managers, mortgage loaners and Hedge Fund administrators have done to our economy, all thanks to personal greed.

We continue to listen to news reports on large, failed banks such as Wachovia and Washington Mutual and "hints" that another major insurer similar in size to AIG may be in trouble.

Now, trusting Americans (mostly middle class) will be asked to endure a government-led \$700 billion white-collar bailout, with "special save America's economy" taxes no doubt coming our way. And, for a matter of comparing these gigantic numbers being thrown around, 700 billion one-dollar bills laid end to end would stretch from the Earth to Mars and nearly all the way back again.

On the daily financial media outlets, certain words are being used less and less so as not to alarm the public. Things like "bank runs," "possible depression" and "mutual fund money market withdrawal implussions" are heard less frequently for obvious reasons.

But there is a silver lining in every column, and because *National Speed Sport News* is the granddaddy of all racing publications, I'll try to lay it right on the line for you from my viewpoint. Regardless of what happens in the future when it comes to our economy, and the fact that many pro racing teams rely on Fortune 500 company successes, there will always be good racing somewhere, regardless of whose name is on the side of a vehicle.

As for the "welfare state" we now call professional motorsports, the current financial "situation" could change the face of racing for years to come. It doesn't take a rocket scientist long to figure out if, for example, a Pro Stock

RACING BRIEFCASE



GREG ZYLA

drag racer pays \$58,000 to lease an engine for one event that might, and we emphasize "might," get him in a 16-car field that pays \$25,000 to win, a sponsor is probably paying the bill.

I can't really predict what NASCAR, NHRA, ARCA, ALMS, USAC, WoO or the countless other sanctioning bodies will look like in the future if we have an

extended recession or, God forbid, a depression, but I know in my heart racing will survive.

Thus, if the economic atmosphere doesn't improve, some pro teams will go through major pain, others disappear. This is inevitable based on the daily financial news as more trouble seems to be brewing.

Still, one of the very best races I attended last year took place in the parking lot of the Orange County Convention Center near Orlando, and it had nothing to do with NASCAR or IndyCar. It was a go kart race, and some of the biggest names in motorsports took the green flag for the pure love of racing. The makeshift grandstands were packed, the admission was free, and it was part of the PRI Trade Show extravaganza I've been a part of since 1986.

So, we'll chalk this column up as another "letdown" thanks to things out of our control, like greedy CEOs and investment advisors that will spoil some great team's nice deal.

One thing is for sure, and was well written by *Newsweek* columnist Daniel Gross when he said in the Oct. 6 issue; "Yes, we do have to be careful about crying 'fire' in a crowded theater. But calling this (financial mess) a meltdown is like crying 'fire' in an inferno."

For the sake of racing, however, always remember that 700 billion minutes ago, they were running some pretty prominent chariot races with full fields and packed coliseums. And as for chariot drivers talking about the "stock market" they were referring to the local livestock dealer and his herd of horses, oxen and donkeys.

Hmm. Horses, oxen and donkeys. I think I've found the words I was looking for earlier to describe those greedy Wall Street crooks.

Sanctioning Bodies Should Control Safety, Not The Drivers

BROWNSBURG, IND.

Just read the October issue of *Sprint Car & Midget* magazine and was surprised when I read the column by Doug Auld questioning the use of the HANS Device in sprint-car and midget racing.

Doug's been on the media side of this sport for a long time and by no means am I slamming his opinions. His writing is an asset to the greatest form of racing on the planet. With that said, is he qualified to give an opinion on such an important topic?

I have to disagree with his statement that the one single reason the HANS Device is so popular is because of the death of Dale Earnhardt and that NASCAR needed a political image fix. Before the death of Earnhardt, NASCAR was working very hard to bring the safety aspect

of stock-car racing into the 21st century. No doubt it was behind during that period of time, but the late Steve Peterson had many programs under way to improve safety in NASCAR. Earnhardt's death certainly put a rush on those efforts.

Before and after Earnhardt's death, we spent a lot of time crash testing seats during our composite seat validation for NASCAR. During these tests we also outfitted the dummies (not referring to race drivers) with head restraints. The HANS was by far the most effective at preventing injuries to the neck.

Doug referred to the fact that sprints and midgets crash different than Indy cars or stock cars and that head restraints are primarily for frontal impacts. He's right about that.

THE TECHNICAL SIDE



CHRIS PAULSEN

The current seats with head surrounds attenuate the side movement of the head. A HANS will take care of frontal impact. Don't ever assume that a frontal impact can't happen in a sprint car. A HANS can save a life in that situation. Saying that a sprint car doesn't have that type of crash very often, so a HANS shouldn't be

required is like saying that they rarely catch on fire anymore so why bother with a firesuit.

As for the sanctioning body mandating a HANS, it's a smart move. The cost of sanctioning a race is expensive. Insurance is a big part of that expense. Increased safety lowers insurance cost not to mention the obvious.

Doug mentioned the driver should decide if the HANS makes them safer or not. I can say this with confidence; most drivers think they know exactly what happens when they crash because they're in the car but they really don't. In a violent crash, things happen much faster than a driver could ever record in his brain.

When NASCAR showed crash test video to the drivers, they discovered they really didn't realize what their

bodies did in a crash. During my miss-spent youth, I crashed several sprint cars and I thought I knew what happened during a crash. I really didn't. Drivers don't know everything.

In reality, Dale Earnhardt was responsible for his own death. He had the crew mount the lap belt in such a way that it failed even though his good friend, Bill Simpson, told him that it wasn't mounted properly. Earnhardt thought he knew what was right.

The sanctioning body must do everything in its power to implement safety. This means helmets, firesuits, HANS Devices and proper seats. Sprint-car racing is an extreme sport. Rules governing safety must be mandated and not left to the discretion of the driver.

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