



Message from EMPA President, Dino Oberto

Greetings everyone

I know it's been a while since getting proper information out but I'm happy to finally pass along news on the current state of affairs.

Everyone is well aware of the unfortunate cancellation of the January 1-3 convention all stemming from the novel coronavirus. Disappointing yes, however, after much deliberation among the Board of Directors it was felt that we still should move forward with recognizing the accomplishments of our own as well as those within the sport who make our jobs as professional journalists the very reason why EMPA has stood solid since its inception in 1969.

With that said you will find on the following pages the bios and ballot sheet for 2021. We ask that you take a close look at the names when casting your votes for the respective candidates. The nominees in the corresponding categories, we feel, are great choices, and trust me this was quite the narrowing down process in getting to those who made the final cut.

For all of you who sent in selections we thank you for the input.

Vote casting:

To cast your vote you can do this two ways.

Print out the ballot and return by mail or paste and copy the ballot with your votes and return via email.

When mailing please send to:

EMPA c/o Dino Oberto, 211 Columbus Avenue, Hazle Township, Pa. 18202

When using email please send to: dlmo@ptd.net

Voting will take place through Sunday, December 13 which gives everyone ample time to return your ballots.

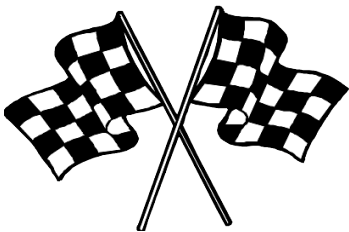
The ballot is the last page of this newsletter and we have also sent it as a separate attachment for your convenience.

PLEASE NOTE THAT IN ORDER TO VOTE OR BE ELIGIBLE FOR AWARDS YOU MUST HAVE YOUR 2021 DUES PAID.

EMPA is an organization of professional writers, broadcasters, announcers, videographers, and photographers working in the motorsports industry, along with Associate and Corporate members.

Board of Directors:

Dino Oberto, President
Earl Krause, Vice President
Carol Houssock, Secretary
Jeff Gromis, Treasurer
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www.empaonline.org



Writer and photographer contests:

Writers, the deadline for sending in your entries will be extended until the end of this month (November).

Photographers, as you may know by now your contest will be conducted virtually. Chairman Bob Yurko is working out the final details and things are shaping up nicely, so start preparing your entries as they will be following the current guidelines.

We want to send a big thanks out to Pocono Raceway and Brice's NAPA Auto Parts for their continued support in the writers and photographers contests.

Award presentations:

As of now we are looking towards a location suitable for presenting a 'select' number of 2021 awards. There are several options on the table and, for right now, much hinges on the restrictions in place by the state of Pennsylvania. We assure you this will be conducted in a proper and safe manner. Our intent is to have the gathering in early 2021 and we will keep updating you as the information presents itself.

Those elected into the Hall of Fame will be deferred until the 2022 convention.

Selections:

Please take a close look at the nominees and we ask that when casting your vote to do so with an open mind. I cannot stress the importance of how each vote counts so please send in your returns.

If you're aware of a member not receiving emails, please let us know ASAP so that we can make the correction.

Thank you everyone for the patience and understanding.

Peace and out, Dino

EMPA Hall of Fame

BOB ROSSELL (lock—no vote needed)

A pioneer race driver and builder of stock cars, Bob began his successful career in 1958 with just a Chevy and an engine. A few years later he'd find himself at the top of the list with the big names in the class.

Bob was talented on both dirt and asphalt. He was a member of the All Star League from 1967-71 tallying nearly 50 wins, including two Wall Stadium 300 lappers, as his biggest victories.

His chassis building skills were considered by many one of the best. Names like Cagle, Brenn and Manchester had much success in a Rossell-built car.

EMPA Hall of Fame (please vote for 4 of the 8 listed)

FRANK RIO

For seven decades and counting car owner Frank Rio has been the patriarch of a PA-based family dirt Modified team. His signature No. R-10 (as a salute to the "Rio" name) has been a mainstay in eastern PA and New Jersey racing.

In the mid-1980s, before embarking on a Hall of Fame Sprint Car career, Frank's son-in-law Fred Rahmer drove the R-10 Modified to many victories at PA's Grandview Speedway.

Frank and his late brother Pete originally had the No. 39 Modified, driven by greats like George Sleight, Dick Havens, Stan Ploski, Leon Manchester, Budd Olsen, Ed Pratt, Dizzy Dean and Jackie Evans.

In the 1970s, the Rio Modified became the now-familiar No. R-10 that Frank fielded with Terry Ebersole, Jerry Verona and Jack McCabe at NJ's East Windsor and Flemington; with its new driver Glen Fitzcharles winning features and titles. In the years that have followed, Frank Rio and proud son Frank Jr. have fielded the No. R-10 for drivers Howie Cronce, Frank Cozze, Dave Blaney (at Syracuse), Meme DeSantis, Ricky Elliott, Darren McCaughey and Wade Hendrickson. By the way, Frank Rio is now 95-years YOUNG!



Hall of Fame Nominees—AMIE TOMAINO

New Jersey's Jamie "The Jet" Tomaino first raced at his "home track" Wall Stadium as an 18-year-old in 1974 in the original Sportsman division with the family No. 56, and by 1975 he was a multi-time feature winner in those cars.

He moved into the full Modifieds within a few years, driving his own car and then wheeling mounts for top owners such as Howard Harvey, Bill Potts and Danny Ust through the 1980s and 90s.

Among his many accomplishments were winning Wall's 1981 Turkey Derby, the 1986 Garden State Classic, and a 1983 Modified race at Va.'s Martinsville Speedway.

Then, in 1990 while driving for Ust, Tomaino became the NASCAR National Modified champion.

Overall, he won 29 Modified features at Wall between 1978 and 1991 and was victorious at N.J.'s then-paved New Egypt Speedway in the 1980s. During that era, he also won two major long-distance features at Ct.'s Stafford Speedway.

Through the 2000s, Tomaino and his signature family No. 99 continued to compete on the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour and until 2016 had run at least one race on the Tour since it began in 1985. Although he has since eased back on traveling to races, he continues to get behind the wheel of his Modified on occasion, and fields cars from his shop for other drivers. Always a fan-favorite, Jamie Tomaino was voted Most Popular Driver on the NASCAR Modified Tour in 1986 and 1987.

BOBBY STULL

Considered one of the most respected chief starters in the business, Bob "Mr. Starter" Stull has had a stellar career as a flagman and race official.

He got his first opportunity to flag in the early 1970's at the then-paved New Egypt Speedway for the American Micro Stock Association and, as they say, the rest was history.

Over the past five decades Stull stood atop the starters stand at no less than 33 different speedways, both dirt and paved.

Aside from working selected tracks, he served for such noted racing clubs as URC and ARDC.

He was also a noted track announcer and corner worker.

Currently, and for the past 10 years, Stull proudly serves as president of the Checkered Flag Fan Club.

BOB FREY

Bob Frey served as an announcer for the National Hot Rod Association for 46 years (1966-2012) and during that time he brought with him a new level of excitement and knowledge that served the sport and business of Drag Racing very well.

First beginning at the Atco (NJ) Dragway (1966-1984), Frey never missed announcing a race there for the next 18 years; even when he served in the U.S. Air Force and was stationed at nearby McGuire Air Force Base. And his efforts were of such quality at the South Jersey track that he was asked to announce special Drag Racing events for the International Hot Rod Association, American Hot Rod Association and NASCAR.

But the unassuming and approachable Frey – who is blessed with a silky-smooth voice and a wonderful sense of humor – really made his mark from 1985-2012 as "The Voice of Drag Racing" for all of the NHRA's National Events. He also served Drag Racing with distinction as a columnist for *NATIONAL DRAGSTER* ("Bob Tales") and *Dragracecentral.com* ("Did You Know?") and hosted the national television coverage of NHRA Sportsman Drag Racing on TNN's "NHRA Today" and ESPN2's "NHRA2Day."

Frey – who still does some special work for the NHRA – is seen as someone who always put his best foot forward when it came to representing himself and Drag Racing. And his goal as an announcer and broadcaster was to enlighten someone who was new to the sport, while at the same time adding to the education of hard-core fans with new insights and great stories.

And while he was, and is, friends with many of the most famous personalities that have been in Drag Racing for the past 50 years, he has never forgotten about the guy or gal who raced on the local level. He believes that their efforts mean so much to the development of Drag Racing.

JOHNNY MACKISON SR.

Johnny Mackison, Sr., is truly one of the earliest racing superstars in Central PA.

Johnny's racing career started back in 1954 when he and Hall of Famer Davey Brown decided to take on auto racing at the now defunct Bowling Green Speedway in Jefferson, PA.

That combination tallied 133 feature wins through the 1963 season opener, when the feature divisions were called jalopies, bugs and flatheads to super modifieds and sprint cars.

Johnny recorded wins at Bowling Green (his initial home track and the site of his first win in 1954), Susquehanna, Williams Grove, Lincoln, Reading, Hatfield, and Port Royal (the track of his last win in 1962).



VAN MAY

Acting on the advice of older brother Dub, Van May moved from his El Paso, Texas home to Pennsylvania 50 years ago to pursue a career as a full-time sprint car racer.

May's skill behind the wheel is highly regarded, yet his first four years in Pennsylvania produced only a single win. Even so, some of the on-track achievements are legendary, like the time he balanced a sprinter on its right front and rear wheels, since the left front had come off, in order to qualify for a feature.

Such talent netted championships at Susquehanna in 1981 and at Lincoln the following year. He has 74 victories, including a Williams Grove National Open win in 1977, the final year it was 150-laps, and a \$10,000-to-win score at Zanesville, Ohio in 1979 as part of a dozen wins that year. He was also a winner in Midgets.

And despite suffering traumatic injuries, including the 1987 one in which he lost an eye and ended his race-driving career, May has always been an enthusiastic supporter of sprint car racing. Over the years, he's sought other ways to be involved and support the sport he loves including as a maker of clever racing components and tools as well as a race photographer.

DON KRIETZ JR.

Second generation racer, Don Kreitz, Jr., did it his way as a driver/owner earning 200 sprint cars wins, including the 1986 \$50,000 Kings Royal at Eldora Speedway.

He was also inducted into the National Sprint Car Hall of Fame in 2015. After starting his career in the Modifieds at Big Diamond, Grandview and Reading in 1978 as a 16-year old and recording 13 wins, Donnie moved to the sprint cars in 1983 with the United Racing Club where he grabbed 8 club wins and won the group's season championship along with Rookie of the Year honors.

That quickly led to a move to the 410 sprints and Don's list of accomplishments from there is impressive including track championships at Selinsgrove ('85 and '86), Williams Grove ('90, '91, '92 and '93), Susquehanna ('92 and '03) and the 1992 Central PA Overall title.

He amassed wins in 8 states including 10 World of Outlaw A-Mains, 2 WoO Preliminary features, 2 WoO II Gumout series features and 8 All Star Circuit of Champions main events.

Kreitz left the sprints for the first half of 1987 to run a NASCAR Busch Grand National car on both the national and the north series short tracks, recording 3 Top 10s before deciding to return to the sprinters.

Although lingering effects of a concussion led to his retirement in 2015, he has continued as an owner of a sprint car team that today includes his long-time mechanic Davey Brown and driver Lance Dewease.

HOWIE COMMANDER

Veteran promoter Howie Commander, who steers the ship at New York tracks including Lebanon Valley and Albany-Saratoga, led the cause for justice in getting all New York state tracks to be open like other outdoor venues during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ever since Commander's Uncle Harry gave him a box of Sugar Daddy candies and suggested he try selling them to fellow elementary school students at a small profit, which he did, business success has come with hard work by the promoter.

Commander, at 76, is just as energetically running his tracks today as when he began taking care of the concessions at Lebanon Valley 60 years ago.

In 1962, Commander's family recognized that the 18-year-old's skills and work ethic would be of great benefit to the track. His Uncle Lou asked Howie to come along to Chicago, so they could attend one of the first-ever racing promoters' workshops in 1962.

In the spring of 1970, Commander became general manager of the speedway and took over operations while still prepping the track each week. His first step was to raise first-place money to \$1000 among the highest in the nation, especially for the track's headline division which had rules designed for cars that could be competitive on a reasonably-affordable budget.

In the 50 years since, Commander has made speedway success look easy, surrounding himself with quality officials while regularly improving the track experience for fans and teams.

This year, he was focused on opening his tracks to fans, so when he noticed that certain religious groups sued the state and won the right to gather in worship, he was convinced that race tracks should be offered the same opportunity.

Commander filed suit and welcomed area tracks to join the action. While ultimately unsuccessful, largely due to delaying tactics that would preclude operation beyond when it is seasonably feasible, Commander's effort, dedication, and willingness to apply his own resources for the benefit of racers, fans, and the sport in general have never wavered.



Richie Evans Memorial Northeast Driver of the Year – Asphalt (Please vote for 1 of the 4 listed)

MATT HIRSCHMAN

Despite a season that was shortened by the novel coronavirus, Matt Hirschman still put together an amazing year of wins, championships and consistent finishes. Heading into Turkey Derby XLVII, the Northampton, Pa., asphalt ace has raced 32 times and thus far won 17 features while racking up 26 top-5s and 30 top-10s in the process.

He started off the 2020 season in Florida winning between Bronson and New Smyrna Speedways, but after the virus hit and halted most everything, he did not get back on track until mid-June at Mahoning Valley Speedway. From then on, he reeled off a flurry of wins and top placings while traversing back and forth across the Northeast each week-end since.

With the winning and top finishes also came multiple titles including the 2020 Speed Week Champion, 2020 Evergreen Raceway Champion, 2020 Mahoning Valley Speedway Hall of Fame Series Champion, 2020 Tri-Track Open Modified Series Champion, and the 2020 Race of Champions 250 Champion.

The RoC 250 win was his record-extending eighth, putting him at what could be considered an unreachable realm.

His 17 wins to date are the most in the Northeast among pavement racers. In 32 starts he has 26 top-5s and 30 top-10s.

JUSTIN BONSIGNORE

During a COVID-19 shortened season on the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour, Justin Bonsignore kept up his fast pace to become champion for the second time in three years. His first Tour title was in 2018.

This year's accomplishment was a true combination effort among the 32-year-old driver from Holtsville (Long Island), N.Y., car owner Ken Massa who fields the Phoenix Communications No. 51, crew chief Ryan Stone, and a dedicated team in the pit area and shop.

Bonsignore won the Tour opener at Pa.'s Jennerstown Speedway, then was first and fifth in back-to-back events at N.H.'s White Mountain Motorsports Park. At the next Jennerstown event he was fifth; then came a victory at Monadnock (N.H.), second places at Thompson (Ct.) and on the New Hampshire Mile; and a third at Stafford before his fourth place in the 2020 Tour finale in the Thompson World Series that clinched the title.

Bonsignore started racing at age eight in Go-karts then first competed in a Charger stock car at his home track Riverhead Raceway in 2005. He moved into the full Modifieds there in 2006 and has become established as one of the best in the division, locally and on the Tour. A versatile competitor, he has also won on the tough Winter Indoor Auto Racing Series in a TQ Midget and Champ Kart.

JON McKENNEDY

Jon McKennedy from Chelmsford, MA split his time between driving two drastically different cars.

In 2020, he ran all nine Whelen Modified Tour races in the legendary 7NY for Tom Baldwin Racing. McKennedy earned a pair of poles (White Mountain and Monadnock, both in New Hampshire) and finished in the top-five in nearly half the events run, including a second at the season-ending Thompson (CT) Speedway where he secured runner-up in the championship standings.

He may have spoiled new ISMA big-block super modified owners Tim and Sheryll Lepine as he won all three races, including both New Hampshire events, the Ollie Silva Memorial at Lee and the Star Classic in Epping, plus the World Series at Thompson.

DEREK GRIFFITH

Derek Griffith, from Hudson, New Hampshire won the first heat and feature he ran, at 12 years old, in 2009. He went on to win six more in the Thunder Light class at his hometown speedway.

The next decade saw steady ascent through local and regional classes, but 2020 was a breakout year. Griffith started with a Speedweeks Super Late Model championship at New Smyrna (FL) including a win in the 50-lapper over Ty Majeski. He also received a last-minute call that resulted in his ARCA debut at Daytona International Speedway. Remarkably, Griffith won the pole at the 2.5-mile superspeedway then finished as runner-up to defending champion Sam Mayer.

Dodging the challenges of COVID, Griffith ran super late model, pro stock, and ARCA races. He won a pair of \$10,000-to-win shows and ran up front in ARCA at Kansas, Kentucky, Pocono, and Bristol despite the pandemic-based rule changes that prohibited practice and qualifying, which were especially challenging for a rookie like Griffith.

He rounded out the year with a win at Lee USA (NH) Speedway in the Granite State Pro Stock Series and is eyeing another good run in the Snowball Derby at Pensacola, Florida's Five Flags Speedway in December.



Richie Evans Memorial Northeast Driver of the Year – Dirt (Please vote for 1 of the 5 listed)

STEWART FRIESEN

Canadian Stewart Friesen once again competed full-time in the NASCAR Gander RV & Outdoors Truck Series, driving the No. 52 Toyota Tundra for Halmar Friesen Racing. However, his roots, racing in northeast Dirt Modifieds, was a focal point in 2020.

Running the powerful No. 44 for HFR, Friesen authored a very rewarding season as he collected a Northeast leading 26 feature wins, tops among both dirt and asphalt racers.

From extra distance races to regular shows “Stewie” was always in contention for the wins as well. He was the 2020 champion of both the North and South Region of the Short Track Super Series and was listed as the point leader in the Super DIRTcar Series prior to the season’s cancellation due to the coronavirus.

In the Gander Truck series he had 12 top-ten finishes with his best being a 4th (twice).

FREDDY RAHMER

Third generation racer Freddie Rahmer continued to show his strength as a 410 Sprint car driver in Central Pennsylvania in spite of the seriously Covid19-shortened season.

Freddie recorded 8 feature wins while capturing the season point championships at both Williams Grove and Lincoln Speedways, becoming only one of four drivers in history to take both titles in the same season.

In another very unique accomplishment for any racer, Freddie was named Williams Grove’s Mechanic of the Year. He had 14 Top 10’s and 12 Top 5’s at Lincoln and 10 Top 10’s and 7 top 5’s at Williams Grove. He capped off his season with a victory at BAPS Motor Speedway.

Freddy’s grandfather, Frank, is instrumental in his racing, as is his 2018 EMPA Hall of Fame inductee and father, Fred.

MARK SMITH

Perhaps no driver can boast what Mark Smith has accomplished in 2020, winning over half his starts, 21 out 40.

And what’s just as impressive is the way he went about it, logging nearly 30,000 miles across the country with his 360 Sprint car. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Smith raced anywhere and everywhere he could and, in the process, won not only in his home state of Pennsylvania but likewise in New Jersey, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Arkansas, Missouri, Tennessee and Louisiana,

He also captured the 2020 Selinsgrove Speedway 360 class championship despite not running for points. There was also a 410 victory as part of his impressive total.

But wait there’s more...Smith also dabbled in the NASCAR Gander Outdoors Series when he drove on the road course this summer at Daytona International Speedway.

MATT SHEPPARD

It seems each year that Savannah, NY’s Matt Sheppard has made winning features his thing. In 2020 the 38-year old ace turned in yet another great season of dirt Modified racing, winning close to 25 feature, which was the second highest total among ALL northeast drivers.

A past winner of the EMPA Richie Evans Northeast Driver of the Year, ‘Super Matt’ made the best of the shortened season due to the coronavirus pandemic as he competed nearly 75 times between the local scene or touring series. Either way it was usually resulting in a victory, top-5 (48) or top-10 (58).

He collected 9 of his victories at Outlaw Speedway with the Big Blocks. Not surprising, Sheppard also scored on the Super DIRTcar Series and had a very profitable run with on the Short Track Super Series tour.

Sheppard just wrapped a three-race sweep in the ‘Cajun Swing’ of the STSS in Louisiana over Stewart Friesen.

GREGG SATTERLEE

In 2020 Indiana, Pa.’s Gregg Satterlee had a very productive season despite the COVID-19 that had hard effects on many in short track racing.

Nicknamed “The Truth” Satterlee was on track no less than 41 times with his Gary Satterlee-owned No. 22 Rocket dirt late model.

His travels began in February in Georgia and ran through the end of October at Bedford where took the lead just past the halfway mark at the 3rd Annual Keystone Cup and sailed away to a convincing victory worth \$20,000, which was his 10th of the season.

At mid-season he scored back-to-back-to-back wins at Path Valley, Port Royal and Selinsgrove Speedways. His 10 wins was the most among Northeast dirt late model racers, which also upped his career win total to over 80.



Al Holbert Memorial National Driver of the Year (Please vote for 1 of the 6 listed)

SCOTT DIXON

By finishing third in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES finale on October 25 at ST. Petersburg, Scott Dixon sealed his sixth INDYCAR championship by just 16 points over defending NTT INDYCAR SERIES champion Josef Newgarden.

Driving the No. 9 PNC Bank Honda for Chip Ganassi Racing, Dixon's stellar 2020 season also helped Honda win the 2020 NTT INDYCAR SERIES Manufacturers' Championship.

Dixon, who won four times this season, including the first three races of the season, now sits just one title behind the all-time INDYCAR record of seven championships, set by the legendary A.J. Foyt.

The championship is the 13th for Chip Ganassi Racing and its second in the last three years. Dixon, 40, who last won the title in 2018, became the first INDYCAR champion age 40 or older since Nigel Mansell in 1993.

KEVIN HARVICK

Although he failed to race for the NASCAR Cup Series championship, regular season champion and nine-race winner Kevin Harvick put together a season that won't soon be forgotten.

Until his elimination at Martinsville, Harvick was at the forefront of the points virtually the entire season. His 9 wins was a Series best as well as garnering the most playoff points throughout the year. Likewise, he was the leader in top 5s (20) and top 10s (27), laps led (1531) and laps complete (9911) in 36 starts. He finished the season fifth in points.

By completing lap 27 at Phoenix, Harvick surpassed NASCAR Hall of Famer Rusty Wallace for 13th on the all-time laps completed list. Harvick has now finished 205,104 laps in his NASCAR Cup Series career.

CHASE BRISCOE

Chase Briscoe, 25, is a third-generation racer from the tiny town of Mitchell, Indiana. Despite a relatively modest amount of racing, Briscoe has made the most of every opportunity presented in his 14-year-long career.

With fewer than two dozen micros, midgets, and sprint races under his belt, Briscoe moved to Charlotte, NC in the hopes of racing in NASCAR. On that path, he won the ARCA championship as a rookie. After that, Briscoe won the 2018 truck race at Eldora driving for ThorSport. He won the inaugural Charlotte Roval Xfinity race in 2019, a race win that came driving for Stewart-Haas.

Looking back, Briscoe who has earned every ride through talent and dignity; he's never brought so much as a dime to a ride, thought his NASCAR hopes would be over had he not won at Charlotte.

Briscoe's breakout was 2020, when he won nine times including at Darlington when he triumphed in a fender-scraping battle over Kyle Busch. In the latter third of the season, it was announced that Briscoe is being promoted to replace the retiring Clint Bowyer in the Stewart-Haas #14 Cup car.

KYLE LARSON

Kyle Larson could almost be an International driver of the year since his first win came on New Year's Day piloting a Midget in New Zealand. But his amazing 2020 season here in the US began just a few days later. He proved 13 can be a lucky number when he won the Chili Bowl in his 13th attempt.

He was the hottest commodity all summer long, helping pack short tracks with fans wanting to watch him master another track, and earning accolades from coast to coast from fans and motorsports press alike.

From historic win streaks in a 410 winged sprint car, to taking the checkered flag in just his 2nd time ever in a dirt Late Model, Larson captured everyone's attention as the most watched driver of the year. As of this writing Larson's win percentage stands at an almost unfathomable 50%, with the potential to go even higher by the end of November if he chooses to compete in late-season Late Model and Midget events.

In a year that brought some racing to a halt, Kyle Larson put his foot to the floor and produced the winningest season we won't see until another Kyle Larson comes along.

BRANDON SHEPPERD

While a gloomy cloud of uncertainty hung over most of motorsports – and the world – throughout 2020, one thing remained as constant and consistent as ever: the dominance of Brandon Sheppard.

In his fourth full season as a platinum driver with the World of Outlaws Morton Buildings Late Model Series, the New Berlin, Ill. native extended his reign as the current king of the Outlaws. His 2020 championship was his second-straight and third in the last four years.

At 27-years old, 'The Rocket Shepp' is already one of the most accomplished racers in the 19-year history of the series. His third title equals him with Billy Moyer Sr. and Darrell Lanigan for the second-most, putting him just one title away from tying Josh Richards for the most crowns in history.

This season saw him make 40 starts winning 14 features, 31 top-5s and 36 top-10s and setting fast time on 8 occasions while garnering nearly \$250,000 in earnings.

On pace to shatter the record books, Sheppard will enter the 2021 season with 69 career wins to his credit, only eight behind Richards (77) for the most wins in series history.



DENNY HAMLIN

Denny Hamlin, a 39-year-old former short track racer from Virginia, has seen all the highs and lows a racer can experience in 2020.

The season began with his 2nd consecutive and 3rd overall, Daytona 500 victory. He followed that up with 6 more wins at tracks in 6 different states – Darlington, Homestead Miami, Pocono, Kansas, Dover and Talladega.

In addition to his 7 wins Hamlin was the runner-up in 5 races, and he led all drivers with 11 stage wins in a season unlike any other. With twelve title runs in his 14 years in the elite division, Hamlin remains one of the best without a Cup series championship.

While he came up short in the championship finale in Phoenix, Hamlin's remarkable run in 2020 demonstrates, once again, his strength and staying power in NASCAR's top series.

New England Race Fuels John Blewett III Memorial Young Gun Award: (Please vote for 1 of the 4 listed)
(Please note that the criteria for this award has been revised to be between the ages of 15 and 21 for eligibility)

ALEX YANKOWSKI

16-year Alex Yankowski continued to make inroads with the highly competitive 358-dirt Modifieds.

This past season he shined weekly at Big Diamond Speedway where he won back-to-back features just as he turned 16. He remained among the championship points leaders before earning a solid fifth in the final standings.

Yankowski was also a hot ticket at tracks such as Grandview Speedway, Port Royal Speedway and most notably Bridgeport Speedway where he recently scored a big victory in the Danny Serrano 100 against a stellar field. He has also notched three runner-up finishes throughout the year there as well.

At age 14 Yankowski was making all kinds of headlines when he won Sportsman Modified championships at Big Diamond and Five Mile Points Speedways and was also the American Racer Cup titlist on the Short Track Super Series.

He has raced in USAC East Coast Sprinters and SpeedSTRs and coming up through the ranks competed Slingshots and was a road racer in go-karts.

AUSTIN BEERS

2020, though disastrous for many, was a career-advancing year for the 17-year-old from Northampton, PA.

Son of asphalt Modified legend Eric Beers, Austin followed in his father's tire tracks when longtime car owners Dave and Laura DeLange from Lockport, NY took a chance and put him in their infamous No. 45 Modified.

Austin's varied racing experience prior to 2020 prepared him for this big move, and he didn't disappoint. Eric guided the way as his spotter and he had the best seat in the house to watch Austin race at three tracks in 2020.

His runner-up finish in the historic Race of Champions 250 at Lake Erie Speedway was just one of his season highlights. He also finished 2nd in the Race of Champions Modified Tour standings, with an average finish of 3rd. Austin raced several times at his home track, Mahoning Valley Speedway where he won back-to-back features in September, including the 800th Modified feature held. The team also ran at Evergreen Raceway, where Beers finished 3rd in points.

He previously was the class champion at Mahoning Valley Speedway in the Hobby Stocks and Sportsman Modifieds, respectively, and since 2016 has won at least one feature each year.

Frank Sinatra sang it, but Austin Beers lived it – "When I was 17, it was a very good year."

KENNY MILLER III

20-year old Kenny Miller's stock just continues to rise, evident not just by his prior season success but his breakout 2020 campaign as well.

Miller, who hails from Morgantown, Pa., got his season underway in February with a very impressive runner-up at the East Coast Indoor Dirt Nationals inside the Cure Insurance Center in Trenton in an oh-so-close-to-winning effort over Erick Rudolph.

When the outdoor season eventually got underway the Millersville University student continued to shine with 600 Micro Sprints, USAC East Coast Sprint Cars and the USAC SpeedSTRs, winning in all three.

2020 marked his first time racing with the Sprint car. In just his third start he was a winner at Delaware International Speedway and took a second win at Big Diamond Speedway.

At Bridgeport Speedway, where Miller won with the 600, he collected the season ending verdict with the SpeedSTR.

He is coming off a very successful 2019 season in which he captured a pair of track championships, one each at Greenwood Valley Action Track and Action Track USA while collecting a number of victories at both. He is also a USAC ¼-Midget National champion and ARDC Midget Rookie of the Year.



JACKSON GILL

Jackson Gill, a 17-year-old high school senior from the Brewerton, N.Y. region, has quickly advanced through the ranks.

He first raced Go-karts at age five and when he reached his teens won in local Sportsman competition and at The Dirt Track at Charlotte (N.C.) two years in a row. He then moved up to 358 Modifieds and in 2020 won for the first time in that division at N.Y.'s Can-Am Speedway.

Ready for the next challenge, Jackson and his family team will move into big-block DIRT Modifieds for 2021.

Promotional Effort of the Year (Please vote for 1 of the 2 listed)

MAHONING VALLEY SPEEDWAY HALL OF FAME SERIES

When promoter Keith Hoffman introduced the first of its kind 'Mahoning Valley Speedway Hall of Fame Series' that paid homage to past greats, little did anyone know it would turn out to be one of the most successful promotions in track history. Each of the special 5-race events saw bigger than normal crowds and car counts, making the ¼-mile paved oval the hotspot for short track pavement racing in 2020.

Likewise, under Hoffman's guidance, Mahoning Valley enjoyed one of its most productive seasons in years as evident by the uptick each week in both the grandstands and pits.

PORT ROYAL SPEEDWAY

Despite a season of indecisiveness for many, Port Royal Speedway was able to offer fans not only a weekly slate of great racing but brought in a number of well-to-do touring groups. That included the URC, Short Track Super Series, Lucas Oil Dirt Late Models, All Star Circuit of Champions Sprint Cars and USAC Raid Tire East Coast Sprint Cars, all of which boasted great crowds and car counts all season.

Chris Economaki Memorial News Maker of the Year (no vote needed)

Dirt Track Digest TV

EMPA MEMBER AWARDS

Jim Hunter Memorial Writer of the Year (Please vote for 1)

Jason Beck
Ted Schmidt
Jeremy Elliott
Steven Ovens
Carol Houssock

Ace Lane Sr., Memorial Photographer of the Year (Please vote for 1)

Rich Corbett
Walt Smith
Harry Meeks
Debbie Gastelu
Rick Sweeten

President	Dino Oberto	dlmo@ptd.net
Vice President	Earl Krause	earl@aarn.com
Secretary	Carol Houssock	carol2race@aol.com
Treasurer	Jeff Gromis	jjg495299@comcast.net
Member	Karl Fredrickson	kfredrickson@speedwayillustrated.com



EMPA HALL OF FAME – **(VOTE FOR 4)**

- FRANK RIO
- JAMIE TOMAINO
- BOBBY STULL
- BOB FREY
- JOHNNY MACKISON, SR.
- VAN MAY
- DON KREITZ, JR.
- HOWIE COMMANDER

RICHIE EVANS MEMORIAL NORTHEAST DRIVER OF THE YEAR - *ASPHALT* **(VOTE FOR 1)**

- MATT HIRSCHMAN
- JUSTIN BONSIGNORE
- JON MCKENNEDY
- DEREK GRIFFITH

RICHIE EVANS MEMORIAL NORTHEAST DRIVER OF THE YEAR – *DIRT* **(VOTE FOR 1)**

- STEWART FRIESEN
- FREDDY RAHMER
- MARK SMITH
- MATT SHEPPARD
- GREGG SATTERLEE

AL HOLBERT MEMORIAL NATIONAL DRIVER OF THE YEAR **(VOTE FOR 1)**

- SCOTT DIXON
- KEVIN HARVICK
- CHASE BRISCOE
- KYLE LARSON
- BRANDON SHEPPERD
- DENNY HAMLIN

JOHN BLEWETT III YOUNG GUN AWARD PRESENTED BY NEW ENGLAND FUELS **(VOTE FOR 1)**

- ALEX YANKOWSKI
- AUSTIN BEERS
- KENNY MILLER III
- JACKSON GILL

PROMOTION EFFORT OF THE YEAR **(VOTE FOR 1)**

- MAHONING VALLEY SPEEDWAY HALL OF FAME SERIES
- PORT ROYAL SPEEDWAY

JIM HUNTER MEMORIAL WRITER OF THE YEAR **(VOTE FOR 1)**

- JASON BECK
- TED SCHMIDT
- JEREMY ELLIOTT
- STEVEN OVENS
- CAROL HOUSOCK

ACE LANE, SR. MEMORIAL PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR **(VOTE FOR 1)**

- RICH CORBETT
- WALT SMITH
- HARRY MEEKS
- DEBBIE GASTELU
- RICK SWEETEN

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN VIA MAIL OR EMAIL, AS DIRECTED. REMEMBER, YOUR 2021 MEMBERSHIP HAS TO BE RENEWED IN ORDER TO VOTE OR WIN AN AWARD.