

closerlook: Builder, not bewildered: New racer connection path ... by Jim Carson

A few car counts in pavement Late Model events and other divisions of short-track racing have been unexpectedly high this spring. There have been as least as many disappointments in that area, and while exorbitant fuel prices make up one main reason, there are others.

Some racers are unable to bring their machines to local facilities as often as they would like, simply because of problems acquiring parts. The needed elements can be large such as engines or transmissions, or something as small as properly-fitting fasteners.

The short-track community is exactly that, and racers have been known to help other racers when needed. In the pits on a race day or practice day, parts are borrowed or given frequently, and usually those pieces are not available on racetrack parts vendors.

One man, known to a huge portion of the short-track community, is attempting to take advantage of both the needs of some competitors and the sharing nature of the sport. Jim Cramsey has worked at Port City Racecars for about 10 years, when the chassis builder relocated from Michigan to the Charlotte area. At first it was under the banner of Crooks Racing which was a Port City dealer, but in 2018 Gary Crooks purchased the brand. Port City is now owned by Terry Jones of Rette-Jones Racing, but Crooks and Cramsey are still workhorses at the factory in Mooresville, N.C.

After a long stint as the parts manager at Hamke Race Cars, Cramsey sampled the higher levels of racing. He spent more than 15 years with NASCAR national teams Hendrick Motorsports and Dale Earnhardt Inc., mostly in the role of parts manager. He's the production manager at Port City.

Cramsey, a native of Allentown, Pa., doesn't travel with Port City customers as much as Crooks and others with the logos on their shirts. He sees enough through his network and his occasional visits to nearby bullrings to try to set up something to take advantage of both the needs of some racers and the sharing nature of the sport.

Earlier this month, he went live with his Race Team Builder website. The concept had been active on an informal basis for over a year, largely in the northeastern United States.

"From Covid on, I've noticed what

cars are sitting and what people are needing to get them out," Cramsey said. "People can sign up to lease an engine or rent a set of shocks. If somebody spends their whole budget on opening night, a lot of guys are done for the season, and this sport can't have that any more. I'm hearing customers' calls saying, 'I don't know how we're gonna get back out there this year,' and this can help."

A racer who has just sold a car and/or other equipment may still have items such as drivetrain or suspension components, a shock dyno, or a truck or trailer or parts for those. Something like that could be the difference in another driver from a nearby location getting back into action or sitting out more months. And someone who rents or lends needed parts could still feel involved in the sport and use his new acquaintance as a competitive outlet.

"Another factor that keeps cars away is lack of shop or track help, and this can be a way to gain that as well," Cramsey said.

High-visibility web listings for racers in either the needing or lending categories are available for \$29 a month or \$79 for three months. For the latter choice, the gift certificates awarded from Port City and other partners such as Afco and Longacre Racing Products and Fire Suppression Engineering will balance out that cost. The site is divided into dirt and asphalt sections, with options for road racers and drag racers.

"I have people messaging me pretty often, getting feels on how they can go about it," Cramsey said about potential donors or lenders. "With me knowing people from coast to coast, there are connections that'll spread the word. When you sign up, you can pick your

region. Within a two-hour radius of here, with dirt, asphalt and drags, there have to be over 200 cars sitting."

"The person that's gonna go to the parts trailer at a track or with a series isn't the person looking to get a set of

shocks. That's for finishing and knick-knacks and that type of thing. I think this is gonna help racers in a lot of places. It's taken a lot of work to get it there. It really feels like a whole different avenue."



Kim Cramsey

Jim Cramsey, the production manager at Port City Racecars and a former NASCAR Cup Series team parts manager, has started **RaceTeamBuilder.com**, a path for some short-track racers to get help from others and compete more often.



South Boston Speedway

The Race Team Builder method is not meant to step on the toes of those who haul parts trailers to racetracks or with touring series.

Checkered Flag

Kyle Busch: 1985-2026



Eddie Richie/Turn 1 Photos

In addition to 63 career wins in the NASCAR Cup Series, 102 in the Busch/Nationwide/Xfinity/O'Reilly Auto Parts Series and 69 in Craftsman Trucks, Kyle Busch amassed numerous pavement Late Model triumphs, including the 2009 and 2017 editions of the Snowball Derby at Five Flags Speedway in Pensacola, Fla.



Ken Causey collection
When NASCAR changed its rule before 2002 prohibiting drivers under age 18 from competing in its three national series, Kyle Busch found a ride in the American Speed Association National Tour with the Noah Yoder Ford team. Busch didn't win under that ASA banner, peaking with two fourth-place finishes and an eighth-place points spot, before making his mark in NASCAR for good in 2003.



Rob Street

Kyle Busch competed alongside his son Brexton in legends cars last November at the Las Vegas Bullring. This season Brexton is racing in the Junior Late Model class at Madera Speedway, in a car fielded by California veteran Charlie Wilson. Brexton's second race was last Saturday, two days before his 11th birthday, and he finished second to Jaxon Burnett.



Oriana Lovell/OL Photos

Kyle Busch competed in three Super Late Model races in 2025. His last start of the year was in the Snowball Derby. Busch also ran twice in the spring and summer at Oxford Plains Speedway in Maine, the site of his Oxford 250 weekend sweep in 2011.



Gavin Ottarski

One of the sites of several of Kyle Busch's Late Model wins was his home track, the Bullring at Las Vegas Motor Speedway, where he first strapped into a Late Model owned by local legend Dick Cobb. This Super Late Model was in victory lane in a Bullring event early in 2020, near the end of the Kyle Busch Motorsports short-track heyday..