

# The Tradition Continues! World Series of Asphalt Stock Car Racing!

## Close, close, then a cigar for Wagner

**SAMSULA, Fla. (February 12, 2009)** – Limited Late Models were a staple of the annual World Series of Asphalt Stock Car Racing from the mid-1990s. The Limiteds usually played a supporting role to Super Late Models and tour-type modifieds. David Wagner was a regular in the class in the February festivities at New Smyrna Speedway from 2004-06, although rarely was he a threat to win at the historic half-mile.

When Pro Late Models became a part of the Speedweeks slate in 2007, the crate-engine class usually didn't knock the Supers and modifieds off the top billing, but they were given a more prominent position. The Pros had a 100-lap feature that headlined one night out of the nine innings of each World Series.

Wagner joined the Pro wars in 2008 with a Lethander chassis that was brand new at the time. His fortunes skyrocketed, although it took until 2009 for him to break through with a victory in the Sunshine State ... 17 years ago today.

His 2009 triumph, on the Thursday night which was the next-to-last race for the Pros, helped push him to the Speedweeks crown. He had pulled off five second-place finishes in his #98 before that win, three in 2008 and more in the two nights leading up to the breakthrough.

"I knew we were getting close a couple of times. It was fun down there. We had a good car and a good crew. We kept our noses down and kept digging," said Wagner, from Akron, Ohio. "I remember how the win went. We started

third and got up there within two or three laps. I was leading and turning my line, running good laps, and with three or four to go I was thinking we were gonna win. Then the nerves took over, but we finally pulled it off. It's weird how it all took place."

Not everything was terrific with the Wagner camp in 2009. His teammate for the week, in a car owned by his father-in-law Rob Petrus, was Landon Cassill, who was fresh off his first nearly-full season in the then-NASCAR Busch Series. Cassill won on the second night and led the points after Monday, but then a wreck and an engine problem hampered the #7 side.

Cassill wasn't the only NASCAR connection on the team. Wagner's crew chief for the week was Rich Lushes, who has been a crew chief for ThorSport Racing's Craftsman Truck Series and has three wins with Ben Rhodes; he'll be on the pit box for Cole Butcher in 2026. Rich's brother Mark Lushes was calling the shots for Cassill during this '09 New Smyrna effort; Mark still races in various divisions in the Buckeye State.

Wagner remained on a tear that season. In that two-year span, he won 14 features at Barberton Speedway, his home bullring which had a template-body class at the time, plus a special at the Lorain County track. His final Speedweeks visit was in 2010, but the magic was left in Ohio for the team which parked in the turn-three infield area each February.



LMD file

**David Wagner finished no worse than fifth** in seven Pro Late Model races in February of 2009 at New Smyrna Speedway.



LMD file

**David Wagner and his wife Robin** celebrate the 2009 Speedweeks Pro Late Model championship, with his father-in-law Rob Petrus behind them (left). Robin sadly passed away in 2023 after a long illness.

"The last year we got wrecked on a Thursday. We had Friday and Saturday to race and we could've probably fixed the car," he said. "I told Robbie, 'Let's go to the beach and relax. We're done for the week.' I still have my piece of the windshield from when (next pit-stall driver and Canadian visitor) Kirk Hooker's car when we wrecked. His right rear tire came across my windshield, and he signed it for me after the race. We still talk now and then."

Petrus sold that Late Model after the 2012 campaign. Since then Wagner has run for various car owners in street stocks and economy modifieds, winning in 2025, just before his 61st birthday.

"I work for Akron Fire," said Wagner, who's a maintenance supervisor. "Some of the fireman come in, and I'm

two times their age."

Petrus, who drove at various levels until the early-2000s, was at New Smyrna for this 60th edition of Speedweeks. He's the spotter for Ohio teenager Chloe Mazzagatti. She has a promising future in and out of their home state, but it's more up in the air for the families' home track, as what's now called Norton Raceway Park was sold in December and there have been no developments about racing in 2026.

**Night #8 Pro Late Model:** 1. David Wagner; 2. Stephen Nasse; 3. Kyle Maynard; 4. Joey Gase; 5. Eric Chase; 6. Austin Kirkpatrick; 7. Josh John; 8. Nick Glaze; 9. Landon Cassill; 10. Shaun McWhirter; 11. Jimmy Weller III; 12. Becca Kasten; 13. Tommy Joe Martins; 14. Bryce Walker; 15. Thor Anderson; 16. Kyle Delisle Jr.; 17. Terry Horak; 18. Sean Bass; 19. Brandon Johnson; 20. Blake Koch; 21. Kurt Jett; 22. Patrick Laperle; 23. Cole Powell.