

Champion Everidge grades on curve

Perhaps it was for the best that Cassten Everidge only earned one large trophy from short-track racing in 2025. The new champion of the Vore's Welding CRA Late Model Sportsman Series didn't have any other hardware to haul back to his current residence in Colorado.

Everidge's engineering work took him to the Rocky Mountain State over a year ago. He still returns to his former home near Stroh, Ind., often, and spends weeks in Hoosier country during the busy times of the racing season. But he still leaves a great deal of the shop work in the hands of his buddies, most notably crew chief Jeff Brunt and also his brother-in-law Brandon Dalbey, who's his tire preparer and spotter on race days.

"Things changed when I had to move to Colorado," the 29-year-old Everidge said. "Luckily, to save time, that's when Jeff came on board. He worked with Mike Kugler when he ran Outlaw Late Models and in the old SuperPro (crate-engine tour). We raced against each other for a long time."

The son of Late Model veteran and former Avila Motor Speedway champion Rick Everidge scored two podium

finishes in CRA LMS competition and had some more close calls to victory in weekly races at Anderson Speedway. But after winning twice in the series earlier this decade, 2025 was a year in which he'll remember the four DNFs as much as the strong outings.

"I don't think I've ever had a worse year luck-wise," Everidge said. "We had a lot of chances to win at Anderson, but we had one motor blow up, and one time I got wrecked by a lapped car. We had a ton of speed, but we couldn't capitalize on it; things just didn't work out."

"I'd give the year a grade of C, despite winning the championship. The crew gets an A+. I get a C- in the driving category, so I guess it's a C+ overall. It was good enough to win this championship, but we're definitely not satisfied; there's a lot more to do."

The #63 effort, sponsored by Track-Tune, Everidge Motor Sales, Auditory Defense, Hand Paint Ink, P1 Covers, Hyperco, Allstar Performance and the Klink Group, plans to go for victories next season. Those pursuits will include more in the LMS division, plus some more appearances in the renamed Turn One CRA Pro Late Model Series.

"We have four total cars, but the last



Darrell Harper/Harpo Photos

Cassten Everidge came close to winning several LMS features, mostly at Anderson Speedway.



Eric Young/Dream Bigger Media

Cassten Everidge won the championship in his sixth year of running full-time in the Vore's Welding CRA Late Model Sportsman Series.

time I raced a Pro car was in 2021," Everidge said. "The motor we had for our Pro car went down and we never got another crate motor, but now we have another and it's ready to go now. Sportsman racing has a lot more horsepower and a lot less tire, so that makes it a little harder to drive. The speed of Pro racing is really fun. I'd like to go back to (Indianapolis Raceway Park) so we'll definitely run that one, plus the one on Winchester 400 weekend."

In both forms of Late Model racing,

Everidge will have the only cars of their kind. Following a family tradition, the #63 machines are home-built.

"We have a bunch of Frankenstein cars," he said. "Two have Port City center sections, one's an FLF center section, and one's from Perfect Circle. We used to run a little more standard stuff 10 years ago, but more lately we've been doing our own thing. Sometimes we hit on something, and we'll morph all the cars to look for that same feel. We like to experiment."

Wisconsin

Fitting the Bill with first touring crown

Short-track racers, just like anyone in motorsports, have two primary goals: victories and championships. Brady Bill checked both on his list, even though they came under separate banners.

His biggest moment was a single night, as he won the Limited Late Model feature on the night of the Cobblestone Hotels Nationals at Slinger Super Speedway. That 40-lap feature was a back-and-forth battle in the final moments, and he didn't clear Ryan Gutknecht up front until the final circuit to secure the \$2,500 payday, a huge check for this division.

The action on the track that July evening didn't match the action in the points race in October. Bill, from Reedsburg, Wis., topped the standings in the second-year All-Star Limited Late Model Challenge.

That eight-race schedule ended at the Oktoberfest race weekend at LaCrosse Fairgrounds Speedway, in an event co-sanctioned by the Big 8 circuit. By the end of that race, the top of the points showed a three-way tie with Bill, 2024 All-Star champion Braison Bennett, and two-time series race winner Zack Riddle. The tiebreaker outlined in the rulebook went down to average qualifying performances.

"I knew I was tied with Riddle going into Oktoberfest, and I outqualified him, but the top nine in each (heat) race made the invert and I finished 10th," Bill said. "I started 26th in the main and he started third, and I was like, 'There's no way.'"

"The caution came out with six laps to go and he was only two rows in front of me. I'm like, 'Holy cow, he's coming back to me,' but I was pushing it too hard. The green flies, and we go into turn three and he's up in the fifth groove. I finished right on his bumper. Braison was seven spots in front of us, so I didn't know what was gonna happen. We got in the pits and I thought we'd lost it, but then the officials came over and said, 'You've gotta come take a picture in victory lane.'"

His best results in All-Star shows were a pair of thirds, at Golden Sands Speedway and Jefferson Speedway. The Plover bullring was also the site of his other two wins in regular track features, as Golden Sands has fields that track management hopes will rival Jefferson and Dells Raceway Park as Limited hotbeds.

This season marked Bill's third points title. The first came in the shortened 2020 campaign in the 602 Late Model class at the Dells, then two years later he won the Limited title at the Sands.

The 2025 honor was the latest in a long line of successes for Superstar Motorsports. The team which began by Badger State driving star Frank Kreyer is now headed by his ageless workhorse father Ray Kreyer, as Frank and his son Kendrick have relocated to Florida.

"I used to race motocross from 2007-16," Bill said.



Mary Schill Forte Designs
Brady Bill, joined by his wife Paige and then-newborn son Briggs, won a tiebreaker for the All-Star Limited Late Model Challenge championship.

"Once I got out of dirt bikes, I took a few years away, then my dad asked if I wanted to get back into racing. I broke like 22 bones in 13 years, and my body didn't miss that, but I missed the freaking adrenaline. We found a blue car that Kendrick drove; it was a 1986 Lefthander car that had been sitting outside. We

picked that thing up and it had squirrel nests and mouse nests in it; it was not in good shape. I pressure washed the whole thing and fixed it up. My dad came home from work one day and said, 'You have this thing looking good.'

"We went to the Dells and I couldn't get out of my own way. Frank was up there helping Mahlon Born-treger and got his car fast. I went up to Frank - I'd never done anything like that before - and said I needed some freaking help. He started making adjustments on it, and I could finally go around the track without spinning out. The next week I went out and qualified sixth; I wasn't even making the feature before. Frank said, 'That was just my front end setup. Come back next week and we'll work on the rear end, and you'll like it even more. I set fast time in my fourth race after that, and I'm like, 'Holy crap, this guy is awesome.'"

Every Late Model the 27-year-old Bill has ever driven, and now sponsored by D&D Tree, Chelsey Steele's First Weber Realty, TPS Farms, Oxford Music, DRM, Scott Construction, Bronco Billy's, Breneman Builders, Hartje Lumber, BC Arts, Summit Ridge, SBI, Fuller Mechanical, McCoy Construction, Jacoby Waterproofing, Judd Concrete, Jay's Power Center, G&G Electric, Reedsburg Car Care, M&H Construction, Newman Heating, Blakeslee Septic, Mead Construction, Just Put In Flooring, Weyhs Window Washing, Lichte Insurance, Joe Seep Plumbing, Motovation Fitness, Mirror Finish, Poor Nate's, Hillsboro Chiropractic, Wisconsin Glass, Brass Oak, CarQuest, Reedsburg Auto Body and Muller Motorsports, has had a connection to the Kreyer group. He still has his Limited, a car he's working on for a couple of Super Late Model starts, and an entry for the Midwest Truck Series



William Prutz/QCWilly.com
Brady Bill won two regular Friday races at Golden Sands Speedway in Plover, Wis., but his biggest victory came on a Tuesday at Slinger Super Speedway.

California

Sierra Speedster: Schmidt excels again

During Eric Schmidt's busiest times in short-track racing, he'd sometimes compete as many as 20 times during one season. In 2025 he was behind the wheel for only four race days, but three of them were the three Super Late Model points races at All American Speedway in his hometown of Roseville, Calif.

There was a lot on the 50-year-old Schmidt's mind last season. Work kept him busy during the week; he's a gunite contractor, and plenty of Golden State residents have swimming pools. He and his car owner Randy Hedrick operate Sierra Speed Technology, and on some weekends either Hedrick or Schmidt will join SST customers at various race tracks. Sierra's recent success stories include Dylan Zampa, the 2025 Spears CARS Tour West Pro Late Model champion, and Kenna Mitchell, who won Roseville's Limited Late Model title and took one of the two checkered flags Schmidt didn't claim at the historic



Patriot Media

Eric Schmidt drove a Hamke Sidewinder chassis with a CRF clip to the 2025 title in the Wild West Super Late Model class.

quarter-mile.

A personal issue was also on the table. Schmidt's stepfather Gene Sullivan had been ill for several years. His mother Gwen still attends almost all of his races at age 81.

"We were supposed to be in Tucson," he said about the January 17-18 Chilly Willy 150 weekend, "but the motor in the Pro car had oil pressure issues and it had to go back to Indiana. It was just as well, because the week be-

fore the race he passed away. Everything happens for a reason. We'll regroup and go to the next race at Vegas in March."

Schmidt does plan on running more CARS West shows, notably those at the Bullring at Las Vegas Motor Speedway, the Roseville track and Stockton 99 Speedway. His only CARS attempt in 2025 produced a DNF after a front-row start, so he'd love some redemption in that series.

He'll have his car in good shape. It's a Hamke Race Car with a front clip from former Hamke employee Dean Clattenburg's shop, parts from WAR Shocks, and support from Cookie Cutter Pools. He likely won't pursue any points this season and won't add another championship to his career total – five at Roseville, plus one each in the old Pacific Challenge Series and SRL Southwest Tour – but he should be in the seat more often this year.

Joyful Junior journey for Hamlin, Thorn



Sal Sigala Jr.

James Hamlin won the Junior Late Model crown at Madera Speedway with the help of Derek Thorn (left). In December Hamlin came down to Five Flags Speedway, on the crew for Thorn.

Madera Speedway's Pro Late Model class hosts several young racers from driver development teams, looking for exposure that's available on the Racer Network (formerly MavTV). The Junior Late Model division also has the tape-delayed airings, making it an attractive option for racers age 10-16 from all along the West Coast (and in 2026 that list will include NASCAR Cup Series star Kyle Busch's son Brexton, who'll run a car owned by Charlie Wilson).

The 2025 champion of the Junior ranks, sponsored by 51Fifty Energy, had another well-known coach. James Hamlin's first full year in the seat of a full-sized race car came mostly under the guidance of Derek Thorn, the all-time winningest driver in the SRL Southwest Tour and 2022 winner of the Snowball Derby.

Hamlin, from Oregon City, Ore., began the year with another Madera-based team and actually won one Junior race. A midseason switch to Derek Thorn Racing was a welcome opportunity, even though the sides had to take one of Mike Hensley's Fury Race Cars, formerly driven by Thorn around the state, and quickly adapt it to Junior specs.

"At first I couldn't believe I was working with one of the best," Hamlin said. "We just kinda fell in together,

and now we work together really well."

Thorn provides something which the youngster couldn't get from his family. James' father Michael Hamlin casually ran some support-class races in a previous generation, but the 15-year-old is the first serious oval driver in the clan.

"We were at a car show and actually looking at junior dragsters," Michael said. "He was too young for those, so they introduced him to quarter midgets. It went south from there, ha."

Hamlin went south and east in mid-January. Thorn plans to be with him throughout this year's Spears CARS Tour West Pro Late Model schedule, and that began at Tucson Speedway during the Chilly Willy weekend. He finished one lap down, but most importantly he made the field comfortably and completed all 125 circuits.

"It was pretty eye-opening," said Hamlin, sponsored primarily by his grandparents' youth racing supply company PNW Motorsports. "It got comfortable, but then we got out there for the feature and it was pretty hard to stay calm and save the tires. I'd only had to run while saving tires once before. I feel like we adapted pretty well. Hopefully we'll adapt more coming to Vegas in March."