

LATE MODEL DIGEST

June 18, 2025



Braden's back!

Braden: Fast on track, fast trip home

From staff and team reports

KENIA, Ohio (June 11) — Travis Braden was happy to climb aboard a race car for the first time in 2025 at the annual Dayton 100. He was even more thrilled to win \$15,000 in the event, the first of two Late Model shows on this year's schedule at Kil-Kare Raceway, and in front of a sold-out crowd at the .4-mile oval.

But the best development for Braden, originally from Wheeling, W.Va., was the fact that the Dayton 100, moved to a Wednesday for the first time, took just under an hour to run. After the checkered flag, and about half an hour for tech, Braden and his fiancée Jess Ballard went on an overnight drive back to the Charlotte area.

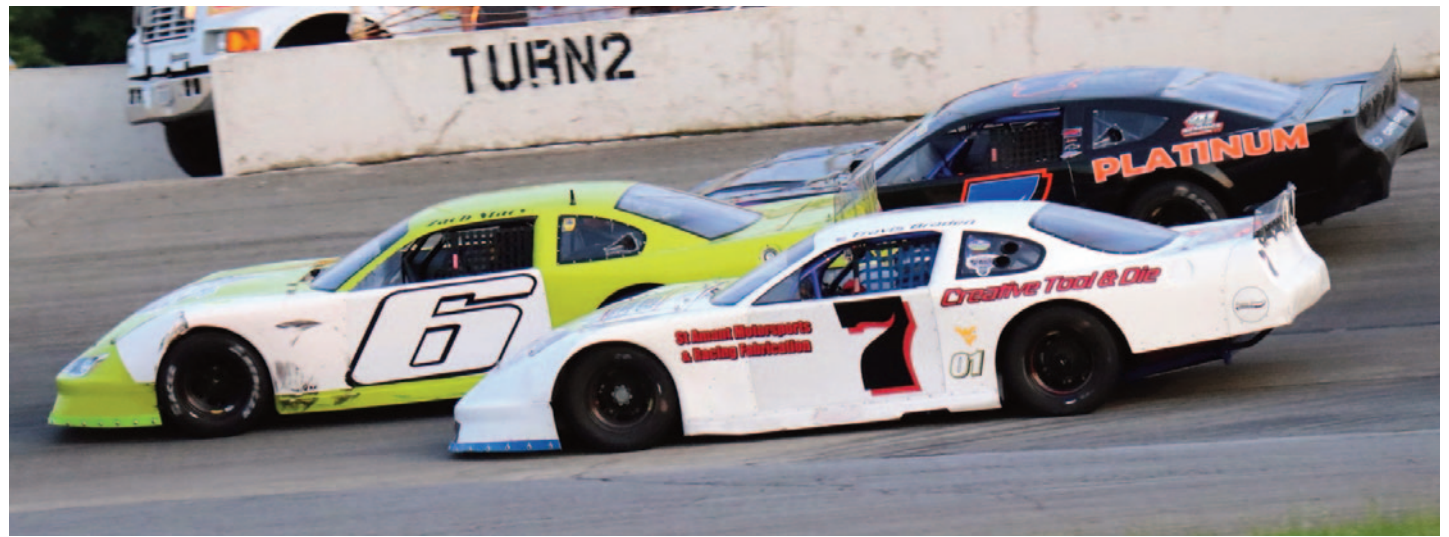
Braden is a mechanic on the #48 NASCAR Cup Series team and has been since 2023. He doesn't travel with the Hendrick Motorsports crew to too many race weekends, but the inaugural Cup points race in Mexico City was an exception because of longer practices and more crew roster spots. At 5 a.m. Thursday, Hendrick employees got together to fly south.

"We made it with half an hour to spare," said Braden, who drove the whole way while Ballard kept him awake. "We talked and relived everything. It was adrenaline for the last 100 miles or so."

The event was chaotic enough without the postrace rush. Braden, who drove for Jim Newman in an effort coordinated by Ohio legend Gary St. Amant, endured engine problems throughout Tuesday practice.

"That all made it part of the excitement when we won," Braden said. "There was a time when we didn't know if the car was gonna get to race, since the motor wouldn't stay running, plus the handling wasn't that great when we started. We were excited to see it progress. We did one big swing after qualifying since it wasn't an impound race. It was either gonna be really bad or pretty decent, and it turned out it must have been the right way."

Another thrill came during the second half of the race. Braden was locked



Scott McIlwain

Travis Braden uses the inside lane at Kil-Kare Raceway to battle Logan Runyon as they come up on the lapped Zach Stacy (6). Braden and Runyon officially traded the lead six times in the second half of the race at Xenia, Ohio.

in a battle with Logan Runyon for the top spot, and the 2019 Snowball Derby winner didn't clear him for good until lap 97.

"Kyle Jones and Justin Alsip were really strong early. I think Kyle was the class of the field," Braden said. "He and Justin got into an altercation and Kyle tapped out. At that point our car started to come on stronger, and Justin's car was falling off. All the others were a good ways behind us. Logan got behind me on a restart and I kinda screwed up. It was a good race between us. It was an interesting race all the way, with a lot of different faces up in the lead, but it came down to Logan and I. I was slowly reeling him in; our last yellow was with just under 40 to go."

Braden had tasted success at Kil-Kare before, winning in what is now the ASA/CRA Super Series in his title season of 2013 and then 2017. This race was contested under the Shadybowl Speedway rulebook – not quite Super Late Models, and more like CRA Late Model Sportsman specs – and guys like Runyon, Jones and Alsip had much more time in this class in recent years.

"This was a Port City car, and it was almost older than me ... early 2000s," said Braden, sponsored by Newman's company Creative Tool & Die and Jeff Beard Concrete Construction. "What's

great about tracks in that region is that you don't need that much power and can't use it anyway, so it doesn't cost a lot of extra money. We ran a stock GM crate that's probably 75 horsepower down from Jegs CRA, but it still was more than enough power – whenever it was running properly."

When not diagnosing engine issues, Braden did have time for some quick reunions. Chief among those was with Platinum Motorsports, which had Southern standout Casey Roderick aboard for this race and finished fifth. Braden won that Snowball and his 2017 CRA win here with Bill and Myna Burba's group.

"I hadn't talked to them in a few years ... but it was definitely a reunion of the old Team Platinum," he said.

Jeff Nuckles Memorial Dayton 100: 1. Travis Braden; 2. Logan Runyon; 3. Justin Alsip; 4. Kyle Jones; 5. Casey Roderick; 6. J.P. Crabtree; 7. Jeff Fultz; 8. Ryan Fleming; 9. Carson Lucas; 10. Logan Bearden; 11. Zach Stacy; 12. Don Mahaffey Jr.; 13. Kody Swanson; 14. Cody Scott; 15. Aaron Timmerman; 16. Mike Stacy; 17. Jason Mahaffey; 18. Chad Richardson; 19. Logan McPherson; 20. Ralph Harrod; 21. Jess Drook; 22. Brian Brewer; 23. Brian Gray; 24. Cody Gallogly; 25. Jamie Sites; 26. Brandon Oakley.

Lap leaders: Braden 1-4, D.Mahaffey 5-10, Roderick 11-52, Braden 53-56, Runyon 57, Braden 58-59, Runyon 60-61, Braden 62, Runyon 63-96, Braden 97-100 • Cautions: 8 • Fast qualifier (of 30 drivers): Oakley, 13.725 seconds • B-main winner: Gray



John Lund

Travis Braden hugs former driver Gary Estes, who was the promoter for the Jeff Nuckles Memorial Dayton 100. Estes fielded Super Late Models for Braden in the early 2010s.

Stovall steals first win from Campbell

From staff and track reports

MARNE, Mich. (June 14) — Since Berlin Raceway made template-bodied Late Models its top division about a decade ago, the most accomplished driver in the class has been Brian Campbell. Getting the better of the four-time track champion made Dylan Stovall's first victory at the suburban-Grand Rapids facility that much more special.

Stovall, from Wayland, Mich., took the lead from Campbell with 29 of 75 laps to go in the Father's Day Celebration feature. The race went caution-free from that point, and Stovall cruised to a three-second margin of victory.

"We had a game plan right off the gate," Stovall said. "We had two cars in front of us at the start, and I knew we didn't want to let Brian get too far out. I had an aggressive mentality at the beginning of the run. I was on Brian's bumper passing for second and the caution came out, so the inside row moved up one lane. One lap later (Evan) Shotko got around us and we did three laps side by side, and I knew we had to get after it."

Eleven days earlier Stovall finished ninth in the Money in the Bank 150, the first of two annual signature Late Model special events at Berlin. That was his best result in four MITB attempts, but there was great value in that effort because of the adjustments he made in the next week.

"It rained and tightened up the racetrack that day. We had already tightened it up before that, so it didn't



team photo

Dylan Stovall and his wife Tori enjoy their first trip to victory lane at Berlin Raceway in Marne, Mich.

work in our favor," Stovall said. "We knew what we were off in at the 150. We freed the car up and changed some things ... and studied the notebook. This time the top side was working really good, and we could roll the top really good. The track was still trending

tight on the bottom, so we could keep them pinned down and gained spots pretty easily."

Very little has come easily for Stovall this season, but the work he and his crew chief (and VanDoorn Racing Development employee) Ethan Stadniczuk

have put into the #24 effort has been worth it. His Berlin fortunes have been pretty good – second to Andrew Scheid in the last points race May 24, and nothing worse than ninth, although he was still sixth in the standings – but some road trips have been very encouraging. Stovall, sponsored by his car owner's company Hutcherson Construction, Southwest Roofing, Gnass Masonry, Carter Lumber, Tough Coat Powder Coating, Classic Concrete, Beaver Creek Tile, Superior Lawn, VanDam & Krusinga, Schaeffer's Oil, Modderman Builders, Last Chance Motorsports, Machine It and a local AutoZone, has top-six finishes in both of his Jegs CRA All-Stars Tour appearances.

This race brought a different audience than most of his other Late Model starts this year. The ARCA Menards Series was the night's headliner at the 7/16-mile oval.

"That was really cool, with different eyes watching, although there are always eyes watching at Berlin," Stovall said. "It was definitely cool to be here with these guys like Butterbean (ARCA points leader and Brenden Queen). They shut down the (FloRacing) broadcast for the night, so I didn't get an interview in victory lane, but you take what you can get."

Father's Day Celebration: 1. Dylan Stovall; 2. Brian Campbell; 3. Terry Senneker; 4. Andrew Scheid; 5. Tyler Lupton; 6. Tyler Rycenga; 7. Keith Herp; 8. Evan Shotko; 9. Justin Thomas; 10. Scott Thomas; 11. Todd Cowan; 12. Ryleigh Davis; 13. Joe Bush; 14. Haden Horvath; 15. Austin Hull; 16. Ken Wobma.

Lap leaders: Campbell 1-46, Stovall 47-75 • Cautions: 3 • Fast qualifier: Hull, 16.571 seconds



Jim DenHamer file

Brian Campbell placed second after leading more than half of the 75 laps in the Father's Day Celebration.



Jim DenHamer file

Terry Senneker (24), shown from the Money in the Bank 150 less than two weeks earlier, came home third in this race.

Family history, chaos favor Prescott

From staff and track reports

GROVETON, N.H. (June 13) — Throughout his career Brian Hoar experienced all types of Late Model races and came out on top in more than his share of them. Every so often there would be a crashfest, especially at a high-banked bullring such as Riverside Speedway. While those types of victories sometimes felt different, they still brought feelings of great accomplishment, as Hoar did in the American-Canadian Tour at Riverside in 2000.

The eight-time ACT champion and the series' all-time wins leader was on hand for his son's biggest moment in the sport. The second annual Keith Morse Memorial, honoring the father of Riverside announcer Tyler Morse, also offered a higher purse than any of Hoar's triumphs. This 150-lap event saw only five drivers see the checkered flag, but it was still worth \$20,000 for Justin Prescott.

A big highlight for Prescott, from Williston, Vt., was the late battle with veteran Jamie Swallow. They didn't get much of a chance to stage long green-flag runs against each other, but the short spurts were thrilling, and the best



Justin Prescott (46) battles Jamie Swallow Jr. for the lead in the final moments of the second annual Keith Morse Memorial 150.

Alan Ward/Big Al's Photos

part was that they were clean. Prescott cleared him for the final time with four laps remaining around the quarter-mile.

"I had it in the bag, with a straightaway on second and Jamie was still trying to fight through to second, but then the 10 car (Bryan Mason) stopped in (turns) one and two with four to go," Prescott said. "We only had six cars left, and I couldn't believe there was another caution."

This race started out smoothly enough, but then deteriorated in the

middle stages. Prescott led early, then fell as low as sixth when shuffled back on restarts. He was fourth when Swallow and Sammy Gooden collided up front; Prescott actually spun in the aftermath, but that didn't hurt him.

"They got checked up and I got checked up, then the guy in fifth actually turned me around the rest of the way. It was definitely a close call ... one of those butt-pucker moments," Prescott said. "I had pitted with 16 to go and restarted 11th; we had burned the right-side tires off, and we didn't come here to finish fifth. We had two more cautions, and before we made another lap I was sixth. Jamie pitted after I did. Me and him battled it out back in the pack, hemming and hawing, and then the next caution came out. The racing gods were on our side."

This was the first time Prescott had piloted this #46 SRT Motorsports car this season, and it might be the only time. He did OK in 2024 spot starts in

the decade-odd-old Race Basics machine, sponsored by family business Goss Cars, but his primary ride is in Arnie Hill's #04 at Thunder Road and in a few ACT races. Hill's car is a full-time deal this year, partly because 2022-23 ACT champion D.J. Shaw is not part of that effort in 2025. This year the #04 has been on the lead lap in two ACT starts and in the back half of the top 10 in all three points races at Thunder Road; he won a weekly show at T-Road last July.

Keith Morse Memorial presented by North Country Ford: 1. Justin Prescott; 2. Jamie Swallow Jr.; 3. Luke Shannon; 4. Bryan Mason; 5. Jeff Marshall; 6. Corey Mason; 7. Randy Potter; 8. Sammy Gooden; 9. Tom Carey III; 10. Shawn Swallow; 11. Brenna Humphrey; 12. Connor McDougal; 13. Ricky Bly; 14. Nick Gilcris; 15. Stephen Donahue; 16. Jason Kenison; 17. Ryan Currier; 18. Jaret Curtis; 19. Ben Belanger; 20. Ryan Olsen; 21. Chase Curtis; 22. Derek Gluchacki.

Lap leaders: McDougal 1, Prescott 2-26, Gooden 27-134, S.Swallow 135, Prescott 136-140, J.Swallow 141-145, Prescott 146-150 • Cautions: 14 • Red flag: 1 • Heat race winners (of 23 drivers): McDougal, Prescott, Swallow



Alan Ward/Big Al's Photos

Race promoter and Riverside Speedway announcer Tyler Morse hugs winner Justin Prescott, who earned \$20,000 for his second career victory in an American-Canadian Tour-legal Late Model.



Alan Ward/Big Al's Photos

This was the other story of the night at the quarter-mile in Groveton, N.H. Derek Gluchacki (03) saw his run end after this tangle with Ben Belanger (99) and Ricky Bly in one of many accidents.

Wiscasset Speedway

Hinkley goes the distance for first time

From staff and track reports

WISCASSET, Maine (June 14) — Wiscasset Speedway has a strong weekly Pro Stock program, and Nick Hinkley has been one of its strongest performers. He won the track championship as a rookie in 2018 and repeated the next year, and he has won at least one feature every year he has been in the class.

The third-mile oval holds only one or two Pro Stock races each season that's longer than weekly distance. Hometown driver Hinkley hasn't had the same good fortune in those shows; he placed second in the Boss Hogg 150 in 2021, but there has been only one other lead-lap finish in the annual Labor Day event. He has also converted his Pro Stock to Late Model Sportsman rules for the Coastal 200 every Memorial Day weekend and placed in the top five in the mid-late 2010s, but his best Coastal result this decade has been eighth.

Last summer Wiscasset held a 100-lap Pro Stock show and named it after the

shipbuilders which make up one of the area's main industries. Hinkley was in contention until a late accident, and he didn't get a chance to rally from the rear when rain ended the race early.

Hinkley took advantage of his latest chance in the second annual Shipbuilders race, sponsored by General Dynamics and Bath Iron Works. He passed 2024 event winner and fellow former track champion Kevin Douglass with 10 scheduled laps remaining.

"I kinda lucked out. I got to ride around in fifth or sixth for most of the race with really not a lot of pressure," Hinkley said. "Kevin was good when he was out front, and I kinda just capitalized on late restarts. We put on a good show. One good thing with Kev is that we've raced each other enough; you can race tight and not worry about getting put in the concrete. Everyone I've talked to said it was a good race. They destroyed quite a few cars over quite a few mishaps here, and that really didn't go over too well.

I've been on that side of it plenty of times."

This was the second win of the young season for Hinkley, whose Distance chassis has primary backing from Ideal Portable Toilets. Last season was one of his best here, winning three times and placing second in points behind Dan McKeage Jr. This was a huge check mark for him in the division sponsored by Norm's Used Cars.

"We finally pulled one off, and we were pretty pumped about it," he said. "We changed some stuff over the last week, and we're definitely headed the right way."

Shipbuilders 100 presented by General Dynamics and Bath Iron Works: 1. Nick Hinkley; 2. Kevin Douglass; 3. Logan Melcher; 4. Kelly Moore; 5. Shane Clark; 6. Austin Teras; 7. Andy Gilbert; 8. Jamie Wright; 9. Dave Getchell; 10. Dan McKeage Jr.; 11. Josh St. Clair; 12. J.T. Thurlow; 13. Nick Cusack; 14. Reed Reno; 15. Nick Jenkins; 16. Matt Beers; 17. Frank Moulton.

Lap leaders: St. Clair 1-29, Douglass 30-90, Hinkley 91-98
• Cautions: 3 • Red flag: 1 • Heat race winners: St. Clair, Cusack



Jasen Dickey Photography

Nick Hinkley (left) outbattled Kevin Douglass for the victory in the second annual Shipbuilders 100 at Wiscasset, Maine.

Stafford Motor Speedway

Latest win from region's famous family

From staff and track reports

STAFFORD SPRINGS, Conn. (June 13) — Brothers Mike and Tommy O'Sullivan have histories of success at New England short tracks. Among other honors, Mike is a two-time champion in the Granite State Pro Stock Series. Tommy has also won in that tour; they have also won in various classes at Thompson Speedway.

Their nephew Chris Buffone's first full season in the Late Model Sportsman class at Stafford Motor Speedway was in 2024. He took his lumps, as in 19 starts he scored only one top-five finish, the lowest of anyone who missed no more than two weeks. His fortunes turned around this Father's Day weekend, as he went flag to flag to win for his first time since his street stock days at Monadnock Speedway.

"My uncles had all that success at Thompson," said Buffone, from Belchertown, Mass. "Coming from such a team, it was hard not winning for a year. We made the switch to BFR Chassis in the middle of last year. We started gaining some speed and confidence, but we didn't really run up front yet. Stafford's a tough place to get around; everybody told me that."

His previous struggles likely helped a bit here, because Stafford's handicapping system put his #07 on the front row. Buffone (pronounced "buf-fone-ee") jumped ahead of Tom Fearn at the drop of the green and after both early cautions. Adam Gray and Andrew Durand made it past Fearn on the second restarts, but they were locked in a battle for second late in the 30-lapper. The end saw a six-second lead for Buffone, sponsored by Teddy Bear Pools, Tom O'Sullivan Welding, Fairborn Northeast, Brad Bennett Racing, T.P. Ryland Landscape, Thomas Wilson Enterprises, OJS Excavation, American Tire, Ceric Fabrication, RAD Auto Machine, and the company of longtime family friend and 1979 Oxford 250 winner Tom Rosati,

"Tom Rosati drove for my grandfather for 20 years at Riverside Park and Stafford. That's where I got the #07 from. It was great to bring the #07 back to Stafford," he said. "Some say the first win is the hardest to get. We definitely have a fast race car now, and we found some of the feels I need to feel. My uncles were doing things with Super Late Models. When it came time to come back to Stafford, most of the field has BFR cars, so this was definitely the right move to go."

Casella Waste Services Night: 1. Chris Buffone; 2. Andrew Durand; 3. Adam Gray; 4. Wayne Coury Jr.; 5. Kevin Gambacorta; 6. Darrell Keane; 7. Alexandra Fearn; 8. Bobby Stirk; 9. Duane Noll; 10. Josh Wood; 11. Tom Fearn; 12. Rob Taylor; 13. Adon Burrell; 14. Chris Meyer; 15. Paul Varricchio Jr.

Lap leader: Buffone 1-30 • Cautions: 2 • Fast practitioner: A.Fearn, 21.599 seconds



TK Race Photos

Chris Buffone won his first Late Model Sportsman race at Stafford Motor Speedway.

Some Hinkle history: Schroeder wins

From staff and team reports

TENINO, Wash. (June 14) — Max Schroeder usually shows up for the special Super Late Model events at South Sound Speedway, last winning one in 2020 when the Northwest Super Late Model Series came to the nearest racetrack to his home in Tacoma, Wash. The first such classic on the facility's 2025 schedule is the race honoring the memory of longtime area driver Chad Hinkle, and Schroeder proved to be a fitting winner for another reason.

"I didn't know Chad personally too well. I had raced with him, until he died," Schroeder said. "I bought my first race car from him, my first V-8. I only knew him with a helmet on, but some would argue that you knew him the best if you had your helmet on."

Now Schroeder has a new helmet, a custom-designed trophy from longtime racer Austin Thom at Finish Line Industries and Short Track Heroes earmarked for major events at the 3/8-mile oval. He took control of this race in the middle stages and held the point until the end. Due to an impending 11 p.m. curfew, that end came 35 laps short of the intended 138, in tribute to Hinkle's #38.

"We just kinda took off on the outside and got up to the lead," said Schroeder, who started fourth. "I had a little bit of pressure from the second-place car, which is also a Jefferson Racing car. I was just kinda managing him



Max Schroeder shows off the commemorative trophy helmet after winning the fourth annual Chad Hinkle 138.

Photos by Stormy and Felicia

and the gap. He wanted to take the lead, so I kinda led him go for about 20-ish

laps. We had another restart and I was able to take it back on the outside. We

had a handful more restarts, and that's when they called it."

Longtime Northwest standout Jeff Jefferson and his staff have been assisting Schroeder on setups for several years. Off-road racing star Ethan Ebert was also in a Jefferson entry, and he topped time trials for this event. He wound up fourth behind Canadian Kyle Cottam and relative SLM newcomer David Knittel, but Schroeder was well out in front when the last caution ended the race prematurely.

Schroeder, in a Port City Phase II chassis with McGunegill power and support from Z93 Media, EXP Realty, Key Property Services, TrackTune, Snoqualmie Falls Golf Course, Central Welding Supply, Studio 17, RaceCals and Just KB Media, has two more events targeted this year at South Sound. July 5 has the Wes Rhodes Memorial Firecracker 125, then the annual 200-lapper August 9. He also wants another shot at the Fall Classic in October at Tri-City Raceway; he placed 14th and sixth in his two previous attempts in the region's traditional Super Late Model season finale.

Chad Hinkle 138: 1. Max Schroeder; 2. Kyle Cottam; 3. David Knittel; 4. Ethan Ebert; 5. Zandar Peters; 6. Tommy Elstoen; 7. Matt Doyle; 8. Matt Barrett; 9. Tom Sweatman; 10. Arlyn Long; 11. Robert Clark; 12. Wes Maden; 13. Jeff Peterson.

Lap leaders: Cotton 1-12, Schroeder 13-29, Ebert 30-52, Schroeder 53-103 • Cautions: 6 • Fast qualifier: Doyle, 13.76 seconds • Dash winner: Ebert



Photos by Stormy and Felicia

Kyle Cottam (4) leads Tom Sweatman in practice at South Sound Speedway. Cottam placed second, his best result in a Super Late Model race in the States.

Photos by Stormy and Felicia
Ethan Ebert chats with Jeff Eden, the promoter and announcer at the 3/8-mile oval near Rochester, Wash. Ebert qualified with the fastest time and finished fourth.



Cote swipes spotlight from Theetge

From staff and team reports

MONTMAGNY, Quebec (June 14) — The early-summer Late Model event at Autodrome Montmagny has been named after Quebec active legend Donald Theetge for five years. Theetge finished second in this year's race, the closest he has come to winning his namesake show in the tour that's now part of the resumed Serie ACT.

Jeff Cote kept Theetge out of victory lane at the 3/8-mile oval this time. Cote, last year's points runner-up, went past Theetge for the lead with 31 of 160 laps remaining and scored his third victory in the series and second at Montmagny.

The eventual winner from Beauceville started 11th and climbed to fourth

in the caution-free first half. Theetge had led since lap 28, and soon Cote was on his bumper. The next restart let Cote move to the outside and grab the point.

"We had another restart with 13 to go," Cote said. "He was really close to me for a couple of laps before making a mistake that let me get a decent gap on him. We were so strong on the long run ... making laps one to two tenths faster than the others after 40-50 green laps."

That final stretch produced a .7-second victory margin for Cote, who drove a Dale Shaw chassis supported by KF Compatibilite, Clement Poulin Pieces d'Autos, Garage Mini Mecanique, Garage H-LS Begin and Dave Bisson Transport. He left with a slim lead in the standings; his nearest points challengers

Dany Gariepy and Dany Trepanier finished sixth and eighth.

Donald Theetge 160: 1. Jeff Cote; 2. Donald Theetge; 3. Martin Goulet Jr.; 4. Maxime Gauvreau; 5. Zackary Fauteux; 6. Dany Gariepy; 7. Simon Roussin; 8. Dany Trepanier; 9. Pier-Luc Labbe; 10. Louis-Philippe Lauzier; 11. Felix Gratton; 12. David Gagnon; 13. Charles Bernier; 14.

Junior Lehoux; 15. Claude Leclerc; 16. Jonathan Cote; 17. Andrew Larue; 18. Jimmy Lehoux; 19. Maxime Robin; 20. Vincent Rivard; 21. Laurent Desjardins; 22. Christian Beau-lieu; 23. Patrick Cliche; 24. Dave Coursol; 25. Jonathan Desbiens; 26. Mathieu Goulet; 27. Christopher Bedard.

Lap leaders: Goulet 1-27, Theetge 28-128, Cote 129-160
• Cautions: 5 • Heat race winners: Coursol, Gariepy, Fauteux, Cote



Rock Bouffard

Jeff Cote (51) leads Donald Theetge in the Serie ACT event at Montmagny, Quebec.

WESCAR • PGARA Speedway

Fixture Thomas gets upset by rookie

From staff and team reports

PRINCE GEORGE, British Columbia (June 14) — Winning any short-track race in your third-ever start in the division is impressive. Beating the winningest driver in your area over the past decade-plus to get there would make that victory almost euphoric.

Nolan Perry experienced that feeling in the latest WESCAR event at PGARA Speedway. The support-class veteran held off province-wide icon Korbin Thomas over the final quarter of the 100 laps to score his first win in a Late Model.

Thomas is the all-time leading race winner and three-time champion of WESCAR, which began in 2011. He was coming off of a dominating victory the previous night at Thunder Mountain Speedway (results not made available), but Perry picked off his chance at a weekend sweep.

"The leaders wrecked with 10 to go," Perry said

about Mark Berriau and Kolten Appler. "Korbin and I were running third and fourth, and I got to the inside and was able to pass him. Under caution we kinda sat there talking to my spotter, and they were calming me down since I'd never been in that position and it was a little sketch. We ended up lining up single file, which I guess is the rule with 10 to go. I told my spotter, 'Don't tell me anything unless Korbin is right under me.' I knew I had to hit my marks and be perfect to hold off someone who's the best in the business."

The runner-up finish broke Thomas' undefeated streak, which had dated back to the 2023 Canada 200 at Saratoga Speedway. He had only entered one race with WESCAR in that span, but he triumphed in a few independent races including last year's Saratoga special. That's the kind of run that the 27-year-old Perry had become used to seeing. It was a thrill to compete head to head with him, early in the race in the middle of the pack and again later at go time.

"It was really fun battling Korbin. He's a guy I'd looked up to since I was a little kid," said Perry, from Victoria, B.C. "I remember watching his #5 car and Dave Hemrich at (his now-closed home track) Western Speedway in Canada 200s. Usually after the race I'd think, 'That frickin' #5 car.' He broke a lot of (his uncle's family friend) Roy Haslam's records."

Perry often watched Thomas while in a firesuit waiting on his races in street stocks or four-cylinder cars. One needed a rebuild in the off-season, and his boss, longtime driver Lance Wade, convinced him to go Late Model racing. They acquired a bare chassis from the Racecar Factory in California and attached a body and a rear clip. The second time out was at TMS for this #61, sponsored by Little Gnomes Child Care, F&A Transmission, DVH Enterprises, North Island Fiberglass and Wade's company Powerhouse Sheetrock.

"We finished it the night before the first race (in May) and used that as a test session, but it blew up," Perry said. "We put a motor in it before we left for Williams Lake and really had no test time. We won the dash, but we broke a sway bar in the main event."

WESCAR 100: 1. Nolan Perry; 2. Korbin Thomas; 3. Bob Reichert; 4. Kendall Thomas; 5. Brad Clarke; 6. Joe Cornett-Ching; 7. Darrell Horwath; 8. Kirk Frost; 9. Yianni Kyrtos; 10. Mark Berriau; 11. Kolten Appler; 12. Kyle Wade; 13. Sheldon Mayert; 14. Doug Lawrence; 15. Trevor Adelman; 16. Clayton Scott.

Lap leaders: Clark 1-4, Horwath 5-14, Adelman 15, Horwath 16-36, Mayert 37-64, Perry 65-100 • Cautions: 3 • Fast qualifier: Kyrtos, 15.358 seconds • Heat race winners: Wade, Perry • Dash: Perry

Rhonda Cahoon

Nolan Perry, shown with his crew after the 100-lap race at PGARA Speedway, started at the rear of the field due to his rookie status. He led the last 36 laps for his first win in the WESCAR Late Model

Touring Series presented by Applied Industrial Technologies.

