

# LATE MODEL DIGEST

September 12, 2025



## More Georgia glory for Garcia, Pollard

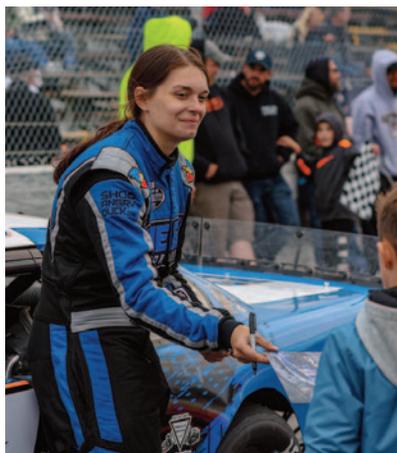
## Jegs CRA All-Stars Tour

# closerlook: Gavel pounds: Demland's milestone after recent talk ... by Jim Carson

Younger racers are often waiting for that one moment where something good sets in. Their families and crews are also hoping that moment comes, sooner than later, to justify the efforts and resources they've been putting into supporting the driver.

That moment may have come for Avery Demland during practice at Kalamazoo Speedway for the August 30 race for the Jegs CRA All-Stars Tour presented by Chevrolet Performance. Something was still off at that race, but one week later Demland turned in her best finish – and her first time coming home on the lead lap – in the Mudslinger 100 at Auto City Speedway.

Eric Young/Dream Bigger Media  
**Avery Demland** hands an autograph card to a young fan at Auto City Speedway. Demland placed seventh, the best in her brief Late Model career.



way in Clio, Mich.

Seventh place may not sound like much, but the 26-year-old Demland is a rookie in Late Models. She also took more than a decade away from the sport before rekindling her interest after she passed the bar exam in October of 2023.

"I was spotting for my dad and working on his car," Avery said about Brian Demland, who has started 27 Jegs CRA races since 2020 including one this year. "I brought up that I wanted to race sprint cars again and he said no. I don't know if it's the competitive side of me, but I'd seen my dad do it all these years, and I knew that I can take what he'd done and we can build on it, and I can do even better."

Through six races in 2025, that hadn't yet happened, despite having a new original chassis from Brandon Oakley Racecars which she debuted at Speed-Fest in January at Cordele Motor Speedway. The seventh start was at Kalamazoo, where practice day was encouraging for the associate attorney from Hicksville, Ohio. She admits that she often loses what she gains from one session to the next in a two-day show, and that's what took place at the 'Zoo.

"She went out and practiced half a second off from what she ran the day before. I could sense the frustration in (crew chief Gordon Guffey's) voice," Brian Demland said. "I put her window net down, lifted her helmet shield, and said, 'Shut up and listen.' She's got to find the faith in herself that her crew chief and half

the garage has in her. 'You can make laps and do this as a hobby and have fun, or you can be competitive.' She responded very well at Kalamazoo, although it was after 40 laps and she was already laps down."

There was a similar "coming to Jesus" talk with Guffey, who's also the crew chief for Michigan driver Chase Burda, a former champion in both Jegs CRA and the ASA/CRA Super Series, and with spotter Ray Kelley. Avery has called Kelley's wife Darlene, also an experienced spotter, as her driver's assistant.

"I think it's Ray's life's mission to make me a race car driver," the younger Demland said. "Something between him, Gordon and my dad - I don't know, but something did click. The way I drove after I woke up in (the Kalamazoo race) and the way I drove at Auto City is nowhere near the way I drove at Whittemore and a couple other races before that. The car can definitely win, and I'd like to get there."

Her father never seemed to have a car as modern as the current #15 Oakley machine. Brian scored only one lead-lap finish in all of his Jegs CRA starts and also two full seasons in the Vore's Welding CRA Late Model Sportsman Series. He enjoyed more success in mini stocks and 600 sprint cars on dirt. He really cut his teeth in the 1990s as a crewman for Todd Forbes and the Noah Yoder Ford team in the old ASA National Tour. Now he's all in for Avery, sponsored by DT Performance Designs, TLC Sports Marketing, Oval Outlaws Performance and Hoosier RV Supply.

## Virginia

# closerlook: Runner-up relief: Surles smiles after Dominion show ... by Jim Carson

Aaron Donnelly captured his first Limited Late Model win of the year at a good time, in the Craig Murto Memorial special at Dominion Raceway. Donnelly, who won races in 2023-24 at the .4-mile oval near Thornburg, Va., wasn't the only Dominion regular breathing a sigh of relief after the 75-lap event honoring the founder of the old Late Model Racer magazine.

Runner-up Kayla Surles also enjoyed what was easily her best result of the year. Until now, her season's main selling point was that she had been able to start all 23 previous scheduled races for the class sponsored by American Racer Tire, even though there have been a couple of start-and-parks in the night-caps of twin-feature nights.

"We definitely needed this one," said Surles, from Fredericksburg, Va. "If you can think of it, it's probably gone wrong for us."

At least she had been out there taking green flags. In 2024 she only started

four races, then lost the rest of her season due to a crash which resulted in a broken foot. That injury also kept her from defending her 2023 track title in its fledgling modified class.

Things fell the 24-year-old's way this time after she was as low as sixth in the first half of the race. A lap-42 caution for points leader Chase Johnson's flat tire set her up for a restart, where she slid up to third. A bit later Dan Rogers had trouble from second. A late yellow brought Peyton Lee and the resurgent Johnson back to threaten Surles, but she fended them off and crossed the stripe .6 second behind Donnelly.

"We were pretty equal in turns three and four, but I definitely felt I was gaining on him in one and two," she said. "There wasn't enough laps."

Her grandfather crewed for several racers at the now-closed Old Dominion Speedway, but Surles is the only driver in her family. She's also the only one active on her team of friends, called Ferry

Farm Racing which is named for Ferry Farm Repair which her dad Philip bought in 2017. Three others, including her younger brother P.J. Surles, raced various classes at Dominion, but they're taking a break from driving this year; one, Kris Kurtz, is now on Kayla's crew.

There is some history with her #25

ride, a Hedgecock chassis with a newer front clip from TORP. Her supporters include Creative Technology Services Group, Virginia 811, Bethel Builders, Fraternal Order of Eagles Area 4123, HPI Certified Training Academy, the Joie of Seating and an area Snap-on Tools distributor.



Dinah Mullins/Dinah Marie Photography  
**Kayla Surles** took second place in the Craig Murto Memorial for a much-needed bright spot in her Dominion Raceway season.

# One Last Look

Southern Super Series • Cordele Motor Speedway



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**Michael Atwell (14) and Jake Finch (51)** lead a restart ahead of Bubba Pollard (26), Hudson Bulger (17), Wilson Motorsports teammates Jade Avedisian and Gavan Boschele, Colin Allman (67), Matt Craig (54) and others in the Sept. 6 ASA Southern Super Series event at Cordele Motor Speedway. Home-state superstar Pollard was coming off of a 75-lap victory the previous night, but he dropped out with a mechanical issue to close the weekend.



Tyler Sontag/SpeedRacer Photos

**Jake Garcia returned to his roots** and led the last 27 of 125 laps of the Saturday finale of the Georgia Summer Nationals, after a third-place finish in the 75-lap Friday race.



Tyler Sontag/SpeedRacer Photos

**Michael Atwell reveals the number** he drew after setting fast time in the Saturday race. The Florida traveler led the first 14 laps before finishing fourth in the Georgia Summer Nationals finale.



Tyler Sontag/SpeedRacer Photos

**Colin Allman, shown with his dad Chad,** placed second in the Saturday show, his best result in 21 career ASA Southern Super Series starts.

Tyler Sontag/  
SpeedRacer Photos  
**Bubba Pollard,**  
**greeted by South**  
**Carolina follower**  
**Torrance Jackson,**  
earned his 42nd  
career points-race  
victory in the ASA  
Southern Super  
Series by leading  
the last 47 laps of  
the Sept. 5 feature  
at the .4-mile oval  
in Cordele, Ga.



Tyler Sontag/SpeedRacer Photos

**Jake Finch, shown with car owner and crew chief**  
**Richie Wauters,** wound up sixth in both races.

# One Last Look

## Limited Late Models around Wisconsin



**Jayden Johnson (8)** races **Evan Hassler** for the lead in the Limited Late Model season finale at Slinger Super Speedway. Johnson earned his second straight win and third of the year at the quarter-mile and wrapped up his first track championship.



**Nick Nolden** collected his second win of the year at Dells Raceway Park and wound up second in points behind fellow multi-time track champion Mike Lichtfeld.



**Scott Patrick** won a feature for the first time in 14 years at Jefferson Speedway.



**Runner-up Franc Beldowski (61)** and **third-place Clayton Storey (67)** scored their best results of the year at the Wisconsin Dells oval. Beldowski was in his second feature of the season at the Dells, while Beldowski was in his fifth.



**Bruce Lee (77)**, **Jerry Eckhardt** and **Tyler Deporter (2)** go three-wide at the quarter-mile in Jefferson, Wis.

