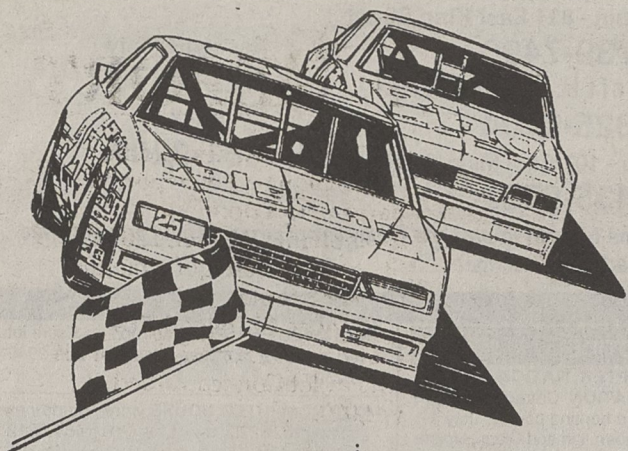


Racing Editor, Mike Cearley  
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# Inside Dirt Track

Mike Cearley  
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## No luck on the home front for Johnny Bridges

By Mike Cearley  
Racing Editor

Cherryville's Johnny Bridges seems to get snake bit everytime he ventures into his own backyard.

The rising young star on the American Sprint Car Series is doing well for himself in just his second year on the tour, but he's having problems putting on a show for his hometown fans.

Bridges entered last Friday's ASCS race at Thunder Valley Speedway full of high hopes. In his Thunder Valley Sprint Car debut earlier, this season Bridges dominated the main event until a broken power steering hose sent him to the pits.

Friday, Bridges had to borrow a car after his car blew an engine during heat races. He managed a ninth place finish as Billy Wilburn took the victory.

"We just can't seem to get a hometown win," Bridges said. "We won a big race in Savannah and another one in Fayetteville, but I just can't get that win in front of the hometown crowd."

Bridges will have another chance this Friday, as the ASCS tour invades Carolina Speedway.

"That's where I started my

racing career 10 years ago," Bridges said. "I started out in a Baby Bomber car, then moved all the way up through the ranks to the super late model division.

"Since I didn't get the win at Thunder Valley, I'll try again this week at Carolina. Both tracks are right in my backyard."

Besides running in some of the regional sprint car circuits, Bridges has tasted competition in the nation's premier sprint car circuit, the World of Outlaws.

"Running in the World of Outlaws is my ultimate goal," Bridges said. "We're talking to some sponsors. The Outlaws travel all over the United States, so it'll take some money. But it would be worth it."

Bridges finished sixth in a World of Outlaws race during Memorial Day weekend at Williams Grove, Pa. Then he drove all night back home to prepare his car for the ASCS race at East Lincoln Speedway.

He finished fourth there, as Wilburn took yet another victory.

For now, Bridges is putting all his winnings back into his car.

"We put our winnings back in so we can race next week," he said.

Right- Cherryville's Johnny Bridges hopes to finally get a win in front of his hometown friends as the American Sprint Car Series comes to Carolina Speedway Friday night.



Below-Bridges (07) makes a move during a recent American Sprint Car Series race at East Lincoln Speedway Saturday, June 4, 1999.



Jeff Oaks & son, Kale

## Times have changed... Oaks is a contender

When Kings Mountain's Jeff Oaks first broke into the Thunder & Lightning ranks 10 years ago, he was barely a contender much less a contender.

In those days Joe Robinson was the Thunder King. Robinson was unbeatable in his infamous blue Camaro as he roared to more than 300 T&L victories, most of them at Carolina Speedway.

Only a handful of drivers could even run in the top five with Robinson, and Oaks usually wasn't one of them.

"Times have changed," Oaks said after he beat Robinson fair and square in a thriller at Carolina last Friday. "When I first started racing in 1989, Joe Robinson couldn't be beat. It took a lot of luck to beat Joe and he had to have some bad luck, and that just didn't happen."

"Now I have a car capable of winning at any track. The cars are pretty equal now."

The T&L playing field was evened when the new management took over at Carolina in May. East Lincoln Speedway's Boyd and Ernie Knight, Richard Meabon, and Dewey Stump imposed a 3,000 pound weight limit on the division.

"There were drivers like Mike Messer whose cars were lighter than the others that ran at different tracks like East Lincoln," Oaks said. "Now, they all weigh the same and that has made the division more competitive."

Friday's win was Oaks third this year and his first over Robinson. A week earlier he finished second behind Robinson.

Friday, Oaks started on the pole and led from start to finish. But it was no joy ride.

Robinson, Messer, Jim Patterson and Andy Thompson were all playing tag three- and four-wide on Oaks' rear bumper.

Midway into the race, Messer passed Robinson for second as Oaks gradually began to pull away in his black and orange Camaro.

A caution with three laps remaining tightened the field for a two-lap dash for paydirt. The running order was Oaks, Messer, Robinson, Patterson and Thompson.

Oaks got a good jump on the restart, but his mirror was full of Messer. But a cut right front tire sent Messer to the rear and Oaks held off Robinson. Patterson finished third, Thompson fourth and Messer came from the rear to post a fifth-place finish.

"It was the most competitive race of the season," Oaks said. "But I knew I had the car to beat. Everything was working right."

In victory lane, Oaks had an early Father's Day celebration with his 17-year old son Kale. Kale, a rookie in the Mod 4 division, finished fifth in his race. It was his fourth top-five finish of the season.

## LOCAL TRACK ROUNDUP

### Moyer wins first round of Hav-A-Tampa Midwest Tour

Billy Moyer of Batesville, Ark. drove his Grand Prix to his third victory of the 1999 United Dirt Track Racing Association Hav-A-Tampa Dirt Racing Series last Friday night in the Coca-Cola 75 at Kentucky Lake Motor Speedway.

The 1997 Hav-A-Tampa champion took the lead from Shannon Babb of Decatur, Ill. on lap 59, in an event that saw four lead changes among four different drivers and four-wide racing all night long in front of a packed house.

Rick Aukland of Fargo, N.D. turned in his best HAT effort of the season with a second place finish in his Monte Carlo. Babb brought his Grand Prix home in third spot.

Steve Francis of Ashland, Ky. finished fourth in a Monte Carlo, while fifth went to HAT point leader Dale McDowell of Rossville, Ga. in a Monte Carlo.

Sixth through 10th spots respectively went to Terry Phillips of Springfield, Mo., 1996 HAT champion Freddy Smith of Kings Mountain, Wendell Wallace of Batesville, Ark., Terry English of Benton, Ky., and Bill Frye of Greenbrier, Ark. Wallace set fast time honors among 46 entrants with a lap in 15.103 seconds.

The 18-day, nine-race Midwest Tour continued Saturday at Paducah, Ky. International Raceway and Sunday at the DuQuoin, Ill. Fairgrounds.

Tuesday, the HAT drivers hit Davenport, Iowa, Fairgrounds before heading to Cedar Lake Speedway in Wisconsin for The Masters this weekend.

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### Galloway shakes slump

James Galloway ended six weeks of misery Friday when he won the Late Model main event at Carolina Speedway.

Galloway, the defending late model champion, had not won since racing first moved to Fridays last month. His win ended six weeks of domination by East Lincoln's regular Late Model drivers.

Donald Wilkes finished second, Todd Bolin third, Everett Dunlap fourth and Tim Sigmon fifth.

Rookie Rob McLaughlin, who had two firsts and two seconds in his first four races, broke a drive shaft during heat races and did not make the main event.

In Mod 4 action, Jerry Oliver won his 17th race of the season after Arnold Propst was disqualified for illegal heads. Propst dominated the race, but was protested by Oliver, who finished second.

Russell Falls returned to the winner's circle for the fourth time in five races. Falls, the 14-year old phenom from Cherryville, won three in a row after picking up his first-ever win on May 21.

On June 11, he was forced to start the main event in the rear and his winning streak ended.

### Sprint cars invade Carolina this week

The American Sprint Car Series will make its season debut at Carolina Speedway this Friday.

All the top ASCS drivers are expected to compete.

Gates open at 5 p.m. and qualifying for main events start at 7:30.

### Childress big winner at Thunder Valley

Scott Childress won last Friday's \$2,000 Mod 4 main event at Thunder Valley Speedway as 40 cars entered the field.

Scott Tessner finished second and Richard Crowe finished third.

Super Late Model cars will return this week for a special feature.

Promoter Ernie Elkins is promising one of the strongest fields ever of Super Late Model cars on Thursday, July 15 for the Grassy Smith Memorial.

### East Lincoln rained out

East Lincoln Speedway canceled its Saturday program after a steady rain moved across Stanley Saturday night.

Heat races were the only action before the rains came. The track will reopen for its regular program this Saturday.

### Hobgood on the move

Former Chester Motor Speedway promoter Jake Hobgood is making a name for himself on NASCAR's Goody's Dash Series.

Hobgood outraced his younger brother Justin for second place behind winner Robert Huffman in Saturday's Winston Fan Appreciation 125 at Louisville Speedway.

Jake Hobgood is currently in fourth in the Goody's point standings behind leader Huffman, Brandon Head and Eddie Kelley.

The Hobgoods have an older brother Will who is a former

Dash Champion. Will Hobgood was a regular in the Late Model division at Carolina Speedway a few years ago.

The Hobgoods hail from Winnsboro, S.C.



Dennis (Rambo) Franklin

### Rambo snaps Week's streak

Dennis "Rambo" Franklin snapped Ricky Weeks' four-race win streak with a Super Late Model win at Cherokee Speedway in Gaffney, S.C.

Flintstone Flyer Mike Duvall finished second, while Weeks came home third.

Ron Parker won his second

straight Limited Late Model race, but not without a fight from a couple of former Carolina Speedway rivals.

Buddy Smith and Doug Sanders duelled for the second spot, with Smith winning that duel. Sanders was third, while Roddey Bolin finished fourth.

### Results for Racing June 18 & 19

Thunder Valley Speedway			
Limited Sportsman			
1.....Bo Mace	3.....Tommy Reeves		
2.....Tim Smith	4.....Tim Bowen		
Stock 8			
1.....Michael Brock	4.....Marvin Pope		
2.....Andy Clark	3.....Kelly Pearson		
Mod 4			
1.....Scott Childress	4.....Ray Warlick		
2.....Scott Tessner	Rookie 4		
3.....Richard Crowe	1.....Brian Carswell		
4.....Tim Smith	2.....Brandy Champion		
Stock 4			
1.....Ray Mason	3.....Ricky Fox		
2.....Mike Wilson	4.....Terry Wright		
Carolina Speedway			
Late Model			
1.....James Galloway	3.....Frank Cooke		
2.....Donald Wilkes	4.....Shane Willis		
3.....Todd Bolin	Mod 4		
4.....Everette Dunlap	1.....Jerry Oliver		
Thunder & Lightning			
1.....Jeff Oaks	2.....Dennis Kurt		
2.....Joe Robinson	3.....Shannon Barnhill		
3.....Jim Patterson	Pure Stock 4		
4.....Andy Thompson	1.....Russell Falls		
Pure Stock 8			
1.....Billy Greenway	2.....Chad Absher		
2.....Keith Patterson	3.....Richard McKenzie		
Cherokee Speedway			
Super Late Model			
1.....Dennis Franklin	3.....Buddy Lamb		
2.....Mike Duvall	4.....Chris Steele		
3.....Ricky Weeks	Mod 4		
4.....Pety Ivey	1.....Bryan Conard		
Limited Late Models			
1.....Ron Parker	2.....Scott Childress		
2.....Buddy Smith	3.....Scott Tessner		
3.....Doug Sanders	4.....Jerry Caton		
4.....Roddey Bolin	Stock 4		
Limited Sportsman			
1.....Billy Randolph	2.....David Blanton		
2.....Ken Pearson	3.....Keith Morgan		
3.....	4.....Brad McBrayer		
4.....	4.....Mike Wilson		