



KALAMAZOO Speedway TRACK TALK March 14, 2018



**1st Open Practice! 30 days
Season Opener! 43 Days**

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Unracelike weather on March 12

SPRING CLEAN-UP STARTS

In between snow storms and freezing temperatures, track clean-up has started in anticipation of the first open practice session of the season: Saturday, April 14 (1:00 – 5:00 PM). Colby Geer (left) and Nathaniel Roberts started leaf duty on February 26.

Booking track rentals for private testing has started with the first two scheduled for this Friday (March 16) and Saturday (March 17). Cars on the track again. Awesome!

Need a current 2018 race schedule?

 <http://www.kalamazoospeedway.com/schedule/>



WHAT THE 2017 SEASON CHAMPS HAVE PLANNED FOR 2018



We asked the 2017 season champions what they had to say about the upcoming season and this is what they told us. (Car photos compliments of the drivers).

Tony LoBretto (far right) won the 1975 Kalamazoo Speedway Street Stock season championship and two generations later (42 years) earned the 2017 season championship in the Flip Flop Cyber Stocks (now the

Zoo Stocks). LoBretto planned to drive a part-time schedule in 2017 and just have a bit of fun in a sport he loves, but when winning another championship looked possible, the fun turned a bit more serious. LoBretto looks back on the achievement with pride knowing he stayed true to the division with minimal spending and operating within car set-up parameters. LoBretto will not be defending his title in 2018, instead he returns to his roots in the Street Stocks. At this point it looks like he will be missing opening night. The #24's engine was at Irwin Quality Engines on Lake Street, one of the businesses under water in the recent floods. Dave Irwin rescued the engines he had onsite but is now 2-3 weeks behind as a result of all the mess. Lobretto's operation is self-financed so he's glad he won't be disappointing any sponsors with getting a late start. As a veteran racer, LoBretto remembers when being NASCAR sanctioned had tangible benefits but noted that hasn't been the case for some time now. He sees the Streets as many do, being the most competitive class on a week in and week out basis and is looking to have some great racing experiences without the pressure of mounting a challenge for a championship. LoBretto also ran in the Super Stocks (Late Model Sportsman) a couple of times in 2017 but has no immediate plans to race in that class. He might even be talked into selling the car.



Larry Richardson's first season championship came in 2017 in the Outlaw FWD class (Outlaw Cyber Stocks in 2017) and is taking the year off, returning to racing in 2019 in the Late Model Sportsman class. Richardson explains he's purchased an Outlaw Super Late Model and will be "downgrading" the car to be a Late Model Sportsman, explaining it's common to proceed that way as the chassis are the same.



Richardson told Track Talk it was "always his goal to run in a true purpose built tube chassis race car". For 2018 he'll be part of mentor Buddy Head's pit crew and will use the information and experience he gains when fielding his own car in next year. "After 3 years of dealing with race cars that started as street cars I had no interest in doing the same with a Street Stock. Lots of new problems are created when you take something built for the street and try to get it to do something the engineers never imagined it would be doing." Long-time sponsor Geek Easy Computers will remain with Richardson.

Richardson expressed he was glad NASCAR sanctioning didn't vanish before he could snag one of the fancy championship banners that track champions receive at the award ceremony. His "Protect the Banner" motto motivated him all season long.

Zack Cook won his first championship in 2017 in the Street Stocks (formerly Pro Stocks) and will be defending his title this year in the #43. Cook says it will be tough to win the championship again but that's his goal. He offered that there are a lot of good cars in the class and a lot of people moving into that class. He's thinking there's going to be some bouncing around for his Longbarn Performance car. Cook welcomes new sponsor Josh Nagy with Everboer Walton Realtors. On the track no



longer being NASCAR sanctioned Cook thought the national points were cool and will miss the extra insurance. He went on to say at the end of the day, NASCAR is just a name and it'll be the same without them.

Buddy Head (second from left in picture on page 1) met with better timing than LoBretto and had already picked up his engine from Irwin Quality Engines. He's kept his 2018 GO N NUTS car under wraps and fans will have to wait until his car hits the track to get a look at it. He's the only driver whose car is ready to go and he plans to come out strong in 2018. Head notes it's always a blessing when he wins a championship and to never count his team out. Of NASCAR he says he's going to miss it and commented that losing the insurance was a real loss.



Mark Shook (center) says the last couple of years have been awesome and he's hoping the team can earn a third consecutive championship in the Outlaw Super Late Models in 2018. Shook won his first championship in 2016 and then repeated the feat in 2017. He says winning a third will be a tough challenge given the competition in the class. Shook gave a shout out to Crew Chief Barton Brooks who makes his job way easier. He extended the accolades to all crew members (Chad, Dave and Matt) with a special note to Kelli McDaniel, girlfriend, stating he couldn't do this without them. "They allow me to do what I love and that's race week in and week out". Main sponsors for this

year are Mac's Sports Timing and Conklin Oil. On not being NASCAR sanctioned this year, Shook said it really didn't change anything for him and he hopes dropping the NASCAR affiliation will bring out more cars to compete.

TWIST TALK

Get your weekly short track fix with TWIST Talk.

Explains Larry Richardson, TWIST Talk Live was Buddy Head's vision to bring back the MARC Times Racing News. Jason Seltzer and Richardson are making that happen.



TWIST Talk Live is a weekly Facebook Live show where both Seltzer and Richardson provide a platform for local tracks to get their information to the fans. It's designed to be a fun and interactive show where fans can learn all about what's going on in the short track racing world. Says Richardson, "No more having to go to multiple websites or Facebook pages to find out the who, what, where, when, and why. We bring it all right to you every Thursday night at 7:00 pm (EST). Fans are allowed to voice their opinions, and ask questions to be answered live on air as well. Future plans include doing driver interviews and shop tours."

To watch, go to TWIST Talk Live on Facebook and hit "like" to receive notifications when shows are about to go live.



<https://www.facebook.com/TWISTTalkLive/>

HOT LAPS – FAST FACTS

Junior Pit Passes

New for 2018 is a Junior Pit Pass to enhance the family experience at Kalamazoo Speedway. Youth 11 and under may now join an adult in the upper pits. The Junior Pit Pass will run \$15. Youth 12 and up may visit the infield pits. A minor waiver form (notarized and signed by both parents) needs to be filed once and then youth (17 and under) can sign the standard waiver form each week when accompanied by an adult. Work is underway to reconfigure the fencing in the upper pits to create some green space to go along with the more youth-friendly atmosphere. Check it out!



<http://www.kalamazooSpeedway.com>

Spring Consignment Auction (Flat Rock Speedway)

This annual consignment auction will be held at the Flat Rock Speedway in 2018 and racing cars and parts have been added to the event for 2018. To be held on April 7 at the Flat Rock Speedway, check out the flyer.



<http://www.kalamazooSpeedway.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2018-FR-Speedway-Auction-Consignment-Flier.pdf>

Drivers and Cars in 2018

Are you planning to run full-time at the Speedway in 2018? If so, drop us a line about your goals for the upcoming race season, what class you plan to compete in and a photo of your car (even if it's a work in progress). It'd be great if drivers were in the photo as well. Our goal is to include what we receive into one of the Track Talk editions before the season opener. Please send submissions to gary@kalamazooSpeedway.com.

