



TRACK TALK

January 15, 2024

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2023 AWARDS PARTY IN 2024! GUN RIVER CONSERVATION CLUB.

WELL, the original date of Saturday, January 13 was a weather bust, so we've rescheduled to Saturday, March 2. If you weren't able to attend on the 13th but you're free and clear on March 2, give us a call and purchase your advance tickets (\$10). Same day sales will be \$15. We'll be doing the same casual program just on a different date: Corliss Cornhole Tournament (\$10 buy-in), plenty of socializing, music, complimentary hot and cold snacks, water, soda and beer. BYO other libations if desired! Doors will now open at 4:00 PM to accommodate drivers booking pit stalls, buying pit or grandstand punch cards, etc. The Cornhole Tournament may start a little earlier as we're expecting a larger crowd on March 2. Stay tuned! The Tournament will break for the awards and then resume afterwards. Awards are slated to be presented at 8:00 PM.

You don't have to be a Top 10 finisher in the 2023 season (or a driver at all) to come out for some socializing and a fun time. Remember the old Meet & Greets before the season? Like that! We will see you there!

THE SPEECH THAT WASN'T! AKA GARY'S NEWS FLASHES.

Well poop! I had my five minute welcome speech all set for the Race Party last weekend and lo and behold, Ma Nature had different plans for us all. I had a few things that I wanted to get out to our local short track racers, so at this point I think I'll just let you read my speech!

Thank you to everyone here tonight. We are trying something a little different this year and I hope it works out well. Let's all sit back, maybe have an adult beverage or two, have some fun, talk a little racing, see who can beat Corliss in our Cornhole Tournament and who has the best dance moves.



First off, I want to thank Randy Ritchey and his family for shining up Kalamazoo Speedway so that it stays one of the nicest facilities in the area. He will have invested over two million dollars above what he paid for the place by the end of this coming season. You may have already or are going to see a lot of great improvements, for both the racer and the race fans. **A new state-of-the-art PA system, new bleachers, a new concession stand, plus new track and midway lighting. You've all seen the new bathrooms already (wow, what an improvement), the elevator serving the front stretch skyboxes** and you wouldn't believe the 10's of thousands of dollars that have gone into infrastructure improvements that no one sees. AND, probably the week after this year's Super Shoe, **Randy is hoping to grind up the old and put down a new racing surface; the old girl just can't be repaired any more.** So, all in all, we are going to see a lot of great improvements at the Zoo; even if the rest of the nation may be a 'lil sluggish next year!

We've got the new Outlaw Limited Late Model class this year that we hope will be something new and fresh for 2024. We'll have the Outlaw Super Lates and Modifieds racing three times each plus the Sprints make a return to the track. Our weekly payout has been beefed up a bit; not so much on the top end but in the middle and in start money (which is what you guys have told us for years). We are very excited to welcome back our strong weekly lineup of Late Models, Street Stocks, and FWD cars. We're also glad to welcome back AutoMODIFIED who leases the track to bring you the drifting series; they kick off their season on March 16. Andy Jach is also back in another leased show, the 4th of July 'Merica program.

Probably one of the bigger announcements is the new Hoosier Tire Program that we've been working on for over 3 months. We have spent countless hours working with Hoosier, going back to the drawing board to produce a race tire that offers repeatability, as well as trying to find tracks a tire that is more competitively priced. The new 980 – 9" Slick has a 9" casing with 970 rubber with no grooves. This will be run on our weekly Late Model and Outlaw Limited Late Model classes. The new 890 – 8" treaded tire features Commanche rubber on an 800 series casing.

The cost projected for last year's 9" slicks in 2024 was going to be \$176 per tire (\$704 for a set of 4 tires). This year's price for a set of **the new Economy 9" slick will be \$145 per tire with a set of 4 selling for \$580.** The **new 8" Economy Street Stock Tire will be selling for \$143 per tire (\$572 per set),** compared to the projected cost of \$664 for a full set. Your local tracks have helped achieve these costs by lowering their profit margin on tires.

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But perhaps equally exciting with these new tires, will be how many of the area tracks appear to be going to these exact tires – another first! I don't have all the answers to your tire questions right now, but I would guess I'll have them very soon.

We have some good savings on season pit and grandstand punch cards and we still have a few seasonal skyboxes for sale. You probably noticed that the Elseys are here showing off their hottest new apparel designs and custom car wraps. As for any special awards to be given out, we'll see you all in 6 weeks to announce the recipients and unveil who's won the various prizes we'll be offering at the party. Thank you all.

Gary Howe

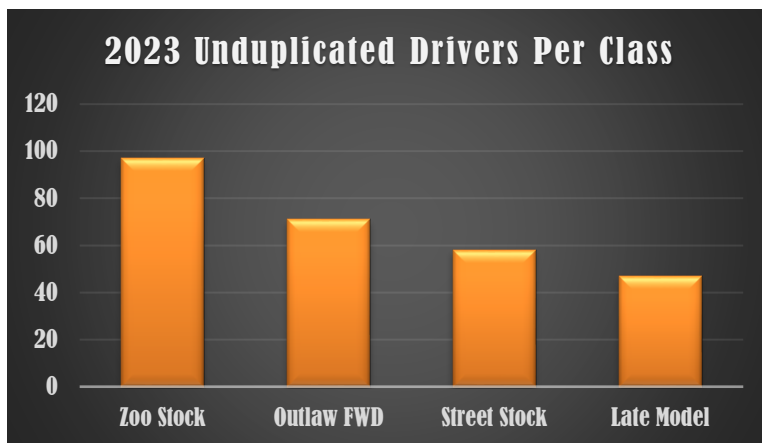
FAREWELL JACK GOODRICH.

We lost one of our track icons this past January 11. Jack Goodrich, 85, passed away just shy of his 86th birthday, leaving a big hole in our hearts. Many of you know Jack as he opened virtually every race with his heartfelt Invocation. For years Jason Seltzer passed him the microphone so he could sing the National Anthem, a familiar voice reverently and proudly offering our nation's anthem. For staff of the Speedway, we know Jack and Madelyn as the long-time occupants of Skybox #28. He was indispensable for decades in taking on the herculean task of opening the track in the spring and winterizing it at the end of each season. We will all miss Jack in untold ways. We offer our deepest sympathies to his wife, Madelyn, and his family.



A FEW NUMBERS.

Ever wonder how many drivers raced in a class over the course of the season? We thought we'd share! Let's break all the records (lap speed, attendance, fans and drivers!) in 2024 at your Friday Night Hot Spot: Kalamazoo Speedway. We can't wait to show you what we've been doing in the off season! It's one thing to read about it in Gary's speech (earlier in the newsletter), but hearing and seeing it in person? We hope to impress!!



*does not include Super Shoe

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NEXT EVENTS AT KALAMAZOO SPEEDWAY

THE first race related event in 2024 is actually a leased event. The AutoMODIFIED Drift Club returns for their second full season at the Zoo and will be testing out the new PA system and seating for the Open Drifting event on Saturday, March 16. Unlike the oval track racers, the drifters do their thing rain or shine, hot or cold, as long as there isn't a foot of water in the infield or snow so deep a car will get hung up.

On Friday April 12, there'll be a pre-season testing session followed by the Season Opener on Friday, April 19 with the Late Models, Outlaw Limited Late Models, Street Stock and the Front Wheel Drive class (now a combination of last year's Outlaw FWD and Zoo Stock). April 19 also marks the 3rd Annual Dare to be Different Autism Awareness race. Then we've got the Outlaw Super Late Models running the 24th (ha! 24th in 2024) Intimidator 100. They will be joined by the Street Stock and Front Wheel Drives.



The AutoMODIFIED Drift Club also has a few dates in April. They'll be showing off their stuff on April 13 and then for a two-day event running April 27-28.

We will see YOU at the races in 2024!



Fast, Family Fun for 74 Years

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Photos A. Fisher. Pixabay provided the cover design.