

Ron Frees Takes "Dream" Win In Wall Modifieds; Kindberg Energized With TSRS Sprints



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Commentary

Ron Frees has been a dedicated race driver at N.J.'s Wall Stadium Speedway for the better part of 10 years, and one of its finest.

This past Saturday, his dream of winning a Modified feature at that famed track came true when he annexed the night's second main.

Between 1999 and 2008 he won 22 Street Stock features on the high-banked paved oval and was the division's 2003 champion.

He also had success in the year-end Wall Turkey Derbies -- taking the divisional race title in 2007 and tying Jared Okerson in 2005.

His car of choice in those Street Stock years was the No. 43, which was a true "family" operation under the guidance of Ron, his girlfriend and now wife Tara and parents Bob and Marie; with good friends, such as "Wild Bill" Gasterini, helping in the shop and pit area.

From Monday through Friday, Ron, who resides with Tara in Brick, N.J., is a driver for the Staples office supply distribution center in South Brunswick, N.J. Tara is employed at Sansone Jr.'s 66 Auto Mall in Neptune, N.J., in the accounts payable department. While Ron loves to race, it can only be a enjoyable, part-time hobby with him.

At the end of 2009, Frees made the move into Wall's Modified division -- again with a family-run No. 43, this time an early-1990s edition Troyer Chassis mount. It was a car that Wall driver Howie Conk had. Frees traded his Street Stock to Conk for the Modified. The former SS No. 43 is now the Conk Racing Team No. 23 that Joe Torchia drives on Saturdays at Wall as the team car to Howie's No. 28.

Once he had the Modified, Ron would run as his budget allowed and did as well as could be expected. There were many nights when he wanted to be at Wall to race, but he knew that it wasn't practical.

Even if he wasn't driving his race car at Wall he would still be in the pit area. In fact, with his years of hands-on knowledge, he served as crew chief for top-rated Wall Street Stock driver Carl Thomas.

This past Saturday at the Jersey Shore oval, Ron and Tara pulled their trusty No. 43 Modified into the pit area for the first time in 2011. The timing and their racing finances were right, and there were two 35-lap features on the speedbill for the division.

The team also had valued sponsorship from "Caddy Master Dave" Preacher; and brothers Steve (a New York City police officer) and Joe Yaccarino. The Yaccarinis have also been racers in Champ Karts in the Wall Sunday Series, and enjoy being with Ron's No. 43.

Ron emphasized that another key to his success on Saturday was veteran Wall and touring Modified Series driver/owner Dave Cranmer. He worked with Ron on the car in the shop and then at the track last week, offering valued information and guidance. Ron was also appreciative of the help and friendship of Carl Thomas and Ed Larson.

By Ron's own recollection, it was just his 12th time in a Modified when he raced last weekend. But, at the end of the meet on Saturday, he had added his name to the long list of those who had won a Modified feature in the 60-plus years that Wall has presented races.

"Saturday night was the first time I had even led a Modified feature, and I ended up winning it!" said Frees. "It was unreal."

Time trials set the grid for the first main, with Ron getting what would ultimately prove to be a "lucky" 13th fastest lap. It didn't seem that way in that initial 35-lapper, when he was taken from contention with a flat tire and ended the race in 11th -- but on the lead lap.

The twin-format was structured to have the drivers that finished on the lead lap of the first race inverted for the starting grid in the night-cap. That put Frees outside row two for the second event, giving him a real chance for success. He borrowed a used tire from the No. 30 team of driver Billy Cole III and car owner Chris Jenkins, and prepared to race. Then, as an indication that this might be Ron's night, Mike Brennan relinquished his pole spot. That moved everyone up.

Ron quickly moved into the lead in the opening laps, then outpaced Cole and the night's fast-time driver Roger Coss Jr. while maintaining command. But, his strongest challenge was not far behind.

That was Anthony Sesely, who had finished third in the opening main and then advanced from 11th in the second race, while dodging a variety of on-track incidents that eliminated strong contenders. And, Sesely was still feeling the effects of a rough week of doctor visits and treatment for an ongoing, severe headache malady, persisting over a month, that actually led him to a neurologist for treatment.

Anthony rocketed his No. 16 into second, and then positioned him-



self right behind the Frees No. 43 in a high-speed chess match that thrilled the grandstand patrons. While Sesely moved high and low to challenge, Frees countered his every move -- and all the time, Anthony raced Ron as clean as could be imagined given the fact that Wall's banked oval lends itself to cars always being on the edge. There was no margin for error by either driver, as they raced for victory -- Ron's first in the Modifieds and Anthony looking to add to his total.

"I was going for my first win in a Modified, and I wasn't going to give up the lead," said Ron on Sunday, as he reflected on the intense race the night before. "I know I didn't make it easy for Anthony, but I hope he realizes that I wasn't trying to mess him up. I was protecting my spot. He was faster, but I wasn't giving up that lead."

"I definitely beat the best, Anthony made me work for everything." With only a few laps to go, Sesely had gone for it on the outside of turn four -- but ended up spinning down to the infield. Though he remained on the same lap, as the caution waved, his chance for a third win of the year was gone. Frees then maintained the lead, again keeping the ever-challenging Coss, who wrapped up a fine night by taking second place, behind in the run for the checkered.

Chas Okerson, the defending and two-time Modified champion, finished third (he was fifth in the opening race), followed by Amanda Sesely (Anthony's sister, who was a strong contender for her first Wall win in the initial main) and Mike Brennan -- who registered his best finish yet in a solid run while staying clear of some wild action.

On Sunday, Ron Frees reflected on his accomplishment. And it truly was just that -- after all, his No. 43 is truly, by his own description, "...just a backyard operation, with used parts. There's not a lot of money in the car, but what money there is in it is a lot for me."

"This (win) is huge. I never expected this, we were just hoping to get good finishes in the two features," continued Ron. "Now, to win in a Modified at Wall is incredible, it's something I dreamed about."

"The realization (of the win) hit me when I was going to the scale after the feature, and Gil Hearne (Wall's eight time Modified champion and winner of 101 features there) came over to congratulate me. I thought, 'My God, here is Gil Hearne congratulating me!'"

"When I got up this (Sunday) morning, I still thought that it (win) might have been a dream. So I went right out into the living room to see if the trophy was still there. It was!"

As documented in last week's *Area Auto Racing News*, a decision by the Wall Stadium appeal committee gave Anthony Sesely the Modified feature win on May 14. He had been given a rough-riding call, and although crossing the finish line first, was set back in the run-down. Shaun Carrig, who was in second place, was thus named the winner. However, when the new decision was made, Carrig's win was taken away and he was then listed as the race runnerup to Sesely.

Like Ron Frees, Carrig is a driver who runs his No. 54 on a strict budget. It's not quite as tight as Ron's, but the "Carrig Family Racing" group gets their money's worth each Saturday. Last weekend, there was no doubt that Shaun was the winner of the first 35-lap Modified feature. He outdueled Jason Heame (Gil's son, driving the Jim Wolfe-owned No. 12) and went on to victory.

Shaun never hesitates to tell all that it's his dad, Jim "J.C." Carrig, that's "the mastermind" behind the race team as mechanic and all around troubleshooter. In fact, Shaun laughingly refers to J.C. as "our team McGiver" -- that in reference to the popular TV show of years ago named for that character who could fix or invent anything, while "under pressure," out of whatever spare parts that were around.

But the Carrig team had a scary moment on Saturday, during the second feature. Shaun had an on track incident, that caused damage to his car, and was headed for the pit area for repairs. J.C., watching Shaun come in under caution, quickly went running toward their pit site to get ready to work on the car, but slipped and fell onto the pavement. He hit his head, causing a nasty cut over his eye that was treated by the rescue crew, but was otherwise unhurt.

Shaun was able to return to competition and finished sixth.

Wall's managing Krause family put together a wonderful salute to the military as part of last Saturday's Memorial Day Weekend races.

It was highlighted by the singing of our National Anthem by Kirsten Sowers, age 11, in front of the grandstand and with all of the race drivers assembled on the infield, prior to the start of the features.

An extremely polished and personable young lady, Kirsten has been singing since age seven and not only plays and sings country music, she also writes songs. In fact, she will be attending a song writing camp in Nashville, Tenn., this summer.

Most-importantly, Kirsten created the "Kirsten Kares" foundation. Through her singing and special appearances, such as being at Wall last week and singing the National Anthem at Pa.'s Grandview Speedway on June 11, Kirsten raises money through the foundation to help members of the military and their families; and also for children and schools that need assistance in times of need or emergencies.

While Kirsten sang the National Anthem at Wall, our nation's colors were presented by a U.S. Navy Color Guard based at the nearby Earle (N.J.) Navy Operations Support Group facility.

Wall and the Garden State Vintage Stock Car Club will host "Wall Stadium Champions Night" in conjunction with the regular race meet on July 9. Ray Shea, president of the GSVSCC, noted that there are close to 30 former champions of the Stadium, representing the variety of racing divisions there, already confirmed to visit and meet the fans on that Saturday. If they have not already done so, any former Wall driving champion, and/or family members who could notify them, should contact Ray at 732-330-8349 or 732-840-6307 or email the club at bigblock7s@comcast.net or gsvssc@comcast.net.

"It's going to be a great time," said Shea, who has been at the helm of the GSVSCC since its founding in 1991, of the July 9 event. "Diane Krause (wife of Wall promoter Cliff Krause) has really been working hard to make this a special occasion for the drivers, in all of the divisions, that have helped to create Wall's great history."

Kindberg Fielding His Own TSRS Sprint Car Team

Since the 1970s, the name of Bruce Kindberg has been very familiar to racers, and fans. Initially establishing his expertise in TQ-Midget racing, as a car designer/builder and driver, Bruce and his wife Margaret have operated the well-known Bruce's Speed Shop in the Northern New Jersey town of Parsippany since 1980.

From 1976 to 1982, he was a TQ driver himself -- at North Jersey's legendary Pine Brook Speedway; and on the touring ATQMRA circuit. His dad, Carl Kindberg, was a well-respected TQ car builder and owner in that era. Now retired, Carl is 78 and residing in Florida.

"He's my biggest fan!" said Bruce of his dad.

In his career, Bruce Kindberg drove a USAC Silver Crown car; was involved in Modifieds; and raced and won, in the Xcel 600cc Modified Series. Most-recently, beginning in 2010, he's been one of the top runners in the new TriState Race Saver (TSRS) Sprint Car Series.

Along with his driving talents, Kindberg has also been a car builder and fabricator of full-Midgets and dirt and pavement Modifieds under his Pro-Car banner. Indeed, his motto at Bruce's Speed Shop is "We Have Everything!" -- which includes a complete inventory of parts and material; a SuperFlow flow bench and chassis dyno service.

There's no doubt that Bruce, now age 52 and resident of Mine Hill, N.J., loves being active and always "going for first place" whether it's in his and Margaret's successful business; or on the track.

Now, as noted, his race driving takes place with the TSRS Sprints.

It was a year ago next week, on June 12, 2010, that he won for the first time in a winged Sprint when he annexed the TSRS 20-lap main at N.J.'s ultra-fast Bridgeport Speedway. That night, as he had throughout 2010, he was driving for a team other than his own.

This year, however, Bruce Kindberg is back where he wants to be. He is both driver and car owner in the TSRS Series with his No. 10K.

"This year, we've welcomed a new sponsor, the *Post Chronicle.com*, to our Bruce Kindberg Motorsports team," said Bruce. "The Chronicle is an 'information hot line', and Marc Centanni at the Chronicle has been great. They are also race fans, so we're really happy to have them join us for Sprint Car racing this year!"

The *Post Chronicle*, an on-line newspaper that covers news, sports and entertainment, "offers original and syndicated content" from news groups such as UPI, Reuters Thompson, Creators Syndicate, and World Entertainment News Network. The *Post Chronicle* logo is prominent on the side panel of the top wing on Kindberg's typically- immaculate white, blue & gold-trimmed racecar.

Last Saturday, he finished seventh in the Bridgeport TSRS main.

Along with driving his own Sprinter on a regular basis, Bruce will also be fielding a team car, the No. 82P, on the TSRS tour this year for 20-year veteran driver Joe Puzzella of Roselle, N.J.

Duties are shared by Bruce's wife Margaret (team organizer/scoring) Puzzella, Teddy Andreiniuk (mechanic) and "Big John" Rudowsky.

"We are expecting to have a great season, thanks to our sponsors, and my fabulous crew," said Bruce. "And, the support of my loyal fans, going back to the Pine Brook days, has always been important."

Bruce will also tell you that a major reason for his success, in business and on the track, is a crucial health decision of three years ago. Back then, he was nearly 370 pounds.

"I had a (sugar) diabetes problem, which had really worsened, and I had to lose the weight," he emphasized. "There was no 'maybe I should lose some weight'. I had to, to survive."

"It brought it all into perspective. I lost 160 pounds in one year, just by going with a healthy lifestyle and a proper diet. I couldn't believe how good I felt after losing the weight, and how good I feel now. It gives me more energy and stamina for being at the (Bruce's Speed) shop and getting behind the wheel of the race car."



GOING FOR HIS FIRST MODIFIED WIN 1) at Wall Stadium, Ron Frees (No. 43) outdueled Anthony Sesely (outside); 2) Singing the National Anthem at Wall's "Salute to the Military" program was 11-year old Kirsten Sowers; 3) Bruce Kindberg charges his No. 10K "Post Chronicle" TSRS 305 Sprinter around N.J.'s Bridgeport oval!

(Photos 1 & 2 by Jim Smith; No. 3 by Pete MacDonald)