



NASCAR WHELEN MODIFIED TOUR

News & Notes

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RACE 1 @ THOMPSON INTERNATIONAL SPEEDWAY

FAST FACTS

The Race: Icebreaker

The Place: Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway

The Date: Sunday, April 11

The Time: 3:15 p.m. ET

The Distance: 150 laps / 93.75 miles

Race Purse: \$87,231

2009 Winner: Ted Christopher

2009 Polesitter: Ted Christopher

Event Schedule:

Saturday: Practice 11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.,
Qualifying 3:30 p.m.

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- NWMT Season Opens With Title Vacancy
- Old Faces, New Places
- Civali Pulling Double Duty



After a runner-up finish a year ago, Preece heads a list of championship contenders in 2010.

2009 FINAL STANDINGS

Rk	Driver	Points
1	Donny Lia	2,020
2	Ryan Preece	2,004
3	Ted Christopher	1,931
4	Rowan Pennink	1,867
5	Todd Szegedy	1,823
6	Chris Pasteryak	1,691
7	Mike Stefanik	1,650
8	Eric Beers	1,645
9	Woody Pitkat	1,621
10	Ed Flenke Jr.	1,602

Whelen Modified Title Up For Grabs As 2010 Opens

As the 2010 NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour season opens this weekend at Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway with the Icebreaker, the championship quest will be a wide-open competition.

For the second time in three seasons, **Donny Lia** celebrated at the Thompson World Series with the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour championship trophy. And this past off season, for the second time in the last three seasons, Lia has vacated his seat in the No. 4 'Mystic Missile' for an opportunity in the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series. That once again leaves a field full of teams that will unload for the Icebreaker with optimistic title expectations.

Heading the list of championship-contending teams is the No. 3 Modified of Boehler Racing Enterprises with driver **Ryan Preece**. Preece showed championship potential in 2009 as he

piloted 'Ole Blue' to a pair of wins and 10 top fives in 13 2009 races. He trailed Lia by just 26 points entering the season finale, but Lia was able to hold on and the final points margin was a slim 16 tallies.

Preece, from Berlin, Conn., and BRE will figure to have plenty of stiff competition for the 2010 crown, however. Despite a third-place finish in the final standings, **Ted Christopher** was in position to defend his 2008 title for the majority of 2009. If not for mechanical issues at Martinsville (Va.) Speedway and Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway in the 11th and 12th races of the season, Christopher could very well be gunning for a third-straight title in 2010.

Christopher is coming off a rather amazing decade. Although his only title came in 2008, the Plainville, Conn., veteran was the championship runner-up in 2002 and 2005 and finished outside

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News & Notes

The Race ... The 2010 NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour season will open with the Icebreaker at Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway on Sunday, April 11. This will be the 110th race in Tour history at Thompson, and the ninth year in-a-row that that track has hosted the season opener.

The Procedure ... Starting positions 1-32 will be determined from time trials, followed by a redraw of the fastest qualifiers. The remaining five positions in the maximum starting field of 37 cars will be filled through the provisional process. The race is 150 laps (93.75 miles).

The Track ... A .625-mile high-banked oval that opened in 1940, Thompson was the first asphalt track in the nation, and the largest in New England until New Hampshire Motor Speedway opened in 1990. TIS has played host to the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour more times than any other track.

Race Winners ... There have been 29 different race winners at Thompson, led by Mike Stefanik's 14 victories. Ted Christopher is the defending winner of this race, and was victorious in the last race of 2009 at Thompson.

Pole Winners ... There have been 36 different pole winners at Thompson, led by Jeff Fuller's 13. Eric Beers set the Thompson qualifying record in the 2008 World Series at 18.429 seconds (122.080 mph).

Icebreaker - Last 15 Years

Date	Pole	Winner
4/2/95	Steve Park	Tommy Cravenho
3/31/96	Steve Park	Steve Park
4/13/97	Charlie Pasteryak	Rick Fuller
3/29/98	Mike Stefanik	Reggie Ruggiero
4/11/99	Jamie Tomaino	Mike Ewanitsko
7/20/00	Tim Connolly	Jerry Marquis
4/22/01	Bob Polverari	Rick Fuller
4/8/02	L.W. Miller	Jerry Marquis
4/6/03	Zach Sylvester	Chuck Hossfeld
4/17/04	Todd Szegedy	Ted Christopher
4/10/05	Chuck Hossfeld	Ted Christopher
4/9/06	Jerry Marquis	Mike Stefanik
4/15/07	Todd Szegedy	James Civali
4/6/08	James Civali	Ed Flemke Jr.
4/5/09	Ted Christopher	Ted Christopher

2010 Championship Up For Grabs

(Continued from page 1)
the top five in points only once (6th in 2001) in the 2000s, a fact that makes him a contender again this year almost by default. Christopher also figures to be able to take advantage of lap leader bonus points, which are new to the Tour this year. In the past two seasons alone he has led 1,214 laps, double the total of Preece, who is second during that timeframe.



Ted Christopher had an average points finish of 3rd in the 2000s.

Like Preece, **Rowan Pennink** had a very solid third year in the Tour. The Huntingdon Valley, Pa., driver had 10 top-10s in his first two seasons, but tied for the Tour lead last year with 11 and exhibited the consistency needed to contend for a title. Pennink is still looking for his first career Tour victory, and it could be on the horizon as he has won races outside of NASCAR competition in the last year. In the first 25 years of the Whelen Modified Tour, no driver has earned the title without at least one win.

Entering his eighth full-time season in the Tour, **Todd Szegedy** has forged a well-earned reputation as a perennial title contender. The Ridgefield, Conn., driver finished seventh in points as a rookie in 2002 and captured the crown the following season. His last four seasons have been top-five finishes, but a runner-up effort in 2007 is the closest he's come to regaining the crown.



Rowan Pennink tied for the Tour lead with 11 top 10s in 2009.

In addition to the drivers that finished high in the 2009 standings, there figures to be a host of others that could factor in. Seven-time champion **Mike Stefanik** cannot be ruled out, **Chuck Hossfeld** has been a top finisher in his full-time campaigns and last year's Whelen Southern Modified Tour Champion **George Brunnhoelzl III** has come north to contend for a title. Younger drivers like **Chris Pasteryak**, **Woody Pitkat**, **Erick Rudolph**, **Bobby Santos** or **Ron Silk** could be in the mix with improved consistency.

Familiar Faces, New Places

As with most off seasons, there were some NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour team transactions. Here's a brief recap:

Hossfeld in the No. 59

... After not having a full-time ride in 2009, **Chuck Hossfeld** will be back to contend for a title in 2010 with car owner Ed Bennett in the No. 59. Hossfeld has seven career wins and has finished in the top five in the standings in four of the six seasons he has run the full schedule.



Chuck Hossfeld

Rudolph Goes From the No. 59 to the 98 ...

A mutual parting of ways in the off season saw **Erick Rudolph** move on from a cooperation between his family's team and Bennett in the No. 59 to drive for Al Heinke and Tommy Baldwin and the new HBR Racing team, which will field a full-time team for the first time in 2010. Rudolph earned his first career Tour win a year ago.

Brunnhoezl in the No. 46 ... The 2009 NASCAR Whelen Southern Modified Tour

champion is coming north. **George Brunnhoelzl III** is following in the footsteps of his father to compete in the Whelen Modified Tour in the No. 46 owned by Bob Katon. Brunnhoelzl III has six career Southern Tour wins. George Brunnhoelzl Jr. was a two-time race winner on the Tour.

Beers Goes From the No. 46 to the 76 ...

Supplanted in Katon's No. 46, **Eric Beers** has landed in the newly-formed No. 76 team that will be a cooperative effort between David DeLange and John Blewett, grandfather of drivers **Jimmy Blewett** and the late **John Blewett III**.

Santos Takes Over the No. 4 ...

A driver without a home for many years, **Bobby Santos** has finally landed his first full-time Tour ride as he has replaced **Donny Lia** in the No. 4 for car owner Bob Garbarino. Santos has a win and 12 top 10s in 29 career starts since 2004 and will crawl into the seat of the 'Mystic Missile' which has registered six poles, 12 wins and two championships in the three previous seasons.

Blewett in the No. 14 ...

After taking off the second half of 2009, **Jimmy Blewett** will return in 2010 in the No. 14 of car owner Richard Barney, previously piloted by **Reggie Ruggiero**.



Tour Tidbits: Competition Updates for 2010



Bonus Points ... Prior to 2010, the NASCAR Whelen Modified and Whelen Southern Modified Tours were the only NASCAR divisions to not award lap leader bonus points. That changed in the off season as the sanctioning body has announced that five bonus points will be awarded to any driver who leads a lap during a race, and five additional points to the driver who leads the most laps in that event.

Leader Chooses ... While double-file restarts were a part of NASCAR's touring divisions well before they were adopted at the national series level last year, there is one feature to the

national series' restart rule that has trickled down to the touring level. The race leader now gets to choose, with one pace lap left, whether to restart on the inside or outside lane. Previously, the leader always started inside.

Changes to Late-Race Restarts ... Speaking of double-file restarts, they'll now be in effect throughout the entire race in 2010. Previously, restarts inside 10 laps to go were single-file. There was also no free pass car with a caution inside 10 laps to go previously, but in 2010 the beneficiary rule applies throughout the race.

Five Over the Wall ... This season Tour teams will be allowed five pit crew members in the car servicing area during pit stops. Teams were previously limited to four over the wall.

Pit Stop Procedures ... Teams will now be limited to changing either tires or taking fuel during a pit stop, but not both. If taking tires on the first stop, team can come back around for fuel under the same caution, or vice versa.

Civali Pulling Double-Duty in 2010

If **James Civali** likes to race a Modified, then he has latched on with the right team because the Hill family likes to go racing, a lot.

In 2010, Civali and Hillbilly Racing are planning to compete for the championship in both the NASCAR Whelen Modified and NASCAR Whelen Southern Modified Tours, something that no team has done since the Southern Tour was formed in 2005.

With the Whelen Modified Tour schedule traditionally starting later in the season with the unpredictable March weather in New England, there are opportunities for teams to go south to compete in early-season Southern Tour events. **Ted Christopher**, **Rowan Pennink**, **Jamie Tomaino** and others have dabbled. **Ron Silk** had seven Southern Tour starts with Hillbilly Racing prior to parting ways with the team in 2009. Southern Tour driver **Andy Seuss**, a New Hampshire native, has crossed over the most with 15 career starts in the northern Tour. But, no driver or team has attempted to run both Tours before this year.

Early returns for the No. 79 team are good. After three events in the Southern Tour, Civali leads Seuss by 18 points atop the standings. Last week at South Boston (Va.) Speedway, Civali garnered his first Southern Tour victory after top 10s at Atlanta (Ga.) Motor Speedway and Caraway Speedway in Asheboro, N.C., to start the season.

The Hillbilly team will have only one logistical challenge if no rain-outs come into play. On Friday, Aug. 7 the Whelen Modified Tour is at Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway and the Whelen Southern Modified Tour competes the next night at Bowman Gray Stadium in Winston-Salem, N.C. Then there is the one guaranteed roadblock to competing in every race in both Tours in 2010: the combination race between the two Tours at Bristol (Tenn.) Motor Speedway where they'll have to decide prior to the race which Tour they wish to earn driver points for, but they could enter a car for each Tour for owner points.

Civali and Hillbilly Racing have already made their mark in the Southern Tour, and it's now time to start the second phase.



Civali and Hillbilly Racing won the Whelen Southern Modified Tour race on April 3.

Up Next: Stafford Spring Sizzler

The first of four races for the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour in 2010 at Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway is slated for Sunday, April 25 with the Tech-Net Spring Sizzler presented by CARQUEST.



The prestigious Spring Sizzler is the traditional season-opening event for Stafford, and will also include racing from five NASCAR Whelen All-American Series divisions in addition to the Whelen Modified Tour feature event.

Stafford, a slightly-banked asphalt facility, has played host to the Whelen Modified Tour in all but one season since its inception in 1985. The 2010 Spring Sizzler will be the 95th all-time race for the Tour at the historic half-mile.

In addition to being the winningest driver in Stafford history, **Ted Christopher** has taken the checkers in the last two Spring Sizzlers. He has nine career Whelen Modified Tour wins at Stafford, including four in the Spring Sizzler.

Action will begin on Spring Sizzler weekend for the Whelen Modified Tour with practice and qualifying on Saturday, April 24. Raceday will commence with the pre-race CARQUEST Belts & Hose Pit Party.

Icebreaker Also Start for Thompson NWAAS

The NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour will share the Icebreaker card with each of Thompson International Speedway's "Super Six" divisions of its NASCAR Whelen All-American Series program. Like the Tour, this will also be the season-opening weekend for the local divisions.



In the headline division, the Sunoco Modifieds, **Keith Rocco** is the defending titlist, as well as the two-time reigning Connecticut state champion. **Derek Ramstrom**, who is competing full time in the NASCAR K&N Pro Series East this year, is the reigning Super Late Model champion. **John Materas** (Late Model), **Brian O'Sullivan** (Thompson Modified), **Larry Barnett** (Limited Sportsman) and **Scott Michalski** (Mini Stock) were also 2009 division winners.



Contingency Awards

COORS LIGHT POLE AWARD: Presented to the fastest eligible qualifier in each NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour race. The Coors Light Pole winner for each race will receive \$600. The driver who wins the most Coors Light Pole Awards during the season will receive a year-end award.

• 2009 award recipient: Ted Christopher

FEATHERLITE MOST IMPROVED DRIVER AWARD: Presented to the driver who improves their finishing position the most, compared to the previous series race. The Featherlite Most Improved Driver Award winner for each race will receive \$600. The driver who wins the most Featherlite Awards during the season will receive a year-end award.

• 2009 award recipient: Ted Christopher

COCA-COLA MOVE OF THE RACE AWARD: Presented to the driver who improves the most number of positions from their starting position in each race. The Coca-Cola Move of the Race Award winner in each event will receive \$750. The driver who wins the most Coca-Cola Awards during the season will receive a year-end award.

• 2009 award recipient: Eric Beers

WHELEN ENGINEERING WINNER OF THE RACE AWARD: Presented to the driver who takes the checkered flag at each race throughout the season. The Whelen Engineering Winner of the Race Award recipient in each event will earn \$500. The driver who wins the most Whelen Awards during the season will receive a year-end award.

• 2009 award recipient: Donny Lia

SUNOCO ROOKIE OF THE YEAR AWARD: Sunoco, the official fuel of NASCAR, sponsors a Rookie of the Race Award at each event – as well as the prestigious year-end award, which recognizes the top rookie driver in the series. Eligible drivers collect Sunoco Rookie points at each race and compete under other additional criteria for the Sunoco Rookie of the Year Award. The Rookie of the Race Award winner in each event will receive \$300.

• 2009 award recipient: Eric Goodale



Thompson International Speedway will celebrate its 70th season in 2010. The track has been part of the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour schedule in each of its 26 years, and in the last decade has become the traditional venue for the Tour to open and close its season.



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2010 NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour Schedule

DATE	RACE	FACILITY	2009 POLESITTER	2009 RACE WINNER
April 11	Icebreaker	Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway	Ted Christopher	Ted Christopher
April 25	Tech-Net Spring Sizzler pres. by CARQUEST	Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway	Ted Christopher	Ted Christopher
May 28	TSI Harley-Davidson 125	Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway	Ted Christopher	Jimmy Blewett
June 6	Made In America Whelen 200	Martinsville (Va.) Speedway	Ron Silk	Mike Stefanik
June 26	New England 100	New Hampshire Motor Speedway, Loudon, N.H.	Doug Coby	Donny Lia
July 3	NWMT at Lime Rock	Lime Rock Park, Lakeville, Conn.	—	—
July 17	NWMT at Monadnock *	Monadnock Speedway, Winchester, N.H.	—	—
July 31	NWMT at Riverhead *	Riverhead (N.Y.) Raceway	Ryan Preece	Ryan Preece
Aug. 6	Town Fair Tire 150	Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway	Eric Berndt	Ryan Preece
Aug. 12	Budweiser 150	Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway	Donny Lia	Donny Lia
Aug. 18	UNOH Perfect Storm 150 +	Bristol (Tenn.) Motor Speedway	None (rain)	Donny Lia
Sept. 18	New Hampshire 100	New Hampshire Motor Speedway, Loudon, N.H.	Ryan Preece	Ron Silk
Oct. 3	CARQUEST Fall Final	Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway	Donny Lia	Donny Lia
Oct. 17	World Series of Speedway Racing	Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway	None (rain)	Ted Christopher

* Qualifying Format Race

+ Combined Race With Whelen Southern Modified Tour