



Vintage Views

*The official publication of the
Garden State Vintage Stock Car Club*

Dedicated to the Preservation of Stock Car Racing History
July, August, September 2020

Totally Awesome: Mid-1980s Garden State Classics

Thanks to Earl Krause for his contributions to this article from Area Auto Racing News, editions of June 16, 2015; June 21, 2016; and June 20, 2017.

When one thinks of July, what comes to mind? If one is near the Jersey Shore, it's all about summer vacations, enjoying the seashore and summer activities and of course, Wall Stadium's Garden State Classic.

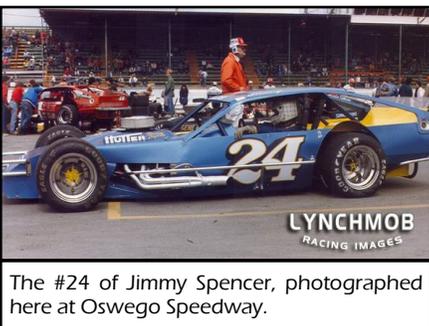
The Classic began in 1957, originally a 300-lap marathon that tested the mettle of drivers and machines. It quickly became a much-anticipated mid-season event for asphalt race fans. The competitors have included not only Wall regulars, for whom the Classic was part of their points season, but the many invaders who came to try their skill and luck. Let's take a look at the Garden State Classics of 1985, 1986 and 1987 as told by Earl Krause - longtime announcer at Wall Stadium and Pocono Raceway, racing historian and Assistant to the Editor at Area Auto Racing News.

SPENCER AND TOMAINO DUELED IN 1985 In the 1985 Garden State Classic, "invader" Jimmy Spencer from Berwick, PA outdueled local favorite Jamie Tomaino to win a bumper-to-bumper race that is still recalled to this day by those who saw it! The Classic was at that time a 200-lap test of skill, planning, and of

course, luck. Spencer took the lead in his family-owned #24 with 75 laps to go. Tomaino, at the wheel of the Potts Racing #99, moved to second.

A memorable 25-lap duel began: Jamie, who had begun his career at Wall, knew the fast way around the high banks, and where to pull off a pass. But each time he would set up Jimmy, the driver known as "Mr. Excitement" would block his attempt. The intensity increased in the closing laps, with Spencer nearly putting Tomaino in the fence. The home crowd in the grandstands cheered, pulling for Jamie all the way. Tomaino raced Spencer clean, never making a move to push him out of the way. Spencer was greeted with "boos" as he pulled into Victory Lane while runner-up Tomaino received the loudest cheers! And then came the Classic of 1986...

TOMAINO REBOUNDED TO WIN IN 1986 One year later, on July 19, 1986, "Jamie the Jet" pulled into Victory Lane to the cheers of the local fans after winning the Garden State Classic for the first time. He drove with a smooth, calculated style in his signature #99 and was right there to take advantage when the leader, Tom Mauser from Farmingdale, NJ, dropped off the pace. Indeed, Mauser - who would become that year's Wall Modified champion, appeared to be unbeatable for three-quarters of the 1986 edition.



The #24 of Jimmy Spencer, photographed here at Oswego Speedway.



Jamie Tomaino's #99

GSVSCC meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday from January through November, 7:30 p.m. at the West Long Branch Firehouse, Rt. 71 (Monmouth Road) and Cedar Ave. West Long Branch, NJ. For directions call 732-330-8349 or go to www.gsvscc.org.

He took the lead at the start in his #45 and led Martin Truex, Sr. (dad of NASCAR Cup star Martin, Jr.) and Doug French (dad of Wall Legend Car champion Robert French) through lap 100.

TOM MAUSER WON IN 1987 After losing the lead in the 1986 GSC due to a mechanical problem, Tom Mauser came back to win the first of his eventual three Garden State Classics in 1987.



Tom Mauser's #45

This time, it appeared as if Martin Truex, Sr. was going to win as he led the 200-lap event at the five-to-go mark. Mauser, who had been challenging Truex, made what turned out to be the winning move when Truex came off turn four in the middle groove. Mauser put his #45 to the inside and they drag raced into turn one – with Mauser edging ahead for the victory. Truex finished second, ahead of fast-closing Pete Brittain, Tony Siscione, and Gil Hearne. Sixth through 10th place finishers were: Chip Graves, Tom Comerford, Joe Merlino, Jr., Barney Truex and Harry Reed. Ron Buck won the Street Stock main.

Fast-forward to this year. The 2020 racing season has been a difficult one due to COVID-19 restrictions. Total bummer. Despite this, Wall Stadium staff, headed by Promoter Diane Krause, were able to open the track for an abbreviated season beginning on July 25th. This year's GSC was run on August 15 and was won by young Blake Barney, son of Robert Barney and grandson of famed car owner Dick Barney. This win was Blake Barney's second career win, the first win coming only the week before. As the 2020 season winds down, we all look forward to the 2021 season with the hopeful expectation of getting back to normal. For sure.





NEW MEMBER
Richard Liquori, Catskill, NY

UP

TO

DATE

ARE YOU UP-TO-DATE?
If you haven't paid your dues for this year, contact Ray Shea to renew.

GET WELL WISHES

John Malsbury



CONDOLENCES
on the passing of:
the brother of Debbie Gastelu;
club member Don Patterson

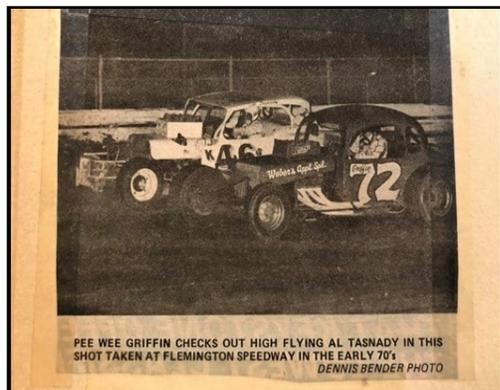
VINTAGE MEET IN THE MOUNTAINS

Atlantic Coast Old Timers vintage club hosted an on-track event at Evergreen Speedway, in St. Johns, PA on June 13th. ACOT invited GSVSCC car owners/drivers to join in. Linda Cooper, new member A.J. Kitz, John Malsbury, Whitney Miller, Gino Murin, Rich Parker, Al Voorhees, and friends made the trip. Everyone had a fun time. Thanks to ACOT for putting out the Welcome mat. *Photos by Linda Cooper*



PHOTO TRIVIA ANSWER

from the Spring 2020 issue



PEE WEE GRIFFIN CHECKS OUT HIGH FLYING AL TASNADY IN THIS SHOT TAKEN AT FLEMINGTON SPEEDWAY IN THE EARLY 70's
DENNIS BENDER PHOTO

There's a lot of history in this photo. Even a tiny hint will give it away, so let's just say this is at a NJ dirt track and leave it at that.

Al Tasnady ran his first race in 1949 at age 19 in a modified 1937 Ford coupe that belonged to his brother. He liked it so much that he decided to quit his job and focus on racing. Al had a special talent for reading dirt tracks and setting up his cars for maximum performance. He also raced on beach courses, including NASCAR events at Daytona. In all, Al won more than 600 races during his career, and was almost impossible to beat on the dirt tracks of South Jersey, including Vineland, Flemington and Alcyon. Al was regarded as a gentleman on and off the track, and had a huge fan following in the 1950s and 1960s. They called the charismatic driver "Tas". He was so adept at racing at Flemington, he won 96 races there and was track champion each season from 1960 to 1966. Al retired after the 1972 season and went to work at his favorite track, Flemington. In 1974, he was the first inductee in the Eastern Motorsports Hal of Fame. The King of the Modifieds passed away at age 58 in 1988.

A native of Florida, Bruce "**Pee Wee**" Griffin headed to the Northeast in the 1960s to compete at tracks offering big money on a weekly basis. His hard-charging style of racing brought controversy and many wins. Griffin's greatest success in the Northeast came on the half-mile of East Windsor Speedway in Hightstown, NJ. He won six features in the track's inaugural year of 1965 and was the track's first Modified champion. In addition to EWS, Griffin did well at other tracks, such as NY's Orange County Fair Speedway, PA's Nazareth Speedway, NJ's Bridgeport and Flemington Speedways; on pavement at NJ's New Egypt Speedway (in its Fort Dix Speedway era), Old Bridge, Vineland and Wall Stadium ovals; with the All Star League of Modified Racing; and on the mile tracks of Trenton and Langhorne Speedways. Although Griffin's racing career was halted by legal problems in the 1980s, he provided fellow racers and fans alike with stories that are still being told today. Griffin passed away at age 80 in 2017.

Thanks to Earl Krause and njsports.com for contributing to this piece.

PHOTO TRIVIA



...and he's outta there! What do you know about this spectacular wreck and how it relates to racing in NJ?

Look for the answer in our next issue, or go to our website www.gsvscc.org if you can't wait that long. Sometimes the website answer contains more information than we have space for in print.

Reader photos are welcomed. Contact the Editor.

CORONAVIRUS

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, club meetings since March have been cancelled. The club's 29th annual **Hall of Fame awards dinner**, originally scheduled for March 22, was rescheduled to **October 25, 2020** and subsequently rescheduled to **March 14, 2021**.

The GSVSCC Officers send our best wishes to members and friends of the club. We look forward to getting together again soon.

VINTAGE VIEWS, THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE GARDEN STATE VINTAGE STOCK CAR CLUB

Linda Cooper—Publisher/Editor

vintageviews@gsvscc.org ☎ 732-456-3947

President **Ray Shea** - 732-330-8349
bigblock7s@comcast.net

Vice President **Marty Van Druen** - 732-255-2807
coacher5@comcast.net

Secretary **Linda Cooper** - 732-456-3947
info@gsvscc.org

Treasurer **Mary Anne Hayes** - 732-458-4074

Membership **Ray Shea** - 732-330-8349
bigblock7s@comcast.net

Event **Ray Shea** - 732-330-8349
bigblock7s@comcast.net

Coordinator **Ray Shea** - 732-330-8349
bigblock7s@comcast.net

Trustee **Al Voorhees** - 732-870-7128
avoorhees@seaboardfs.com

On the Web www.gsvscc.org

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Club E-Mail gsvscc@comcast.net/info@gsvscc.org