



**LUCKY 7:** Randy VanAagten picked up the Sprint main event victory May 7 at Grays Harbor Raceway in Elma.

## ELMA OPENER

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hell away from the tire. It must have hit him. I hope Bob's okay."

Swiglo, who also sent well wishes to Valencia, won for the first time since his 2003 title season. "Les Rogers gave us this motor near the end of last season, and we knew we could win with it," Swiglo said afterwards. "We had a good night. "It's big for us," he added. "We work hard, and we wanted this bad. By God I got mom a Mother's Day gift. She'll love it. I already got her a gift, but this is the best gift I could give her."

Ironically, Swiglo's mom usually comes to the races with him and his dad, but didn't Saturday because the family figured races would be rained out. Cooper came to Elma since a race in Oregon got rained out. "That was pretty fun," he said. "I couldn't get enough bite off the corner. I thought we were going to have a pretty good opportunity, but the car got loose at the end."

Glenn Borden Jr. led the Sprint main event early with VanAagten and Danny Horner right behind. About halfway through the race, Borden got caught high in traffic and lost the lead to VanAagten. Adding insult to injury, Borden spun after Horner clipped his left front on the way by for second.

"We were pretty good out of the gate, but traffic was holding me up," Borden said. "One guy was skating all over the track. I tried to pass high and got in sick stuff. Randy got by, and then (Horner) slammed me."

VanAagten, in just his third race with his new car and team, acknowledged traffic helped. "We were pretty even," he said. "That traffic helped me, because Glenn ran into a wall (of

traffic). He went high, and I went low. It was absolutely wonderful."

Though disappointed in his own misfortune, Borden congratulated VanAagten on the win. "I'm glad to see he won one," Borden said.

In Hobby Stocks, Jason Halverson took the initial lead after flattening Zach Simpson's tire. Joe German got by Halverson for the lead, but soon had defending division champion Joe Lambert hounding him.

Lambert, who started 10th, tried everything but slowed in the end with a broken shock, the result of his car slipping into the side of German's.

"I had Joe all over me," German said. "I told him before the race I was sure I'd see him up there. He's a class act. This is my first main event win, and it feels good. It's been a lot of hard work."

Lambert moved up patiently. "Things leveled out," he said. "A door would open, and I'd take the spot. When I got to second I had enough for the lead, but he kept closing me off."

Saturday's racing featured some new rules, with a new rule concerning cautions leading to plenty of gauding in the pits. In an effort to speed up the evening, any car that spins during a heat race is done for that race, while trophy dashes were also eliminated to move the evening along.

During one Modified heat race, only two cars were left racing when Ron Comfort spun in front of the field. Defending series champion Scott Miller and others spun to miss Comfort, and were sent off the track. Adding to the confusion, an inversion meant Miller—who was credited with the fourth and final transfer spot out of his heat race—started the main event third.



**I KNOW A LITTLE GERMAN:** Joe German (75x) won the battle of Joes as he held off a determined Joe Lambert during the May 7 Hobby Stock main event. It was German's first main event victory.

# Northwest Motorsports Expo draws healthy, diverse crowd

■ **Craig Murphy**

Even before the 2005 racing season began, racers from around the Northwest were coming together.

The Cowlitz County Expo Center in Longview was the site of the inaugural Northwest Motorsports Expo and Swap Meet Jan. 22-23.

Longview native and resident Jerry Clark, who hopes to run at least this year at the Super Stock races this year at South Sound Speedway near Tenino, worked for a year to plan the expo.

"When I got into racing, I didn't realize how many people and forms of racing there are," the show manager said. "No one knows about each other. This gets everyone together."

Numerous race vehicles were on display, ranging from a Kasey Kahne Nextel Cup show car to big rigs to powerboats, and just about everything in between.

Gary Longley had a car along, or at least one that had the outside body of a racecar.

"About 100 people have been in the simulator," Longley said. "It's been overwhelming. The simulator has been a great success. It's neat that people get to see all the cars."

Longley feels companies around the Northwest need to see what racing can do for them. "The Northwest business owner doesn't take the value of racing," he said. "The hardest sell is corporate. It takes a company willing to take a risk."

One businessman well aware of the value of racing is former World of Outlaw racer Fred Brownfield, promoter of the Northern Sprint Tour and Grays Harbor Raceway in Elma. Brownfield manned a booth at the expo, answering questions and passing out schedules and showing video



**GETTING A-SIMULATED:** Gary Longley (right) watches one of the many fans who came to try out his racing simulator during the Jan. 22-23 Northwest Motorsports Expo and Swap Meet in Longview.



**BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Anyone would become a wild animal when behind the wheel of a powerful hydroplane.

tapes of races.

"It's really good for the racing industry to have an event like this," Brownfield said. "It's nice to see the other side of the business. You hear 'I didn't know they were doing that' all the time around here."

Brownfield found spreading the word about GHR necessary. "There are a lot of new faces stepping by here," he said. "It's amaz-

ing how many people are about two hours south of Elma and don't know about Grays Harbor Raceway."

Clark said approximately 5,000 people attended the two-day expo, which he hopes grows each year. "Everyone involved said they wanted to come back," he said. "The buzz was everyone was excited. It exceeded their expectations."

## Blast from the Past

NORTHWEST RACING MEMORIES



**HIGH TRAILING IT:** Mike Rendell's Freeway Trailers Pinto takes off on a 8.71-second, 154.76-mph run at Pacific Raceways, then known as Seattle Int'l Raceway. The shot was captured by Rich Carlson in 1979.

# Hall of Fame

## Hitchcox, Edgett 2005 inductees in Victoria Auto Racing Hall of Fame

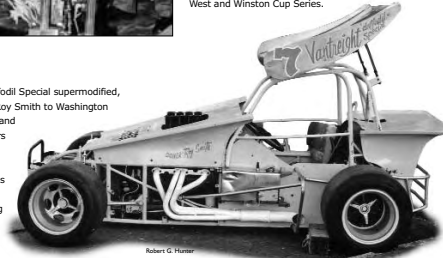


**LEFT:** Victoria Auto Racing Hall of Fame inductee Bill Hitchcox, center, from Victoria, B.C., was the 1981 and 1982 NASCAR Northwest Late Model Sportsman champion. He also competed in various Late Model series, including the NASCAR Northwest Tour and Winston West Series.



**ABOVE:** J.R. Edgett, center, also was inducted into the Victoria Auto Racing Hall of Fame. Edgett was a car builder, owner, and sponsor in the Late Models, Winston West and Winston Cup Series.

The Vantreight Daffodil Special supermodified, driven by the late Roy Smith to Washington Racing Association and International Drivers Challenge championships has been restored and is on display at the Victoria Auto Racing Hall of Fame at Western Speedway.



## Never say never

Things definitely looked bad for Tom Sweatman after he wrecked his No. 11 car, above, during practice laps May 7 prior to the Late Models season opener at South Sound Speedway. Sweatman's crew managed to get the damage repaired, and the veteran driver out of Cosmopolis, Wash., not only managed to qualify third, but also won the 100-lap main event, right.



**PUTTING THE 'PETAL' TO THE METAL:** The top three drivers during the inaugural Apple Blossom 100 were winner Brent Harris, center; runner-up Garrett Evans, left; and Jim Johnson.

## Brent Harris wins inaugural Apple Blossom 100 at WWSO

For the second straight year, Brent Harris of East Wenatchee, Wash., captured the feature win at the NW Late Model Challenge Series' season opener.

The season kicked off April 30 at Harris' home track Wenatchee Valley's Super Oval, and was run in conjunction with the town's annual Apple Blossom Festival.

Twenty-nine of the region's best late model teams gathered at the quarter-mile track for the 100-lap special event, competing for more than \$10,000 available in cash and bonus awards.

This also was the 50th scheduled race event in the series' six-season history, and marked the first of three Wenatchee appearances for the LMCS in 2005.

Harris started eighth, but worked his 2004 Monte Carlo up through the field while many times taking the familiar high groove at his home track, overtaking early leader Steve Thompson of West Richland, Wash.

Although challenged several times by NASCAR Northwest Series regular Garrett Evans, Harris was able to hold the lead for the remaining laps. Evans followed in second, with Jimmy Johnson of Orting, Wash., finishing third.

Top qualifier Mike Zamora of Kennekick, Wash., drew a six-car invert and finished fourth and Duke Langley of Umatilla, Ore., rounded out the top five.

Of 22 positions available for the feature, 16 cars were locked in by qualifying, four moved up through B main and two provisional positions.

Rick Hager of Mountlake Terrace, Wash., advanced the most positions, finishing seventh after starting in 21st position on a provisional.

The next scheduled event for the Late Model Challenge Series is May 21 at Stataline Speedway in Post Falls, Id. The series returns to West Richland for a 150-lap event June 18th.

—Northwest Late Model Challenge Series



**ALL FIRED UP:** Steve Blankenship (47) of Port Angeles, Wash., blew his motor in the B dash, and struck the Turn 4 wall, taking Don Vickery (11) with him, above. Blankenship escaped the burning car, right, without injury, but his LMCS rookie contention was put on hold as his car sustained significant damage.



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