



WHELEN MODIFIED TOUR

# News & Notes

RACE 2 | STAFFORD MOTOR SPEEDWAY

## FAST FACTS

**The Race:** Tech-Net Spring Sizzler presented by CARQUEST

**The Place:** Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway

**The Date:** Sunday, April 26

**The Time:** 2:30 p.m. ET

**The Distance:** 200 laps/100 miles

**2008 Winner:** Ted Christopher

**2008 Polesitter:** Ryan Preece

### Event Schedule:

Saturday, April 25: Practice 10 - 11:30 a.m.; Tire Scuff 1:15 - 1:30 p.m.; Qualifying 1:30 p.m.

### Track Contact:

Scott Running  
(860) 684-2783  
scottrunning@staffordspeedway.com

### NASCAR PR Contact:

Jason Cunningham  
(704) 201-6658  
jcunningham@nascar.com

## 2008 DRIVER STANDINGS

Rk	Driver	Points
1	Ted Christopher	180
2	Jimmy Blewett	170
3	Donny Lia	165
4	Ryan Preece	160
5	Todd Szegedy	155
6	Ron Silk	150
7	Mike Stefanik	146
8	Doug Coby	142
9	Rowan Pennink	138
10	Bobby Grigas III	134

- **Christopher Returns North To Defend Sizzler Win**
- **25 Seasons Running: A Look Back At The Spring Sizzler**
- **Home Tracks: Posocco Looks To Continue LM Domination**



**Ted Christopher** (36) is a three-time winner of the Spring Sizzler, including this 2008 triumph.

## Christopher Returns North To Defend Sizzler Win

**Ted Christopher** ended the 2008 NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour season in Victory Lane with the race and season championship trophies. He's continued those winning ways in 2009 with wins in three of the four NASCAR Modified races he's entered. This weekend he'll have a chance to make it 4-for-5.

The Plainville, Conn., racer will return to Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway — site of more than 100 wins throughout his career — for the second race of the 2009 NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour season: the Tech-Net Spring Sizzler presented by CARQUEST. Christopher has won the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour portion of the Spring Sizzler three times in his decorated career, including the 2008 edition, which provided an early boost to his championship campaign.

Christopher began his 2009 NASCAR racing season with a win in the NASCAR Whelen Southern Modified Tour season-opener at Concord (N.C.) Speedway on March 21. He then won the

NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour opener at Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway on April 5 before returning south to reach Victory Lane at Caraway Speedway in Asheboro, N.C. on April 11. Christopher's only Victory Lane miss took place last Saturday when he finished seventh at Lanier National Speedway in Braselton, Ga.

In addition to Christopher, **Chuck Hossfeld**, **Jimmy Blewett** and **Mike Stefanik** reached Victory Lane at Stafford a year ago. The entry list for the 38th edition of the Stafford Spring Sizzler is expected to include at least nine drivers who have won at the track during their careers.

Action for the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour will begin on the track for the Tech-Net Spring Sizzler presented by CARQUEST with practice and qualifying on Saturday, April 25. Green flag for the 200-lap race is scheduled for Sunday, April 26 at approximately 2:30 p.m. For ticket information, please visit Stafford's official Web site, [staffordmotorspeedway.com](http://staffordmotorspeedway.com).



**News & Notes**

**The Race** ... The Tech-Net Spring Sizzler presented by CARQUEST will be the second of 14 races on the 2009 NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour schedule. This will also be the first of four stops for the series at Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway.

**The Procedure** ... Starting positions 1-28 will be set from time trials. The remaining five will be filled through the provisional process. The race is 200 laps (100 miles).

**The Track** ... A half-mile flat oval, Stafford Motor Speedway began as a horse-racing track in the 1870s. After seven decades as a horse track, the dirt oval started holding auto races following WW II. Stafford became a NASCAR track in 1959 and was paved for the first time in 1967.

**Race Winners** ... There have been 28 different race winners at Stafford, led by **Mike Stefanik's** 20 victories. **Ted Christopher** had the longest win streak in the history of the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour at Stafford with four-straight victories from Sept. 30, 2001 to Aug. 23, 2002. Stefanik, Christopher, **Chuck Hossfeld** and **Jimmy Blewett** won at Stafford in 2008. Christopher is the defending winner of this race.

**Pole Winners** ... There have been 34 different pole winners at Stafford, led by Stefanik's 15. **Ryan Preece** became the youngest Coors Light Pole winner in NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour history when he turned the fast time for the 2008 Spring Sizzler.

**Stafford NWMT Win Leaders**

Mike Stefanik .....	20
Ted Christopher .....	8
Reggie Ruggiero.....	8
Tony Hirschman.....	6
Jeff Fuller/Rick Fuller .....	5

**Stafford NWMT Pole Leaders**

Mike Stefanik .....	15
Reggie Ruggiero.....	7
Donny Lia .....	6
Tony Hirschman.....	5
Jan Leaty/Steve Park/Rob Summers .....	4

**Past Sizzler Champs Share What It Takes To Earn The Checkers**

The past three years has produced three different winners in Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway's Tech-Net Spring Sizzler, and all three of those drivers are looking forward to getting back to Victory Lane there again in the 2009 edition.



**Doug Coby** took the checkered flag in the 2006 Spring Sizzler for his first – and only – NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour victory.

Coby, who runs an SK Modified regularly in NASCAR Whelen All-American Series action at Stafford and Waterford (Conn.) Speedbowl, has been on-and-off with the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour since his 2006 Sizzler win, but looks forward to returning to the site of his greatest Tour triumph.

"I'm really excited to go back," Coby said. "I haven't raced [a Tour race] there since I won that race. I think it's going to be a great race, and we'll have a good car."

Coby will pilot the No. 19 Family Auto Center/ Major Motion Transport Chevrolet at Stafford this time around, and likes his chances for a second career win.

"I'm happy to be with the new team and move forward here, and I think we'll have a good shot at it," Coby said.

Coby stressed that strategy and patience are keys to winning the Spring Sizzler. He started in the 29th position for his 2006 win, but was able to move up through the field and eventually led a race-high 62 laps en route to Victory Lane.

"It's a long race that you have to plan out your pit strategy, try to stay out of trouble and try to be there in the end," Coby said. "I think we'll be able to do that. That's my style these days in the longer races. I like to stay up front, but not be aggressive, and hopefully be around at the end."



**Ted Christopher**, the defending NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour champion and winner of the Spring Sizzler a year ago, has a similar formula to Coby for what it will take to get back to Victory Lane.

"Having a good car, staying up front, and being there at the end after 200 laps is the biggest thing," Christopher said. "Just make sure you're

in a position with about 50 laps to go and see how it plays out."

Christopher didn't have quite as far to go through the field as Coby did as he started fifth, but it doesn't matter where you start if pit strategy backfires according to how the race develops. The No. 36 Al-Lee Installations team executed their pit stops to perfection in 2008.

"More than anything it's pit strategy because it's 200 laps," Christopher said. "We had a good deal last year by pitting twice. We might try something like that again, and we might not. You can't ever really lay out a plan because most of the time, it never comes out the way you want it to."

Christopher, the winningest driver in the history of Stafford Motor Speedway, will have plenty of experience to draw on for the 2009 Spring Sizzler. In addition to last year, he also won the race in 2002 and 2003.



Like Coby, **Donny Lia's** 2007 Stafford Spring Sizzler win was a landmark moment in his career. He had registered five wins before that day, but it was his first at the famed Connecticut half mile, and one that he treasures.

"Winning that race in 2007 was huge for me and one of my biggest wins ever," Lia said. "I love the Spring Sizzler. It's a race that has so much history."

Aside from his home track – Riverhead (N.Y.) Raceway – Stafford has been Lia's best track with two wins and six poles.

"I always look forward to going to Stafford, it's one of my favorite race tracks," Lia said. "We always seem to run good and qualify good there."

In his return to the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour full-time for 2008 after spending 2008 competing in the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series, Lia finished third in the Icebreaker at Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway earlier this month. He'd like to use the 2009 Spring Sizzler as a springboard to a series title like he did in 2007.

"I think we'll be really good there," Lia said. "That place does set the tone for the season. It is an important race whether it's the Sizzler or not, but being that it's the Sizzler just makes it that much more of a race that you want to win."



## 25 Seasons Running: A Look Back At The Spring Sizzler

As the 25th season of the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour is celebrated in 2009, events and individuals who have carried the series from its historic first season in 1985 to the present day will be highlighted. The second edition will take a look at the history of one of the Tour's traditions: the Stafford Spring Sizzler. The following are capsules in five-year intervals.

**April 14, 1985 ...** The first Spring Sizzler for the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour was won by none other than Richie Evans. With eight NASCAR Modified championships under his belt prior to 1985, Evans was – not surprisingly – the class of the field throughout the inaugural season of the Tour. In the first of four trips to Stafford that year, Evans started seventh and worked his way into the lead on Lap 62 after Greg Sacks, Mike Stefanik and Brian Ross had led the field. The "Rapid Roman" then held off the field for the remaining circuits of the 80-lap, green-flag-only race for the second of his 12 wins en route to the series title. Jimmy Spencer won the pole and finished fourth.

**April 22, 1990 ...** For the second year in a row, Mike Stefanik took the customary gulp of milk in Victory Lane at the Spring Sizzler as he led the final 26 laps for the first of his five wins in 1990. Mike McLaughlin started in the pole position after the redraw and led the first 66 laps before giving way to Reggie Ruggiero, who had earned the pole in qualifying. Stefanik was able to get by Ruggiero on Lap 165 and hold off all challengers for the win.

**April 23, 1995 ...** Four drivers vied for the 1995 Spring Sizzler trophy, but it was Mike Ewanitsko who would lead the final 23 laps for the win, his second in a row in the 'Greatest Race in the History of Spring.' Steve Park earned the pole, but it was Reggie Ruggiero who led the first 71 laps from the outside pole. Satch Worley held the lead for 58 laps before yielding to Ruggiero. Rick Fuller contended for the win as he took the lead on Lap 172, but Ewanitsko moved to the front to stay on Lap 178.

**April 30, 2000 ...** Rob Summers earned the pole, but it was a three-horse race for the checkered flag

between Reggie Ruggiero, Jerry Marquis and Rick Fuller in the 2000 Spring Sizzler. Ruggiero started on the outside pole and led the first 116 laps. Marquis and Fuller would lead before Ruggiero returned to the front on Lap 138 and appeared to be in position for what would have been his third Spring Sizzler win. Fuller had other plans, however, as he took the lead back on Lap 191. Fuller survived a green-white-checker finish for his third Sizzler win overall, and second in a row.

**April 24, 2005 ...** The elusive Spring Sizzler trophy finally went home with Tony Hirschman in 2005. The longtime NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour veteran had many notches in his belt, but the Stafford Spring Sizzler had been a goal unachieved. Donny Lia earned the pole, and four drivers had paced the field during the first 128 laps, but Hirschman took over the race on Lap 129 and held off the field for the first of five wins that would propel him to the 2005 series title. Things got interesting in the end as a caution came out on Lap 199, but Hirschman was able to hold off Zach Sylvester and Todd Szegedy.



**Mike Stefanik** has the most Spring Sizzlers wins with four, including this one in 1998.



## Home Tracks: Posocco Looks To Continue LM Domination

The NASCAR Whelen All-American series is full of drivers from coast-to-coast who have achieved high levels of success at their respective tracks and divisions, but few have dominated to the degree that Stafford Motor Speedway's Ryan Posocco has.

Posocco has raced in the Late Model division at his hometown track since 1997 after three years competing in the DARE Stocks, and during that time he has amassed four titles.

"It didn't come easy, that's for sure," Posocco said. "It took a few years before we started to really win some races. I started off with our own stuff, and we won a bunch of races doing that, but I think all of our success came when we started teaming up with other teams."

Late Models began running at Stafford in 1987. In the division's 22-year history, Posocco's 35 wins are 11 more than any other competitor. He recorded a string of three straight titles from 2004-06 and added a fourth last year.

"It takes getting yourself in a situation to win, and I've been fortunate enough throughout the years to do that," Posocco said. "I've had a good crew and good teams, and that definitely makes me look good. Without all of that, I wouldn't be where I'm at today."

Posocco is coming off a 2008 campaign in which he piloted the No. 48 Davidson Specialty Foods Ford to seven wins and 16 top fives in 17 starts. The stranglehold he put on the rest of the Late Model competitors resulted in an 86-point victory in the championship chase.

While Posocco is the odds-on favorite to add another championship trophy to his mantle, the competition will once again be stiff in 2009. Dillon Moltz, the runner-up in 2008, will be back to contend and longtime competitor Jim Peterson is returning to the Late Model division after a year off.

Posocco will begin competition for a fifth Late Model title at Stafford this weekend in the Tech-Net Spring Sizzler presented by CARQUEST.



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**Whelen Winner of the Race Award**  
Ted Christopher..... 1



## Up Next: TSI Harley-Davidson Classic

Following this week's Tech-Net Spring Sizzler presented by CARQUEST at Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway, the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour will turn right around and head back to the famed Connecticut half mile for the TSI Harley-Davidson Classic on May 22.



**Coors Light Pole Award**  
Ted Christopher..... 1



The TSI Harley-Davidson Classic will be the second of four races for the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour at Stafford in 2009. Stafford has held four NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour races a year since 2004, and 90 overall since the Tour began in 1985.

**Coca-Cola Move of the Race Award**  
Bobby Grigas III..... 1



**Mike Stefanik** has earned the most Coors Light Poles (15) and trips to Victory Lane (20) than any other driver at Stafford, and captured both in the CARQUEST Fall Final in 2008. **Chuck Hossfeld** won this race a year ago, but is not expected to be entered in the 2009 edition.

**Featherlite Most Improved Driver Award**  
Bobby Grigas III..... 1



**Sunoco Rookie of the Race Award**  
Eric Goodale..... 1



**Sunoco Rookie of the Year Standings**  
Eric Goodale..... 10  
Tommy Farrell III ..... 9

## 2009 NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour Schedule

DATE	RACE	FACILITY	2009 POLESITTER	2009 RACE WINNER
April 5	Icebreaker	Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway	Ted Christopher	Ted Christopher
DATE	RACE	FACILITY	2008 POLESITTER	2008 RACE WINNER
April 26	Tech-Net Spring Sizzler presented by CARQUEST	Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway	Ryan Preece	Ted Christopher
May 22	TSI Harley-Davidson Classic	Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway	Chuck Hossfeld	Chuck Hossfeld
June 27	New England 100	New Hampshire Motor Speedway, Loudon, N.H.	None-rain	Chuck Hossfeld
July 11	NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour at Spencer	Spencer Speedway, Williamson, N.Y.	Jan Leaty	Matt Hirschman
Aug. 1	NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour at Riverhead	Riverhead (N.Y.) Raceway	Bill Park	Jimmy Blewett
Aug. 7	Town Fair Tire 150	Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway	Eric Beers	Jimmy Blewett
Aug. 13	Budweiser 150	Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway	None-rain	Ronnie Silk
Aug. 19	UNOH Perfect Storm at Bristol *	Bristol (Tenn.) Motor Speedway	---	---
Aug. 29	NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour at Chemung	Chemung (N.Y.) Speedrome	Matt Hirschman	Matt Hirschman
Sept. 19	New Hampshire 100	New Hampshire Motor Speedway, Loudon, N.H.	Ryan Newman	Ted Christopher
Sept. 27	Made In America Whelen 300 *	Martinsville (Va.) Speedway	Ryan Preece	Ryan Preece
Oct. 4	CARQUEST Fall Final	Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway	Mike Stefanik	Mike Stefanik
Oct. 18	Xtra Mart World Series	Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway	Eric Beers	Ted Christopher

\* Combined Race With Whelen Southern Modified Tour