



The Race: New England Dodge Dealers 150

The Place: Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway

The Date: August 16

The Time: 8:30 p.m. (ET)

Track Layout: .625-mile paved

Race Purse: \$86,595

2006 Winner: Ted Christopher

2006 Pole: Tony Hirschman

NO	Driver	Pts
1	Lia	1439
2	M. Hirschman	1347
3	Szegedy	1310
4	Silk	1232
5	Civali	1226
6	Christopher	1220
7	Ji. Blewett	1216
8	Stefanik	1186
9	Tomaino	1099
10	Marquis	1066
11	Flemke Jr.	1054
12	Beers	1015
13	Houlihan	966
14	Savary	965
15	Sammons	953

Schedule:

Thursday: Practice, 1:30-3 p.m. Practice, 5-5:30 p.m. Time Trials, 5:30.

Track Contact:

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- *Silk In The Middle Of The Championship Chase*
- *Barry Looking At Turnaround For Savary*
- *Thompson Offers Key To Title Hopes*
- *Stafford Recap: The Good And The Bad For Grigas*



Upbeat Silk Enjoying His Second-Full Season

Like the golfer getting the birdie on the 18th hole after a disastrous round, Ronnie Silk capped a difficult 2006 season with a ninth-place finish at Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway.

"We didn't have the greatest season last year," Silk said. "We had a good car at a lot of tracks, but just couldn't put together the finishes."

The difference is **Silk (No. 19 Major Motion /Silk Plumbing & Heating Chevrolet)** followed up with a strong start to 2007 with a third-place at the season-opening Icebreaker at Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway. The success has followed as Silk has put together three top fives and six top 10s. He sits fourth in points as the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour returns to Thompson Thursday for the New England Dodge Dealers 150 presented by Budweiser.

"A lot of racing – you need to have a good car and you have to have a lot of good luck – but a lot of it is everyone's morale," Silk said. "It's easier to get the work done when you're getting results out of it."

"To run a tour that's as competitive as the Modified Tour and be able to consistently finish well feels really good."

The 24-year-old Silk had made a handful of



Ronnie Silk has finished third and sixth in the two races this season at Thompson. (Mary Hodge)

Whelen Modified Tour starts before landing a full-time ride last season. He started off with a solid 11th place at the Icebreaker at Thompson but did not qualify for the next two events.

This season, Silk was involved in an accident in the Spring Sizzler at Stafford. A seventh at Wall (N.J.) Speedway was followed with a 21st in the season's

Please see Silk, page 3

Barry and Savary look for turnaround at Thompson

Art Barry knows what it takes to put a fast car together.

The long-time Whelen Modified Tour car owner from Preston, Conn. fielded cars for Mike Stefanik's back-to-back titles in 2001 and '02. And his son, Ken Barry, transitioned from his crew chief role to win Sunoco Rookie of the Year title in 2004.

Barry stepped aside to focus more on the family business of building Spafco race chassis this year, and **Richard Savary** took over the seat of the No. 21 Superior Oil Chevrolet.

Savary arrives at Thompson, a track where he ran a Sunoco Modified in the weekly NASCAR Whelen All-American Series last year, 14th in points and as the top rookie. His best finish was a ninth at Stafford (Conn.) Motor Speedway May 25.

It could be even better.

"We're not having any luck, but we're going good," Barry said. "I'm kind of looking forward to doing good this week."

Please see Barry, page 2



➤ News & Notes



➤ **The race:** This event is the 10th of 16 races on the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour schedule. It is the third of five races in 2007 at Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway.

➤ **The procedure:** The starting field is 35 cars, including provisionals. The first 30 cars will qualify through two-lap time trials. The remaining five spots will be awarded through the provisional process. The race will be 150 laps (93.75 miles).

➤ **The ramifications:** Because Thompson accounts for nearly a third of the schedule, running well at the 3/8-mile is a must for any championship contender. **Mike Stefanik (No. 16 Diversified Metals Pontiac)** had his only win of the 2006 championship season at the season-opening Icebreaker. Since 1998, when Stefanik swept the four races at Thompson en route to the title, only two drivers (Stefanik in 2001 and Todd Szegedy in '03) have won the championship without winning a race at Thompson.

➤ **The first two:** **James Civali (No. 28 Ramar-Hall/Liberty Limousine Chevrolet)** held off **Chuck Hossfeld** to win the Icebreaker April 15. And **Donny Lia (No. 4 Dodge)** won the rain-shortened race June 21.

➤ **The history:** There have been 94 races run at Thompson, more than any other track on the schedule. Twenty-seven different drivers have won, led by Stefanik with 14. Jeff Fuller has 10 wins and brother Rick has eight. Also with eight is **Tony Hirschman (No. 48 Kamco Supply Corporation Chevrolet)**. Ted Christopher, Reggie Ruggiero and former NASCAR NEXTEL Cup driver **Steve Park** are all tied with six wins



Veteran NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour driver Jamie Tomaino is enjoying a strong season. He is ninth in points with three top 10 finishes. (Mary Hodge/NASCAR)

Barry: 'They're like a big family. They're all pulling for you.'

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Savary had a solid run the last time the Whelen Modified Tour was at Thompson, running second when he suffered a flat tire just before the rain halted the race. Savary finished that race 21st, one lap down. He rebounded for a strong 11th-place finish the following week at New Hampshire. Savary qualified 11th last weekend at Stafford before being caught up in an early wreck and ending up 23rd.

"We had a good car at Stafford, but we never got a chance to prove it," Barry said. "We're hoping to do good this weekend."

Last weekend was also tough personally for Barry. His wife suffered a stroke and some complications Aug. 6 and was admitted to the hospital. Barry said that she came home Monday and is "doing better but she's still got a ways to go."

He added that he it really helped to receive a tremendous outpouring of support at Stafford.

"They're like a big family," Barry said of those associated with the Whelen Modified Tour. "They're all pulling for you when you've got a problem."

Coby Continues 'Audition' At Thompson

Doug Coby's one-race deal in Curt Chase's No. 77 Racing Against Cancer Foxwoods/Subway of Coventry Chevrolet turned out well with a fourth-place at Stafford last Saturday. And Coby will again be in the car Thursday at Thompson.

"Same car, same motor and we're going to go have fun again," said Coby, who qualified 20th. "I tell you what, I had a blast."

"Definitely a good way to start. Again."

Coby is unsure how long his second go-around with the team will last. He said he

knows the car will be in Mansfield, Ohio next week and Martinsville, Va. the week after.

"I don't know for sure I'll be the driver," Coby said. "I'd like to be. And I think I will be. But you never know."

"I figure we'll just keep taking it one race at a time, and I figure if I keep finishing in the top five, I'll stay in the car."

Coby's best finish at Thompson was third in October of 2005. He also led the first 80 laps in the August 2005 event before finishing 14th.

2007 SUNOCO ROOKIE OF THE YEAR STANDINGS

Driver	Points
1. Richard Savary	69
2. Billy Pauch Jr.	57
3. Bobby Grigas	54
3. Rowan Pennink	54
5. Ryan Preece	53
6. Bobby Santos III	36
7. Joseph Hartmann	31
8. Woody Pitkat	27



How To Run Thompson

James Civali (2007 Icebreaker winner):
 "I kind of race it like you race Loudon – go in as hard as you can until you get scared. I just keep going until the other guy lifts. Ever since I've gone there, that's what we've made my car do. You get the guts to drive it in there. I've been working on my car so I can do that and make it stick. Everybody is pretty much the same center off. Everybody is capable of getting the same drive you do. There's no passing going off (the corner). ... I make 99 percent of my passes, just on the bottom, going into one or going into three. ... If I'm loose, I can't make that move. Then you can't pass a car all day."

Ron Silk (third at the 2007 Icebreaker):
 "You can drive into the corner pretty hard because you have all that banking to hold you up. ... You have to be kind of neutral through the center, and then you have to have plenty of bite off just so you can make the straightaways longer, so you can carry that momentum. ... I don't know if the two turns are a little different but my car always feels different during the day. My car is always a little snugger through 3 and 4 than it is through 1 and 2. The feeling kind of goes away during the night."

Ronnie Silk's day at Stafford, Conn. took a big hit early when he was involved in a wreck. He managed to stay on the lead lap and finish 20th. (Howie Hodge)



Silk: Hopes return to Thompson ignites strong run

second trip to Stafford.

He turned it around, though, with his sixth-place finish in the second race at Thompson June 21. A sixth at New Hampshire International Speedway and third at Twin State Speedway in Claremont, N.H. moved him to fifth in points. Silk is looking for a similar rebound after being caught in an early wreck last weekend at Stafford that relegated him to a 20th-place finish after qualifying seventh.

"The worse thing about Stafford, all three races I've qualified well," Silk said. "I'm totally confident we'll go to Thompson and have a good car. I just want to go and have a good finish and start another streak."

Stafford and Thompson are the two tracks where Silk has logged the most amount of laps in a Modified in the Whelen All-American Series.

"I'd like to go there and run up front and win one of these races," Silk said.

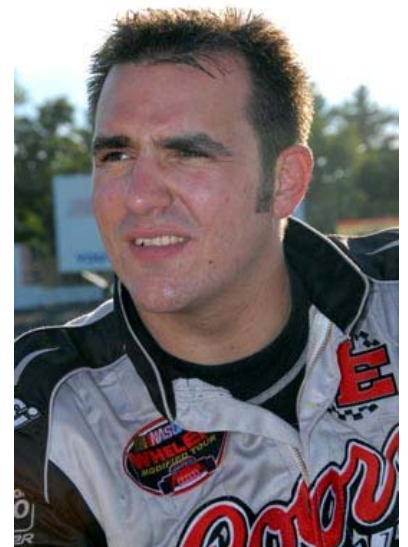
➤ Post-Race Notes: Stafford

Making Progress ... A mistake in the pits sent Bobby Grigas III (No. 09 Triple G/Amsoil Racing Chevrolet) home early from Riverhead (N.Y.) Raceway after he wound up missing the show. It was a complete turnaround at Stafford, as Grigas qualified sixth and redrew the pole. Despite losing the lead to Todd Szegedy (No. 2 Wisk/Snuggle Ford) on the first lap, Grigas hung around the top five nearly all night. He eventually got back out front and led from lap 86 to 111. However, the night ended on a sour note for the rookie when his car lost power and forced him out of the race on lap 132. "I just wanted to finish," Grigas said, "and now I'm sitting in the pits with 15 to go. ... It was just a phenomenal car and I couldn't ask for more."

Home Track Advantage ... Woody Pitkat (No. 79 Hill Enterprises/Coors Light Pontiac) was in the same boat as Grigas at Riverhead, when he failed to qualify. Pitkat returned to Stafford, where he runs on a weekly basis and qualified 10th for the Tour race. After winning

the NASCAR Whelen All-American Series SK Modified 40-lap feature, Pitkat made the most of his opportunity in the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour race. He was up as high as fifth on lap 60 before getting shuffled back and finishing 10th. He was the highest finishing rookie, three spots in front of Billy Pauch Jr. (No. 06 Greenfield Dodge Dealers Dodge). Pitkat heads to Thompson in the car that Chuck Hossfeld drove to a second-place finish in the season-opening Icebreaker.

Wedding Bells ... Ted Christopher (No. 36 Ai-Lee Installations Chevrolet) had to make his own call on when to pit during Saturday's race. Seems the weather took away his crew chief. The race was scheduled for Friday and when rain postponed it until Saturday, Christopher's crew chief Brad LaFontaine missed the race to attend his son's wedding. Christopher wound up pitting at the half-way mark with the rest of the leaders and made his way back to the front for the win.



Woody Pitkat was the Sunoco Rookie of the Race following his 10th-place finish. (Mary Hodge)



NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour Special Awards Standings

➤ BUD POLE AWARD

Ted Christopher	2
Tony Hirschman	2
Matt Hirschman	1
Richard Savary	1
Ronnie Silk	1
Todd Szegedy	1



➤ WHELEN ENGINEERING WINNER OF THE RACE AWARD

Donny Lia	5
James Civali	2
Jimmy Blewett	1
Ted Christopher	1



➤ SUNOCO ROOKIE OF THE RACE AWARD

Bobby Grigas	2
Ryan Preece	2
Bobby Santos III	2
Billy Pauch Jr.	1
Woody Pitkat	1
Richard Savary	1



➤ FEATHERLITE MOST IMPROVED DRIVER

John Blewett III	2
Jimmy Blewett	1
Ted Christopher	1
James Civali	1
Dick Houlihan	1
Danny Sammons	1
Mike Stefanik	1
Zach Sylvester	1



➤ POWERADE POWER MOVE OF THE RACE

Mike Stefanik	2
Eric Beers	1
Jimmy Blewett	1
John Blewett III	1
Joseph Hartmann	1
Matt Hirschman	1
Richard Savary	1
Todd Szegedy	1



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