



**The Race:** Sunoco Modified Mania

**The Place:** Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway

**The Date:** Sept. 9

**The Time:** 2:45 p.m. (ET)

**Track Layout:** .625-mile paved

**Race Purse:** \$89,186

**2006 Winner:** Eric Beers

**2006 Pole:** Donny Lia

No.	Driver	Pts
1	Lia	1934
2	Szegedy	1746
3	M. Hirschman	1735
4	Christopher	1674
5	Civali	1656
6	Silk	1597
7	Tomaino	1496
8	Stefanik	1483
9	Flemke Jr.	1439
10	Beers	1428
11	Ji. Blewett	1410
12	Marquis	1368
13	Savary	1339
14	Houlihan	1338
15	Pennink	1234

**Schedule:**

Saturday: Practice 11:45 a.m.-1 p.m., 2-2:45 p.m., Time Trials 2:45 p.m.

**Track Contact:**

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- *Teamwork Keys Garbarino's Dream Season*
- *Beers Returns To Thompson looking For Turnaround*
- *Combination Event A Hit For Whelen*
- *Martinsville Recap: Pennink Checks Out*



## It's Smooth Sailing For Garbarino And Co.



Driver Donny Lia and car owner Bob Garbarino shared the podium at Martinsville. (Mary Hodge)

## Partnership With Lia Paying Dividends In First Season Together

Bob Garbarino's main concern Saturday morning was getting his RV fixed.

Sure, his crew and driver Donny Lia were at Martinsville (Va.) Speedway getting the car ready for the night's Made In America Whelen 300. But Garbarino knew the work that was done in the shop long before the car hauler even arrived at the track was what was going to decide their fate. And that Lia was fully capable of putting that car in Victory Lane.

So Garbarino spent much of the day working to get the exhaust manifold leak corrected so that he and his wife, Joan, could drive back home after the race. They had taken the RV out to Mansfield (Ohio) for the previous race and spent the week between visiting friends and seeing the sights in West Virginia and Virginia.

He got to the track in time to see his faith rewarded. Lia and Co. won the Budweiser Pole Award and then went out and led 234 laps en route to their sixth win in the season's 12 races.

"This season feels as good as the best ones I've ever had," Garbarino said. "I've been very fortunate. I've had good people – good people on the team and good people in the seat. It's a dream season for me, because it's the kind of season most car owners dream of having."

The list of drivers that have occupied the seat on the famous v4 'Mystic Missile' reads like a who's who of Modified drivers: Geoff Bodine, Eddie Flemke Sr.,



## ➤ News & Notes



➤ **The race:** This event is the 13th of 16 races on the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour schedule. It is the fourth of five races in 2007 at Thompson (Conn.) International Speedway.

➤ **The procedure:** The starting field is 36 cars, including provisionals. The first 31 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 first three:** James Civali (No. 28 Ramar-Hall/Liberty Limousine Chevrolet) held off Chuck Hossfeld to win the Icebreaker April 15. Donny Lia (No. 4 Dodge) won the rain-shortened race June 21. Todd Szegedy (No. 2 Wisk/Snuggle Ford) won Aug. 16 in the race that was halted after 108 laps following the race accident that involved John Blewett III. Blewett was pronounced dead later at an area hospital.

➤ **The pole:** Szegedy has won the pole in two of the three races at Thompson this season. He started 27th in the Charter Cable Internet & Telephone 150 June 21 but finished fifth. Richard Savary (No. 21 Superior Oil Chevrolet) earned the pole for that race.

➤ **The history:** There have been 95 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 apiece.

### 2007 SUNOCO ROOKIE OF THE YEAR STANDINGS

Driver	Points
1. Richard Savary	92
2. Billy Pauch Jr.	80
3. Bobby Grigas	75
3. Rowan Pennink	74
5. Ryan Preece	73
6. Woody Pitkat	48
7. Joseph Hartmann	45
8. Bobby Santos III	43



Members of the Future Business Leaders of America from nearby Martinsville High School take in the Made In America Whelen 300. (Mary Hodge/NASCAR)

### Garbarino: 'Focus on the race. The rest will be whatever it will be.'

**From Page 1**  
Leo Cleary, Buggy Stevens, Hop Herrington, Satch Worley, Tim Connolly, Brian Ross, Chuck Hossfeld, and Jerry Marquis.

But the one thing that has always eluded Garbarino, 70, since he bought his first car in 1961 is a Modified championship.

With a 194-point lead and four races remaining – all at tracks Lia already has won at this season – this may represent Garbarino's best chance.

He's not thinking about that, though.

"I've been in this game so long, I know it can turn on a dime and it can go right to nothing instantly," Garbarino said.

Garbarino recalls gathering the team in the hauler at the beginning of the season and telling them that there was nothing outside of that truck that could prevent them from being where they want to be in October. Even after Lia took over the points lead with his third win of the season at Thompson (Conn.) in June, Garbarino continues to caution the team about worrying about what everybody else was doing and where other drivers were finishing.

"It's all a function of what we do here as a team," Garbarino said. "Focus on the race. The rest of the stuff will be whatever it will be. ... I don't think our equipment is any better (this year)," Garbarino said, "but it's just that everybody seems to have a hold of that rope

and everybody is pulling in the same direction all the time."

This season very nearly didn't happen for Garbarino, who owns Mystic River Marina in Connecticut with his brother, Skip. Garbarino's crew chief, Greg Schroder, wanted to scale back and Garbarino was thinking about not fielding a car. A couple phone calls with Donny Lia, however, changed his mind. Lia had been a car owner/driver for his four years running on the Whelen Modified Tour, and teaming with Garbarino offered him a chance to concentrate on just driving.

It also allowed Schroder to stay home and become more of a car chief.

The results have been a pair of wins at Stafford (Conn.), the win at Thompson, a win at Lia's home track at Riverhead (N.Y.) and a victory at New Hampshire International Speedway. Almost as impressive, Lia only has two finishes outside the top five.

And then came Martinsville.

Garbarino already won twice at one of the Modifieds most historic stops, once with Worley and once with Ross.

"Both times I didn't take the clock," Garbarino said of the grandfather clock that comes as the prize for winning the race. "Every time I visit Satch, I look at that one. It's pretty nice. I think it's about time I got one."





## Kurze Likes What He's Seeing

Phil Kurze has been a fixture at the race track – and for good reason. The vice president of motorsports for Connecticut-based Whelen Engineering is a big fan of the Modified divisions.

As title sponsor of both the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour and NASCAR Whelen Southern Modified Tour, the Made In American Whelen 300 is the centerpiece of Whelen's schedule.

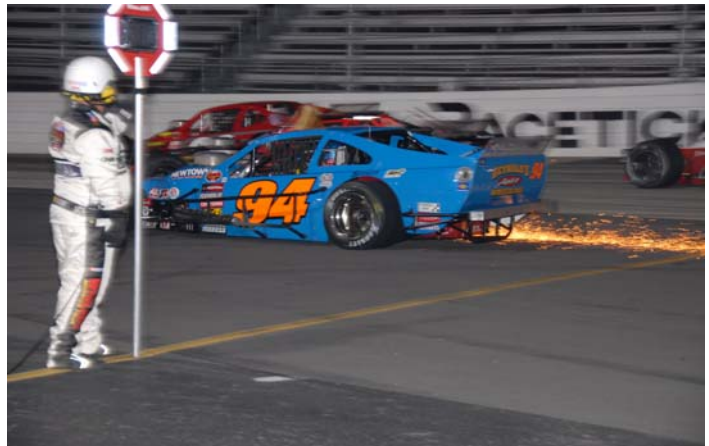
"It's very special to be able to run the north and the south together," Kurze said, "to have the drivers and the crews interact."

The company, which manufactures emergency and safety lights, is in its third year of a long-term agreement to sponsor both tours.

"The Southern Modified Tour is growing. The car counts are up," Kurze said. "To be able to show what we can do for Modifieds and have them in one place is very gratifying. Whelen is a family company and the Modified Tour is one big family."

Kurze said it also meant a lot to have the Made In America Whelen 300 on Labor Day weekend, because all of Whelen's products are made in the United States.

Eric Beers (No. 94) has been plagued by bad luck but is hoping to finish out 2007 on a strong note – beginning at Thompson. (Mary Hodge)



## Beers Looking For Turnaround At Thompson

Eric Beers entered the 2006 season looking to be a championship contender. Three tops fives in the first four races did nothing to dispell that notion. However, Beers found himself in the wrong place at the wrong time more often than not.

"I thought we'd be right there," said Beers, "It killed me. We had a fast car everywhere we went."

He points at Martinsville, where they qualified second, redrew seventh and then were involved in a wreck on lap four.

He bounced back from that Martinsville misfortune to lead the last 50 laps at Thompson (Conn.) en route to the victory.

Following an 18th-place finish at Martinsville this past Saturday, Beers (No. 94 Sunoco Race Fuels Chevrolet) is looking for a similar turnaround.

The 37-year-old Beers is already looking forward.

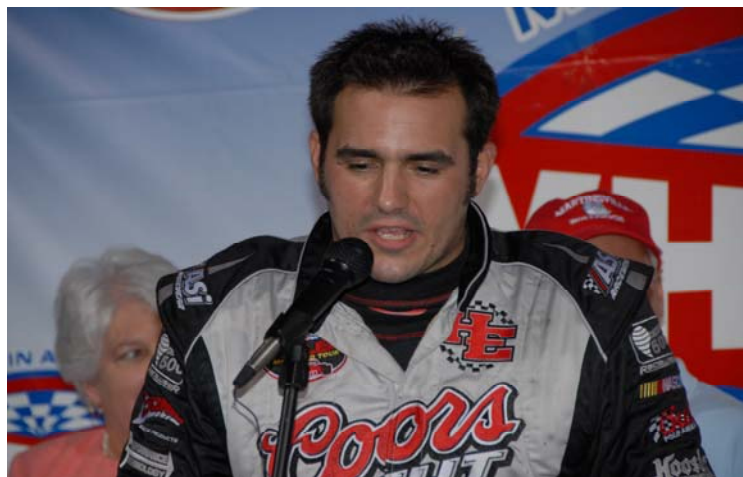
"We have a better engine now," said Beers, who has two top 10s in the last four races.

## ➤ Post-Race Notes: Martinsville

**Pennink Mops Up** ... Rookie Rowan Pennink (No. 93 Monk Mechanics Hand Cleaner Dodge) cashed in with his eighth-place performance at the .526-mile concrete oval. It was his first top 10 of the year. He earned the Sunoco Rookie of the Race honors for the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour, finishing two spots ahead of Richard Savary. But that's not the only check Pennink will pick up this weekend at Thompson. Pennink qualified 37th and earned the Powerade Power Move of the Race Award. And, following a 21st-place finish in the previous race at Mansfield (Ohio) Motorsports Park, Pennink earned the Featherlite Most Improved Driver Award as well.

**Strong Run** ... Veteran Dick Houlihan (No. 46 Viveiros Insurance /Crossroads RV Center Chevrolet) ran in the top five for much of the evening before settling for a season-best seventh-place finish. Houlihan's previous best was 11th at Stafford (Conn.) Aug. 11.

**Ring It Up** ... NASCAR legend Jerry Cook made the trip up from Daytona Beach to watch



Woody Pitkat donated the \$600 he won for the Powerade Power Move of the Race at Mansfield to the scholarship fund for the son of the late John Blewett III. (Howie Hodge)

at the track where he won seven times – so often he called it his home track despite it being more than 650-miles from his then home in Rome, N.Y. And the six-time Modified champion likes what he sees. "For me, it's fun to see new people coming in," Cook said. "And, I might add, doing really well."

**Halfway Cash** ... The pass that Ted Christopher (No. 86 Al-Lee Installations Chevrolet) made of Donny Lia (No. 4 Dodge) on lap 118 wound up being worth \$1,500. He picked up the Clarence's Steak House Mid-Race Leader Award as the leader at the mid-race break on Lap 150.



## NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour Special Awards Standings

### ➤ BUD POLE AWARD

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



### ➤ WHELEN ENGINEERING WINNER OF THE RACE AWARD

Donny Lia	6
James Civali	3
Jimmy Blewett	1
Ted Christopher	1
Todd Szegedy	1



Donny Lia collected an extra \$1,000 for winning the Spark's Oil/Sunoco Pole Award given by Martinsville Speedway. (Howie Hodge)

### ➤ SUNOCO ROOKIE OF THE RACE AWARD

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



### ➤ FEATHERLITE MOST IMPROVED DRIVER

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



### ➤ POWERADE POWER MOVE OF THE RACE

Mike Stefanik	2
Eric Beers	1
Eric Berndt	1
Jimmy Blewett	1
John Blewett III	1
Joseph Hartmann	1
Matt Hirschman	1
Rowan Pennink	1
Woody Pitkat	1
Richard Savary	1
Todd Szegedy	1



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