



Syracuse Mile Program at IMRRC Nov. 14

WATKINS GLEN, N.Y. (Nov. 9, 2015) – Six cars representing different eras of competition at the Syracuse Mile will be on display at the International Motor Racing Research Center Saturday, Nov. 14, for a daylong program about the famed race track.

Among the cars will be a 1934 Ford and the 1980 Gary Balough “Batmobile.”

The Syracuse Mile is one of the most historic tracks in the nation. Also known as the “Moody Mile,” the one-mile dirt track at the New York State Fairgrounds in Syracuse hosted car races starting in 1903. It is considered to be the second or third oldest race track in the country.

Since 1972, the track was the hub of the hugely popular Super DIRT Week, a five-day racing extravaganza, which had its final run at the Syracuse Mile last month. State and county officials have a \$50 million plan to build an equestrian complex, a hockey facility and an RV park on the site currently occupied by the dirt track and its main grandstand.

The Nov. 14 program at the Racing Research Center is free and open to all. The program, offering the cars, speakers and special displays, will highlight the history of the Syracuse Mile and look at the future of Super DIRT Week in Central New York. The Center is located at 610 S. Decatur St., Watkins Glen.

“While we’re saddened that our program about the Syracuse Mile comes just weeks after the last checkered flag falls there,” Center President J.C. Argetsinger said, “gathering Syracuse Mile experts together to tell the track’s story and share their own memories is a fitting tribute.”

The “Batmobile” modified racer is noted for winning the 1980 Super DIRT Week race after running away from the rest of the field. The car will remain on display at the Center through the end of the year. The car will be on loan from the DIRT Motorsports Hall of Fame and Classic Car Museum in Weedsport, N.Y.

The other cars, which will be on display just for the day:

- A 1934 Ford five- window coupe that raced at Syracuse in the late 1950s, driven by Ray Preston and Red Beardsley. The car is owned by Jim Hilimire of Branchport, N.Y.
- The Cliff Kotary coupe that won the 1963 New York State Fair Labor Day race. It is owned by Jeff Ackerman of Endicott, N.Y.
- A 1980s Pinto-bodied Olson Eagle chassis car. It is owned by Leo Kuleszo of Romulus, N.Y.
- A 1980s Gremlin-bodied Show Car chassis car, also owned by Kuleszo.
- A current TEO-chassis dirt modified that ran in this year's final Syracuse 200. It was driven by and is owned by Brian Swarthout of Beaver Dams, N.Y.

The day will begin at 9 a.m. with radio personality and track announcer Joe Marotta doing a live broadcast from the Center of his radio show "Around the Tracks."

At 10:30 a.m., drivers from all eras will share their stories in an informal roundtable setting. Participants will include:

- Brett Hearn, winningest driver of the Syracuse 200 modified race at Super DIRT Week, with six victories. Hearn also earned six wins in the small-block race. His start in the final race in October was his 38th at Syracuse.
- John Birosh, who ran both small-block modifieds as well as Sprint cars on the Mile.
- Malcolm Lane, who also ran both small-block modifieds as well as World of Outlaws Sprint cars at Syracuse. He is a six-time Empire Super Sprint Champion.
- Dan Kapuscinski, better-known as an asphalt super modified driver, who had his first - and last - experience running a Sportsman modified at this year's Super DIRT Week, finishing 13th.
- Alan Johnson, three-time winner of the Syracuse 200 and the only competitor to win the race from the last starting position.

Glenn Donnelly is scheduled to be on the afternoon panel, but because of scheduling commitments, may join the morning session. Donnelly, who founded the Driver Independent Race Tracks, DIRT, organization in the early 1970s, the major event becoming Super DIRT Week, will talk about his time promoting races at The Mile and will perhaps give details of his new Central New York Raceway Park venture which will host Super DIRT Week in 2016.

Others planned for the 1 p.m. panel discussion, moderated by Marotta, include Hearn as well as:

- Jeff Hachmann, director, events sales and marketing for the World Racing Group/DIRT Car Northeast, who will share his memories of Syracuse, both as a young boy attending the races to his position working for the WRG and promoting the Super DIRT Car Series and Super DIRT Week for the past 10 years.

- Dr. Gary George, author and race historian and the man behind "signs by AJ" lettering on race cars in the 1970s. George will speak on the history of the track beginning from 1903, detailing some of the most famous drivers to tackle The Mile, some of the accidents and many of the famous events that ran over the years.

"Anybody who has been a fan of the Syracuse Mile ought to be there because a lot of stories and memories will be shared," Marotta said. "It's going to be like visiting an old friend.

"As my good friend Jack Burgess always said, 'You've got to have a favorite out there,' and Syracuse is my favorite."

The International Motor Racing Research Center is an archival and research library dedicated to the preservation and sharing of the materials of motorsports history, of all series and all tracks, worldwide. For more information about the Center and its work, visit the website www.racingarchives.org.

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