

- Coronavirus Pandemic Forces Racing Cancelations Worldwide But Not In Pennsylvania -

ited national media members only.

Trucks had begun to be unloaded from trailers and Cup teams were reportedly only miles away when the plan was scrapped and the event cancelled.

NHRA: The National Hot Rod Association postponed a significant portion of the 51st annual Gatornationals at Gainesville (Florida) Raceway due to the ongoing global outbreak of the COVID-19 virus.

The partial postponement was in accordance with the recommendation of the Florida governor. Some Sportsman racing was held without spectators.

Top Fuel, Funny Car, Pro Stock, Pro Stock Motorcycle, Pro Mod, Factory Stock Showdown, Top Fuel Harley, Top Alcohol Dragster and Top Alcohol Funny Car will compete at a later date to be determined.

On Monday they suspended all NHRA drag racing for 30 days. This suspension includes events at all NHRA-owned tracks and any NHRA-sanctioned events such as the NHRA Mello Yellow Drag Racing Series and the Lucas Oil Drag Racing Series.

The NHRA intends at this time to resume the original schedule on April 17-19 in Houston, and continue thereafter, subject to developments in the interim. The spring Las Vegas event is postponed with new dates to be determined.

WORLD RACING GROUP: World Racing Group has announced it has postponed all of its scheduled World of Outlaw Sprint Car series events through April 9. That involved eight races, two in Texas this

past weekend, two in Arizona on March 21-22, and four in California.

At this point, the WoO Sprint schedule will resume on Friday, April 10 at Ocean Speedway in Watsonville, CA. The next WoO Late Model series race is slated for March 27th at the Volunteer Speedway in Tenn.

FORMULA 1: Formula 1 canceled its season opening Grand Prix in Melbourne, Australia in part because the McLaren Formula 1 team had declined to participate. It was subsequently reported that a Team McLaren employee had tested positive for the coronavirus. The race was canceled Thursday.

Formula 1 champion Lewis Hamilton said he was "very, very surprised" that the teams had even travelled to Melbourne. Mercedes's F1 team released a statement calling for the race to be cancelled, noting the "well being of our team members and of the wider F1 community" took priority.

Races in China, Bahrain and Vietnam have been postponed.

Formula 1 and governing body the FIA have said they now 'expect' the 2020 season to begin at the end of May.

The outbreak of COVID-19 forced the Chinese round of the calendar to be postponed last month.

The Bahrain Grand Prix, which was due to take place next weekend, and the first ever Vietnam Grand Prix, scheduled for the beginning of April, have also been postponed.

USAC: USAC announced early Friday afternoon that it has postponed all of its events across all of its divisions

through the end of March.

The Saturday's March 14 West Coast Sprint Car event at Hanford, California's Keller Auto Speedway at Kings Fairgrounds was postponed with officials hopeful to make up the Twin 20s event at a later date this season.

The Western States Midget season opener on Saturday, March 21, at Bakersfield (Calif.) Speedway has been postponed as well as the Saturday, March 28 USAC CRA Sprint Car event from Perris (Calif.) Auto Speedway, which has also been postponed.

California governor Gavin Newsom, along with California state health officials, recommended the cancellation of gatherings of 250 or more people across the entire state. The new policy from the California Department of Public Health will be in effect at least through March.

The West Coast Sprints will now begin on April 25 at Perris Auto Speedway; the USAC/CRA series will now open its season with a rare doubleheader, starting Saturday, April 18th at Bakersfield Speedway.

A 360 Sprint car event was held in Chico, Ca. with spectators limited to 250 per state regulation. If those in the pit area working on the cars and the drivers were part of that count is not known.

IMSA: The International Motor Sports Association (IMSA) announced that the 68th Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring Presented by Advance Auto Parts scheduled for March 18-21 was postponed due to the recent United States ban on travel from Europe, which would have prevented a number of drivers, teams and key personnel from participation.

The rescheduled race will now become the season-ending event of the 2020 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Champi-

onship and will be run Nov. 11-14 at Sebring International Raceway.

BAPS: BAPS Motor Speedway in Newberrytown, Pa. canceled Saturday's (March 14) Test & Tune Session. The management team at BAPS made the decision in an effort to keep employees safe and for the well-being of race teams and the fans traveling to the speedway.

The speedway said on its website that it is "monitoring the situation as it progresses and will provide updates on upcoming events." This week's opener on Saturday at BAPS remained on the schedule when AARN went to press.

POTOMAC: The state of Maryland's governor issued an executive order late last week banning gatherings of 100 people or more. Potomac Speedway's management thus canceled their season opener and two other events planned in March.

"This is obviously not in our plan and not what we wanted to happen at the start of our racing season. We're just as eager to start the season as you all are. We feel that based off of this statement by Governor Hogan that we are affected" Potomac management posted on its website. They are planning to now start the season on Friday April 3.

ARCA - The ARCA race planned for Five Flags Speedway in Pensacola Speedway was postponed. Five Flags admitted the decision to postpone was a difficult one.

"Months of preparation by multiple parties had us optimistic that we were in for some fantastic racing. We do feel however, that the well being of our Fans, Competitors, and Employees far exceeds our need to run a race. In all facets of our operation, we always make it our mission to error on the side

of safety. We have faith in local, state, and federal authorities to act in the same manner," track management expressed.

A make-up date will be announced in the near future.

USCS 360 SPRINTS: The two day USCS Shoals Shootout at North Alabama Speedway in Tusculumbia, AL was moved back a week and rescheduled for Friday and Saturday, March 20-21 because of wet grounds.

It appears as if the event would have run otherwise.

CARS LATE MODELS: The CARS Late Model race which was planned for next Saturday, March 21 at the Hickory Speedway was canceled. The issuance of North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper's Executive Order No. 117, which banned public gatherings of

(continued on page 5)

Starting Line-Up

THE SHOWS WENT ON: Central Pennsylvania's three weekly 410 Sprint tracks, Lincoln, Port Royal, and Williams Grove ran their races off as scheduled last weekend, the only state in the union to run more than one race. Drivers, car owners and fans turned out in good numbers. AARN's Todd Heintzelman, who was at Port and the Grove, has the comments of race winners Lance Dewease and Carson Macedo.

Sprint Car Scene, Page 14.

ANDY J CROWNED IN FRONT OF EMPTY STANDS: The empty arena may have dimmed the majesty of the moment somewhat, but for Andy Jankowiak he would have been happy receiving the TC Cup in the middle of an ice storm. One of racing's true characters, Jankowiak reflected on his achievement, his career and his life with AARN Editor Len Sammons. *Focus On Speed, Page 4.*

REACTIONS AT PORT: An unusual situation played out Saturday at Port Royal Speedway as COVID-19 news was fast-breaking and the threat to the immediate future of the sport was becoming real. In the midst of it, drivers and car owners paused to share their thoughts, some well reasoned, others reflexive. AARN's Steve Barrick compiled them. *Port COVID-19 Thoughts, Page 9.*

MOD TOUR MEN TALK COVID-19: The NASCAR Modified Touring Series drivers were ready to head to South Boston this week until the Coronavirus outbreak hit. It's a different world now. Ron Silk and Eric Goodale are concerned about the economic impact on their business, Woody Pitkat is worried his wife, who is a nurse. Burt Myers thinks it's political. AARN's Kevin Rice ties it all together. *Perspective, Page 19.*

REMEMBERING WADE COLE: Wade Cole, one of the genuine nice guys in the sport, died over the past weekend in an accident at his race shop. Cole, whose exploits on the the NASCAR Whelen Mod Tour were the stuff of legend, is remembered fondly by AARN's Mod Tour Authority Brian Danko. *In Memoriam, Page 7.*

JUST KEEPS ON WINNING: Davey Brown built the engine in the Don Kreitz, Jr. owned 410 Sprint Lance Dewease drove to victory Saturday at Port Royal. It was nothing new for Brown, who first came into prominence in 1961 with driver Johnny Mackison, Sr. AARN's Steve Bubb traces the legacy of the eighty-something engine whiz. *Bubb's Bits, Page 27.*

DIFFERENT FATES: Racing can be a fickle sport, and the way the off-season plays out can have a great effect on how next racing year develops. At Grandview Speedway, Andrew Kreis and Cody Bleau, two guys with bright futures, face uncertainty because of funding. Veteran Ryan Beltz, on the other hand, just keeps on going. AARN's Randy Kane evaluates the status of the three men as Grandview's 2020 season is ready to go in a couple of weeks. *Spinnin' Wheels, Page 16.*

THE FAVORITE: Though the NASCAR Whelen Modified Touring Series season's beginning is being pushed back a few weeks, there is one clearcut favorite who has emerged as the threat to win the 2020 championship. AARN Columnist Kevin Rice identifies the man they'll all have to outrun to win this year's title. *Southern Style, Page 23.*

TQ SWAP: Joey Bailey won his first ATQMRA Midget driving championship in 2019 driving a car owned by Alan Mollot. Now, Bailey is going to drive Lenny Boyd's TQ this year while Boyd's former driver, Ryan Tidman, moves to the Mollot car. Bailey drove his first laps in his new ride Saturday at Mahoning Valley Speedway in practice, then shared his thoughts about his new owner, who reciprocated in conversation with AARN's Steve Barrick. *Exclusive-To-AARN, Page 32.*

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NJ Mandate Could Delay Debut Of New Bridgeport Speedway

Bridgeport Motorsports Park is ready for its unveiling and the first practice sessions scheduled for this Saturday on both the new 4/10ths mile track and the new and improved Spirit 1/4 mile surface. New Jersey state restrictions set for the COVID-19 virus could, however, stop the test sessions as well as one planned that same day at New Egypt Speedway. At AARN's deadline, it was unclear if either track would be allowed to hold the practice events or if fans would be allowed.

The Bridgeport season is scheduled to get underway with the Kingdom of Speed 100 weekend on March 27th through 29th. Again, only time will tell if COVID-19 restrictions will be lifted at that time or the event will be postponed.

The three day inaugural weekend will begin with practice on Friday for 358 Spec Small Block Modifieds, Big Block Modifieds, Mid Atlantic Sprint Series (MASS) 305 Sprint cars, Street Stocks, USAC SpeedSTRS and 602 Sportsman - all of whom will be featured during the first weekend of racing.

On Saturday, March 28th, fans will see the 358 Spec Small Block Modifieds, MASS 305 Sprint Cars and Street Stocks in a full program of qualifying and feature events. There will also be timed hot lap sessions for the Modifieds, SpeedSTRs and 602 Sportsman for the Doug Hoffman Memorial Race the next day. Two spots will be locked into Sunday's redraw in each division.

Sunday's Kingdom of Speed Doug Hoffman Memorial will feature the Modifieds in a sixty lap feature event. the 602 Sportsman and SpeedSTRS will see their first competition on the new big track as well.

New Egypt is scheduled to open on April 4. Readers should check the *Area Auto Racing News* web-site or Facebook page for schedule updates in the coming days.