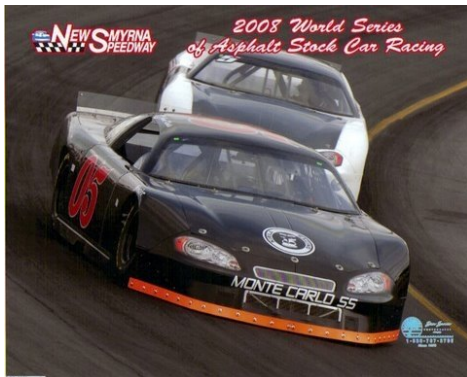


# 2008 Kirila Racing Speed Week Summary

## Race Update 2-19-08

The Kirila Race Team was in Florida for an exciting 10 days of racing. The team's goal was to run the Legend at the Winter Nationals in Orlando and also let Gene run his new late model at the New Smyrna World series of Asphalt Stock Car Nationals. History shows it is a tough place to run because the best of the best come from all over the country and Canada. The team felt it would be good experience for Gene to get his first ASA Late Model race even if he just rode around in the back.

Gene proved to everyone he was more than ready when he turned some of the fastest times during practice the first day and caught many team's attention. Tony Blanchard is Gene's new crew chief for the Late Model and Tony was pumped about the car's performance as well as Gene's ability. We decided to qualify Gene the next day for the opening race. Gene drove his 05 Chevrolet into 7<sup>th</sup> place in qualifying out of about 40 cars. This was a great achievement for the rookie team's first Stock Car race. The officials inverted the first 10 qualifiers and placed Gene in the 3<sup>rd</sup> spot to start the race. This was exciting because for the next 9 nights of racing you line up where you finish for the remainder of the races.



*Gene on the track at New Smyrna Speedway in his late model #05*

When the green flag dropped for the start of the race it was evident that with the 3-4 months all the teams had been off, the entire field was fired up to win the big one. There were multiple restarts but once the laps started clicking off Gene was charging for the lead. The 05 was clearly faster than the leader and crew chief Tony Blanchard was over the radio in

Gene's ear "hold back and stay in second." Since Gene was in his first stock car race everyone knew it was best for him to have a pace setter rather than charge to the front. It makes sense to everyone except the 14 year old driver who knew he could get to the front but he complied. About halfway through the race a yellow flag flew and commenced a 10 minute ride around delay under caution. During the yellow a cagey driver in the 3<sup>rd</sup> spot pulled up into Gene's number 2 position. As the 05 rolled around the inside of the parade for several laps Gene tried to stick his nose in line where he belonged but the more experienced driver ignored the radio tower's position request and held his position. This clearly was intimidation and Gene was not giving in to these antics. As Gene respectively rubbed doors with the ill positioned car, the driver cranked the wheel and drove Gene off the track at a pace setting speed of 35 MPH. As Gene drove into the infield to avoid heavy contact he hit a piece of debris buried in the sandy infield and apparently slit his radiator causing a slow leak. As Gene drove his car back in line he lined up in 2<sup>nd</sup> place for the green flag restart. For the next 6 laps he raced for the pass awaiting the spotters "GO" signal but on lap 18 the water temperature warning light came on and the decision to save the motor for the remaining 8 nights was made and Gene pulled off the track for a DNF. This really hurt our starting position for the remaining races. To come from the back in asphalt short track racing is really tough but at the World Series in 25 lap races it's magical.

On the second night we started 20<sup>th</sup> and finished 16<sup>th</sup>. The third night we started 16<sup>th</sup> and got up to 10<sup>th</sup> but were sent to the back for rough driving. Gene was being blocked by a seasoned driver for over 10 laps and his patience wore thin. It put Gene back to 30<sup>th</sup> position with 10 to go and he raced back up to 17<sup>th</sup>.

In preparing for day 4 of racing the late model got loose in practice and smacked the wall. Since we do not have a back up car in service yet the 05 late model racing for speed week was over. We knew the risk but achieved our goal of getting Gene into 3 races. This will be a good start on the spring season.

In addition to the late model races in New Smyrna Gene was driving one hour over to Orlando Speed World to race his legend car at the Winter Nationals. Jumping from a legend to the late model proved to be difficult but Gene was ready for the challenge.

You will have to ask the crew about how Tony Blanchard got NASCAR's #38 M&M driver Kyle Busch to scuff in tires and test run Gene's late model. While Gene was in Orlando racing the legend, the 05 was missing practice but getting Kyle to take a few laps was cool. The test drive was highlighted when Kyle gave positive feedback about the car's handling. Later Gene and Tony went into a neighboring trailer in the pits and talked with Kyle. Kyle talked about the car and handling with Gene and also reminisced about his legend and early late model racing career. Gene and Kyle also talked about the Las Vegas bull ring that Kyle calls home and Gene ran last September at the Nationals.



Gene with Kyle Busch NASCAR driver #38 M&M car

At the legend races, once again, starting position is key. The Kirila team was pulling some bad pills (numbers which determine your starting position). While luck is no excuse it is amazing that Gene pulled the first two days and then Legend crew chief Devo pulled on the third day to try to change things but believe it or not they both pulled the pill number 34 three days in a row. This placed the #5 car in the rear of the 3rd heat each day but that did not slow Gene down. He came up through the field each day with some good driving and some good luck in missing several wrecks. Once again when drivers are shooting for the prestige of winning a national during speed week things get crazy.

Legend Feature #	Start position	Finish position
1	14	6
2	7	5
3	18	3
4	6	7

The fourth feature was exciting because Gene was in 3<sup>rd</sup> place with 10 to go and the 4<sup>th</sup> place car spun Gene out. That driver was black flagged and thrown off the track which was his 3<sup>rd</sup> rough driving with black flag incident in 3 days. But black flag or not, it didn't help Gene because he had to go to the rear of the pack for spinning. Gene knew the championship was on the line and made a late race charge that placed him in 7<sup>th</sup> after the final flag.



Gene racing his Legend car

It was a great week of legend racing even though we missed one of the 5 scheduled races for the week due to scheduling conflicts with the late model at the other track as well as some rain delays that flipped what was to be a perfect schedule. When the points were all tallied Gene finished the Winter National Points Series in 3<sup>rd</sup> place overall. While racers were able to drop one night of racing, which we dropped the day of our absence, Gene still was just a few points from the championship.

When you look at the big picture for the 10 days of racing we really tested Gene's ability, maturity and endurance. After this Speed Week 2008 the team knows we have a driver who is ready to work on his Late Model driving skills in 2008 and a driver who will become a Pro class driver in his legend racing. By March 15<sup>th</sup> look to the website for the '08 updated schedule based on what we learned from Speed Week. Kirila 'The Gorilla' will be racing legends and late models throughout the remainder of the '08 race season. Visit us at [www.kirilaracing.com](http://www.kirilaracing.com).