

Rod Breitenstein's No. 14 May Have Run Its Last Laps In Competition

By BRETT DEYO
 READING, PA - One of Grandview (Pa.) Speedway's most recognizable race teams may have run its final race.

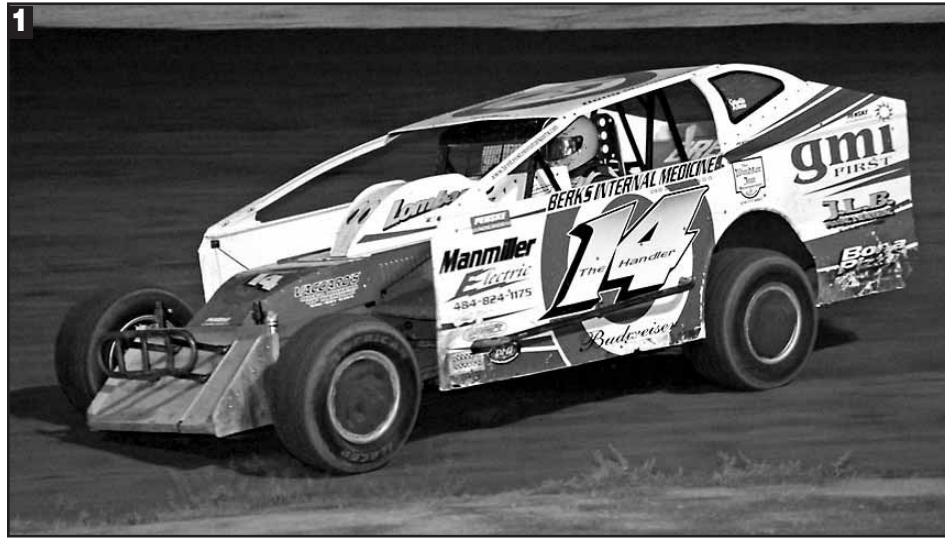
Breitenstein Motorsports, a fixture in the NASCAR Whelen All-American Series 358-Modified division at the Bechtelsville, Pa., oval, will likely not compete in 2012. The entire operation has been listed for sale online, per Chris Breitenstein, who handles the day-to-day management of the team for his father: former racer Rod Breitenstein of Reading, Pa.

Chris said financing a competitive Pennsy 358-Modified effort has become too expensive for his family operation.

"The whole racing scene is different now," he said by phone last weekend. "It doesn't take knowledge. It's all about the money. How do you compete with a guy who can buy two or three cars a year or two motors?"

The Breitensteins have seen the sport they love change.

"In 2006, when Doug (Man-



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 miller) was driving for us, we had a flip in the middle of the season and destroyed a car," Chris said. "We bought a frame that was sitting around for \$500 and still had a good year. We led the points into September. "It's impossible to do that now."

The elder Breitenstein is known for his work ethic. At 63 years of age, he works tirelessly to fund his race team. He is a mechanic at Verizon, operates Rod's Automotive out of the Vince's Towing shop in Reading and takes on frequent side jobs.

"My Dad can't keep working two full-time jobs every day just to scrape by and not be as competitive as we were," Chris said.

"He doesn't want to quit. I don't want to quit. I refuse to let him (Rod) do it out of his own pocket."

The Breitensteins have been loyal to Grandview and the Rogers family since the late 1980s.

"We all love Grandview," he said. "It feels like home to us on a Saturday night. When Susquehanna (Pa.) was running small-blocks 15 years ago and all the top guys left to go run at Susky, my Dad stayed to support Grandview. There is no place else he would rather be."

A former driver at Grandview (Hobby Cars), Penn National (Pa.) and other venues Rod Bre-

itenstein delved into a car owner role in '89 with Kenny Gilmore as the driver. A near-decade relationship with the Kutztown, Pa., resident followed. Kevin Hartnett spent a year in the Breitenstein equipment before Keith Brightbill - son of Modified legend Kenny - took the wheel of the No. 14.

In 2006, Doug Manmiller was named the team's driver and came oh-so-close to a NASCAR 358-Modified title. Manmiller and Breitenstein lost out when the season was extended after the Freedom 76.

"We were so close," Chris said. "That kept my Dad going. To run like we did and come that close was big. They (officials) changed the engine rules in the middle of the year, which was a benefit for (Chad) Sinon and Craig Von Dohren who was driving for him at the time."

"Then, they added a week on the season and we lost that night. That's the stuff that's so blatant and hard to take."

Manmiller earned another runner-up point finish in '08 before leaving the team at the end of last season.

"Doug is one of the best drivers down there (at Grandview)," Chris said. "The relationship we had with Doug was the best you could ask for."

Gilmore returned to the seat for what likely would be the team's final year.

All the while, the Breiten-

steins have utilized Dirt Wheels chassis. Dirt Wheels, of course, is no longer an active chassis manufacturer in Modified racing. The team does have a "new" Dirt Wheels chassis at the ready and would consider entering select events next season - particularly the \$10,000 Forrest Rogers and \$50,000 Freedom 76 - if funding can be found.

"We want to sell everything," Chris said. "And we've sold a bunch of stuff already. The only way we can think about racing at all next year is if someone steps up with some funding for my father."

After three runner-up points finishes and a pair of second-place performances in the Freedom 76, the Breitenstein team may be no more.

"We're not good spectators," Chris said. "So I don't know if you'll see us at the track a lot. It will be tough when we wake up on a Saturday morning and its blue sky. But we won't mind it Sunday when we don't have to clean everything up."



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 THE FAMILIAR ROD BREITENSTEIN 1) No. 14 may have turned its final laps at Grandview (Pa.) Speedway. The team is selling out; 2) Doug Manmiller was a winner in Breitenstein's cars.

(Photos by Mel Stettler)

Clauson Sweeps USAC In Arizona

PEORIA, AZ - A weekend sweep.

Following a triumph in Friday's preliminary event, Bryan Clauson returned to Victory Lane on Saturday night at Canyon Raceway Park during the Parker Store "Hall of Fame Classic" 30-lap AMSOIL USAC/CRA event. It was a perfect weekend for the 22-year-old Carmichael, Calif., driver.

Clauson led the final 21 laps of the main event after passing R.J. Johnson on the ninth circuit.

Keith Bloom Jr. finished second, followed by Levi Jones, Chris Windom and Nic Faas.

Thirty-four cars took time. Nic Faas set the fast lap at 13.627 seconds.

FEATURE: (30 laps) 1. Brian Clauson, 2. Keith Bloom Jr., 3. Levi Jones, 4. Chris Windom, 5. Nic Faas, 6. Matt Mitchell, 7. Damion Gardner, 8. R.J. Johnson, 9. Mike Spencer, 10. Hunter Schuereberg, 11. Jon Stanbrough, 12. Robert Ballou (#73), 13. Tracy Hines, 14. Bobby East, 15. Cody Williams, 16. Rickie Gaunt, 17. Austin Williams, 18. Danny Sheridan, 19. Mike Martin, 20. Rip Williams, 21. Bruce St. James, 22. Dalton Gabbard, 23. David Bezio, 24. Stevie Sussex. NT

(Fri.) - Bryan Clauson won Friday night's AMSOIL USAC/CRA Sprint Car main event during the Parker Store "Hall of Fame Classic" at Canyon Raceway Park.

Clauson too the lead with just

five laps remaining in the 30-lap event from Mike Spencer, who set the pace from the outset. Chris Windom charged late into second spot, followed by Damion Gardner, Levi Jones and Spencer.

Thirty-seven cars entered the event. Keith Bloom Jr. set fast time at 13.840 seconds.

FEATURE: (30 laps) 1. Bryan Clauson, 2. Chris Windom, 3. Damion Gardner, 4. Levi Jones, 5. Mike Spencer, 6. Matt Mitchell, 7. Hunter Schuereberg, 8. Jon Stanbrough, 9. Robert Ballou, 10. Keith Bloom, 11. Bobby East, 12. Nic Faas, 13. Tracy Hines, 14. Rip Williams, 15. R.J. Johnson, 16. Mike Martin, 17. David Bezio, 18. Cody Williams, 19. Austin Williams, 20. Stevie Sussex, 21. Casey Shuman, 22. Rickie Gaunt, 23. Josh Pelkey, 24. Danny Sheridan.

Conley Family Has Three Generations Of LM Racers

Contact: lcl@pietragallo.com or 412-263-4395

He has only entered five races so far, and his plan has been to get some valuable seat time.

But, the competitive fire is burning in the lad.

"In a couple of years, I want to be beating those guys," he said gesturing toward the other family-owned racers.

Officials at Atomic Speedway clarified the situation that led to the withdrawal of the All Star sanction for the event. A press release issued by the All Stars presented the matter as a dispute over the purse. Such was not the case. The race still paid \$5,000 to win and \$400 to start, and the payoff through the field remained the same.

What was in dispute was the All Star sanction fee.

Per the All Star contract, the sanction fee is fully earned when the All Stars produce the first car through the pit gate. Speedway officials were concerned, however, that the sanction would not bring enough cars to warrant the high sanction fee. They approached the All Stars in an effort to reach an accommodation, however, the sanctioning body refused to entertain the issue.

By now, big-block Modified driver Skip Moore should be in possession of his 2012 Bicknell chassis, ending months of speculation that he would be racing with fenders next season.

Another Modified driver getting new wheels for 2012 is Don Brown. He struck a deal to obtain a car from a Canadian racer. His plan is to ready the car for racing with the Modified Tour and in selected other events. His current ride will be prepped to race in the 358-Modified division at Mercer Raceway Park.

Russell King does not plan a return to the Modified division in 2012, despite his recent appearance in the Steel City Stampede. The car he ran belongs to Rod Jones, and the Kings had an arrangement with him to use it as a back-up car through much of the 2011 season. The car was outfitted with an engine that the Kings got back from the shop, and they wanted to see how it would perform after some service.

Lon and Pam Baker are selling off their equipment, leaving their driver, Mark Flick looking for a ride. He may field his own car in 2012, but drove Glenn Hinkle's 358-Modified at Lernerville.

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