



## Freshmen Bring Truckloads of Experience to Sportsman Division in '09

March 18, 2009

There are certain awards in sport that every athlete wants to etch their name on as a champion. In the C&R Auto Supply Sportsman class, as well as every other division in auto racing, the Rookie of the Year award is one of those prestigious awards that first year drivers strive to win. This year sees a class full of racing experience and knowledge of the 3/10 mile oval which should lead to one of the most entertaining battles for the Debbie Hallahan Memorial Rookie of the Year award in recent memory!

Included in this (at the moment) triple threat match for the title include:

### BRANDON NILES – Truro, Nova Scotia

The Sojourn Signs Bandolero division standout from Nova Scotia's Hubtown will make the transition to the C&R Auto Supply Sportsman division this season, following on the heels of former Bandolero racer turned Sportsman driver Kari Johnson. Johnson, who calls Crowes Mills home (a stones throw away from Truro) finished 15<sup>th</sup> overall and 5<sup>th</sup> in the ROTY hunt in what was a deep class of competition in '08. Niles knows the transition will be tough but plans on taking it all in stride. "We have set simple goals this season, to finish every race and to be competitive are tops on the list," Niles told [ScotiaSpeedworld.ca](http://ScotiaSpeedworld.ca) last weekend.

As for preparation, the pieces are falling into line to be ready for the first C&R Auto Supply race, Saturday afternoon May 30<sup>th</sup>. "We took the engine over to R&D (Performancentre in Onslow) to get it freshened up and ready for the season and I cannot wait for the winter to be over to test the car!"

The car is no stranger to Scotia Speedworld or being fast around Maritime circuits. Fans will recognize the car and number as Niles will sport the #29 that was made famous in recent years by Dodge driver Troy Slaunwhite (Terence Bay). Slaunwhite shook down the racecar for the first time last season in the C&R Auto Supply 100 on CAT 250 weekend before handing the reins over to Niles, who tested the Sportsman car in a private session late in the season. Niles and crew currently plans to run the full season at Scotia Speedworld with a possible visit to the Atlantic Canadian Stock Car Championships at the Centre For Speed in October '09!

### SCOTT THIBODEAU – Williamswood, Nova Scotia

Scott has progressed through the ranks at Scotia Speedworld rapidly the past two years. In 2007, Scott piloted the #123 Sunfire in the Miller Tire/BFGoodrich Lightning division to an 11<sup>th</sup> overall points finish, 100-points out of the Rookie of the Year award won by last season's champ Andrew Starks (Truro). Last season, Scott moved up to the Wallace Equipment Hobby Stock division where he posted two heat race wins, along with three top five finishes. Overall, he finished 6<sup>th</sup> in points, only 32 markers out of Eric Neilson, the 2008 Rookie of the Year.



Continued...

This season, Scott moves up to the high octane competition of the C&R Auto Supply Sportsman division with one goal in mind, to turn heads in the #69 Sportsman car! The car itself is no stranger to the track as '08 Rookie Contender Kyle Butler and track veteran Laurie Hutt shared the Zoom Boom Transport #35 last season.

The team, like everyone around this time of year has been rebuilding the Sportsman car and putting new parts on a car that was competitive last season. Watch for Scott to be a contender in the C&R Auto Supply Sportsman division this season!

### MIKE ALEXANDER – Cole Harbour, Nova Scotia

Another Wallace Equipment Hobby Stock driver moving up to the C&R Auto Supply Sportsman Series this season is the Champion from one year ago, Mike Alexander. Mike continued the Alexander racing legacy in 2007 when he purchased a championship Mustang from former multi-time champ Mark Whynot (Eastern Passage), who moved to the Legends Division. Alexander piloted the Hobby Stock to 4<sup>th</sup> in points in his first season including a win in the 50-lap feature during his freshman year. The next season, Alexander cruised to his first racing championship by winning six main features, one heat race and amassing ten podium finishes, three more than his nearest competitor in that category, Mark Wilson. Ironically, Wilson has purchased Alexander's Hobby Stock for '09 to pursue another championship for Wilson and the car!

The team has been busy preparing for the 2009 season. "We have the body fitted on the car now," Alexander commented at the end of February. "It's going to be fun this year, I'm excited." Alexander is one of the favourites for not only the Rookie of the Year award but to be a top five contender as the season pans out at Scotia Speedworld.

### Speaking of Rookies

Last season's C&R Auto Supply Rookie of the Year is planning to come back in a big way in 2009! Jeff Dillman has purchased a winning car out of New Brunswick and is currently hard at work preparing the car for the new season.

"We have the car torn apart and we're looking to put a new body on it in the next few weeks," Dillman said last week. "With a new car and a new sponsor, we hope to be up front a little more this year!"

Dillman has brought Absolute Traffic Control of Elmsdale on board for '09, and with more sponsors expected to be announced before the May 30<sup>th</sup> green flag, the season looks bright for the Musquodoboit driver!

If you have any Sportsman news, know of anyone we overlooked going for the Sportsman ROTY award this season or have any news tips for the '09 season, do not hesitate to email Tim at [tim@timterryonline.com](mailto:tim@timterryonline.com) to get your news out on ScotiaSpeedworld.ca!