

# MID-AM REPORT

The final checkered flag of the MiDiv racing season fluttered last Sunday over the Gateway track as James Stevens got the outright victory he needed to become the last driver this year to win a new driver's suit from SafeRacer. Earlier in the day Patrick Findley joined the list, making just seven drivers who met the minimum requirements of four outright victories (first on the track in a class of at least two cars) to qualify for Driver of the Year.

**Chris Albin** (SIII) of course, won that honor for a record 10th time -- a mark that may never be beaten other than by Albin himself extending it. Albin didn't even race as much as in years past (at least not in ITB as he also had a GP national program going), but still won 11 times, eight of them outright.

Stevens joined Albin as the only two drivers to score the maximum possible 84 points, but he needed that fourth outright victory after finishing third in the Saturday portion of the Spooktacular double Regional, and got it third overall behind two Spec Miatas in the last race of the day.

Twenty-three new champions will be receiving the handsome clocks given annually to the best of the Mid-Am. Here's how they got there:

- **PRODUCTION** • **EP** ~ **Forrest Tindall** (OzMt) went on a season-end rip through the last four races, winning three of them to claim his third straight championship.
- **FP** ~ **Randy Wagner** (OzMt) and **Bob Eichelberger** (StL) traded wins through much of the season. Eichelberger eventually won seven, but missed the Bonus Race which Wagner won. Wagner also ended up third in the DotY standings. It's his second championship after a GT2 title in 1980.
- **GP** ~ I won I won I won I won I won! Okay, after chasing this thing since, oh, 1977, it finally came to me, **Rocky Entriken** (Sal). After Chuck Leighton and Chris Albin were kind enough to run their National points beyond the 36-point cutoff, my plan was to blitz the four July races at Hallett, Heartland Park and MAM and it worked.

- **GRAND TOURING** • **GT1** ~ **Mary Daly** (StL), had three wins in hand, two from last May at Gateway and Memphis and one from Hallett in July, but needed at least one of the Spooktacular races (she won both) to take an eighth championship.
- **GT2** ~ **Greer Haynes** (MidS) had the first three of the five Gateway races, plus Memphis in May and Hallett in July.

- **SPORTSRACING** • **S2000** ~ **John Nelson** (KC) picked up the Gateway/Heartland pair in the spring, then the Heartland double in July, and polished it off with a Bonus Race win at MAM in September for his third championship, his second in a row.
- **SRF** ~ The door was open at Gateway but nobody knocked. That left **Jack Donnellan** (Okla), who'd also done the July blitz and won all four of them, the champion over Bonus Race winner **Robin Kirkland** (KC). Donnellan repeated a championship first won in 2004.

- **FORMULA** • **FA** ~ **Willard King** (KC) had two wins in April at HPT and MAM, picked up a third at the Bonus Race, but needed at least one more. He got the one he needed Saturday, good thing as he was DNF on Sunday.
- **F/SCCA** ~ **Jason Mabee** (KC) and **Craig Chandler** (OzMt) came to the Spooktacular tied, but Mabee had already won their four prior matchups. Chandler won both ends of the Spooktacular but had to discard an earlier 9-point finish, and that was the difference as Mabee took the Mid-Am's first Formula SCCA championship by just 3 points. These two have been beating on each other for three years, each winning F/Atlantic in one of the past two years. Mabee also placed 6th on the DotY list.
- **CC** ~ **Mike Bass** (MidS) had five

wins, four from spring races before **Greg Scharnberg** (DMV) got started. Scharnberg then ran off four wins, setting up a Spooktacular showdown, but then didn't go. Bass did, and his Saturday victory cinched it.

- **FM** ~ Another door left unopened as **Gary Phillips** (KC) gave the final weekend a pass but saw his slim lead hold up when his closest challenger did the same.
- **FF** ~ **Don Nelson** (Neb) won once in April, twice in August, and the Bonus.
- **Tim Koch** (KC) was within range but Nelson became champ when neither took on the Spooktacular.
- **CF** ~ Probably the strangest turnaround of the series. Going into the finale at St. Louis **Jeff Norris** (Okla) led **Jim Krispin** (StL) with **Michael Dierkes** (StL) a somewhat distant third. All three were at Gateway along with spoiler Bryan Cohn, who won both days. Virtually any finish would have won it for Norris and Krispin was within reach, but both of them were DNF on Saturday and DNS on Sunday and so neither even got the fourth finish they needed to qualify. Dierkes, second to Cohn both days, needed both finishes, got them, and won the whole shebang. It's his second championship but first outright, last year he had to share it with Krispin.
- **FV** ~ **Matt Guzowski** (StL) got four of his five wins in the spring, tacked on one more in August.
- **F500** ~ **Kenneth Kirkland** (Ark) won four consecutive races in the first half of the season, then added one more in late summer.

- **STREET TIRES** • **AS** ~ **Scott Bettinger** (Wich) won with two visits each to Hallett and Mid-America.
- **SSC** ~ **Dave Gird** (Wich) swept the three April races then spaced three more wins through the summer for his second straight championship. The season also placed him 5th on the DotY rankings.
- **SM** ~ The biggest class in the Mid-Am was decided at the Bonus Race when **Stephen Johnson** (KC) won his fourth victory. **Peter Lehr** (DMV) and **Sam Henry** (OzMt) ended up tied for second, the tiebreaker going to Lehr on most victories, 2-1.

- **IMPROVED TOURING** • **ITS** ~ A Bonus Race victory was the final shout in **Aaron Holstrom's** (KC) championship.
- **ITA** ~ **Steven Bachenberg** (KC) won four races including the Bonus for the top score in the biggest IT class of 2006 and a third consecutive title.
- **Jude Rudder** (OzMt) had a shot but needed victorious efforts both days in St. Louis. Unfortunately his best was one second-place finish to hold on to second in the series.
- **ITB** ~ With 11 victories, **Chris Albin** (SIII) won this class for a 14th straight year! He skipped the Spooktacular, leaving victory both days to **Patrick Findley** (MidS), who not only jumped to second in the points, but also to 7th on the DotY rankings.
- **ITE** ~ The turning point was probably the DNF by **Buddy Cisar** (Neb) at Heartland Park in July. **Andy Wolverton** (Neb) already had six wins by then, and later added two more, but his season ended with a DNF at the Bonus Race. Cisar's DNF meant he didn't qualify for bonus points and had to settle for the regular score when he won it, then he won both ends of the Spooktacular. By that time Wolverton, fourth in the DotY rankings, was out of reach.
- **IT7** ~ **James Stevens** (StL) had four wins from the first five races of the year, then after letting the summer mostly go by won his fifth at the Bonus Race. However, only three of those were outright wins and on Saturday at the Spooktacular **Scott Peterson** (KC), the runner-up to Stevens all year, finally grabbed the checkered flag. Stevens had but one chance left and grabbed it with the Sunday win to claim runner-up honors for Driver of the Year.

--Rocky Entriken