

By John Manzi

Fans have been treated to a continuing battle for top driving honors this year at Monticello Raceway between Billy Dobson and Bruce Aldrich, Jr. Dobson brazenly has said he is going to try to win the dash-win title this year; a statement which has been taken notice by his fellow drivers, some of whom resent Dobson's lack of remorse.

But the idea that one driver is making his desires be known perhaps has a good influence on the competition and maybe, just maybe, the fans will be the recipients of season-long battle. The possibility exists that the other reinsmen might be trying to make Dobson eat his words which in turn could make the racing even more competitive.

Dobson, who has nothing more than gloves and a whip, travels to other tracks to drive when Monticello is dark. He came here on Monday afternoon, March 8 off a 4-win night at Saratoga Raceway last Saturday and found that Bruce Aldrich, Jr. is closing in on him in races won at the Mighty M, 69-66. And though the transplanted Michiganite reined two winners on the Monday afternoon card Aldrich outdid him by winning three and moved ever closer.

But through this head-to-head daily grind a host of other talented reinsmen provides stiff competition to the driving leaders. Jimmy Taggart, Jr. a Monticello-native, who usually spends most of his year campaigning at Pocono Downs, also turned in a three-bagger on Monday and Greg Merton, a two time Mighty M driving champ, added two more wins to his driving totals as he rapidly approaches 3000 career triumphs. Currently third on the local leaderboard with 50 wins Merton now needs just 20 more to reach a personal milestone of 3000 lifetime driving victories.

Though over the past two weeks he hasn't been driving as regularly as he usually does, Billy "Zeke" Parker, Jr., last years champ and winner of 14 driving title here is currently fourth with 36 wins as he moves toward 10,000 in his illustrious career. Now with 9945 winners Parker is expected to reach 10,000 by this summer or maybe sooner.

And when you the likes of Kyle DiBenedetto, Mike Forte, Mike Merton and Mike Micallef and the others talented drivers currently competing here are added to the fray, as were alluded to earlier, the fans will enjoy very competitive racing this year.

*Photo credit: Geri Schwarz*