

MID-AM REPORT

Both the climate and the racing is heating up. Mid-Am rounds at Heartland Park and Gateway have almost tripled the size of the Driver of the Year list and had their impact on a number of classes in the championship chase. There are six races left which means, mathematically, a driver with zero points could still be a class champion, even in classes where the leader has 72 points. The Bonus Race pays 24 points to winners.

IMPROVED TOURING

Loren Moore (OzMt) skipped Heartland Park -- the first race he's missed all year -- then won ITE for the 11th time at Gateway to pad his lead in the Driver of the Year standings. Nebraska drivers **Buddy Cisar** and **John Waldbaum** are duking it out for 2nd, separated by just three points. ~~ **Bob Gill** (KC) got his fifth and sixth ITS wins to go to a perfect (until the Bonus Race) 72 points and move up to 3rd on the DotY list. ~~ **Nick Chinopulos** (MidS) also picked up No. 6 at St. Louis to take 5th place among the DotY. ~~ **Chris Albin** (Sill) broke his tie with **Patrick Findley** (MidS) in ITB, coming out ahead in a 1-2 finish at Gateway. The race put both drivers on the DotY, Albin in 6th and Findley in 10th. ~~ **Steve Bachenberg** (KC) won ITA at Heartland Park to widen his points margin and take 7th on the DotY list. ~~ **Scott Peterson** (KC) and **Mark Jeffery** (Ark) each claimed a runner-up finish in one of the two races and ended the month exactly where they began it -- Jeffery nine points ahead. **Lynn Lamb** (Okla), the HPT winner, moved into the chase 4 points behind Peterson.

PRODUCTION

With three wins in the last three races, **Forrest Tindall** (OzMt) has leapt 12 points past **Steve Schmidt** (KC) into the EP lead. **Michael Eden** (OzMt) is still in the chase, 14 behind Schmidt. ~~ **Loren Moore** (OzMt) won in SP at Gateway to put a 24-point margin between himself and the second-place tie of **Pete Bell** (KC) and **Chris Stevens** (KC). ~~ **Chuck Leighton** (OzMt) took his sixth win at Gateway and now stands 4th in the Driver of the Year standings. He does not seem threatened for the GP title. ~~ **Ronald Davis** (Kan), standing 2nd on the DotY list with seven wins, would seem similarly secure in FP, but **Bob Eichelberger** (StL) scored his first win of the season at Gateway to move into a distant second place.

SPORTS RACING

Franklin Stone (KC) extended his winning streak to four straight races, and opened a 3-point margin over **Jack Donnellan** (Okla), who was second at Gateway. That race propelled both into the Driver of the Year list, in 8th and 9th place. **O.L. Kinney** (KC), a DNF at St. Louis, was unable to keep up but remains just 12 behind. **Rob Sherwood** (StL), was 3rd at St. Louis to move within just 2 points of Kinney. ~~ **Ed Smith** (StL) scored his second win to lead the S2000 class.

GRAND TOURING

Mary Daly (StL) scored a fourth GT1 win at Gateway to pad her lead over Ken Raley (KC) ~~ In GT2, **Cliff Koehler** (KC) won at Heartland Park to tie **Ward Herst** (StL) and move within one win of class leader **Dan Guterman** (NeOk). ~~ **Ken Probst** (Sill) missed a chance to extend his GT5-leading total when the Gateway race left him a DNF.

FORMULA

Willard King (KC) has made every race in June and July, winning two, and that has lifted him 15 points past **Patrick Donnelly** (Kan) in Club Continental -- the most interesting race among the open-wheelers. ~~ The conundrum that is Formula Ford continues: The only time they have been seen this year -- Club Fords included -- is at Gateway. No Mid-Am FFs at Memphis, Hallett, HPT or MAM! Who knows why? Just because they are mostly from St. Louis? Well, if none of them race elsewhere none will be champ. Gotta go to at least two tracks. **Gary Payne** won the last outing in FF ahead of **Mark Blythe**, and they now sandwich former points leader **Brian Cohn** who didn't race (well he did, but in IT7). Eleven points covers the trio. ~~ In CF, **James Krispin** outran **Michael Dierkes** for a third time to widen the points margin to nine. ~~ **Jason Mabee** (KC), with the first Formula SCCA car in the Mid-Am, raised his points total to 60 to go to 13th on the DotY list. ~~ **Nick Grapsas** (StL) boosted his FV lead with another win.

SHOWROOM/TOURING/AMERICAN SEDAN

Scott Bettinger (Wich) outran AS points leader **Jeff Kopp** (KC) at Heartland Park. Kopp still leads the points handily, but Bettinger jumped past **Mark Kutina** (KC) for second place. ~~ **Candy Gerber** (Neb) made the only Showroom or Touring start, winning at HPT to tie **Paul Sherman** (Wich) at 60 points each in SSC.

SPEC MIATA

Charles James (NeOk) vaulted into the Spec Miata lead with a Gateway victory over **Dick Faxon** (OzMt). James is now 2 points up on **Tom Kraft** (DMV) who has just a 3-point edge on Faxon. **Bill Pemberton** (Neb) is another 6 behind, and it's 4½ more to **David Harber** (MidS). The thing is, the top three all have six or more finishes and are up to throwing out their lower scores, while Pemberton and Harber both have raced just five times and can

still score full points once more. Imagine just a second-place finish for each, and that's five drivers in the 50-point range.

The Midwest Division I.T. Tour

Spec Miata has taken off like no class in the past quarter-century! The last time I saw a points list where one class took up a whole page was back in the heyday of Formula Ford -- the mid-70s. Not Spec Racer, not Improved Touring, nothing in my memory matches this phenomenon. The I.T. Tour now has a full 52-card deck of Spec Miatas.

Dick Faxon (OzMt) has been the ace from the beginning, in 2001, when the I.T. Tour had nine SM cars. He won that championship, and in '02 and '03. Several new players joined the list at Gateway, but in the absence of most of the top runners, Faxon won the race and his fourth straight gold medal. His 54-point total cannot be caught by either of the next four drivers, who are grouped within a 3-point spread. This of course means that a dozen or so drivers still have a shot at the silver and bronze.

With two Tour races left, at MAM and HPT, the only other class that is locked up is ITE, where **Loren Moore** (OzMt) has won six of eight starts. Silver and bronze are still within reach of all the other 10 drivers in the class.

ITC has the closest battle still going for gold, with **Nick Chinopulos** (MidS) playing catch-up to his buddy **Larry Orr** (MidS), closing to within 7 points. **Jarold Boettcher** is just another 5 behind -- that's one win if the two yellow Fiats don't show at either race.

Brian Glassburner (StL) charged into the ITA lead, winning at Gateway, to go 9 points up on **Timothy Finley** (StL), who hasn't been out since May.

Both ITS and ITB have 15-point spreads between the top two drivers. **Bill Denton** (MidS) holds the margin in ITS over **Paul Lerman** (StL), but Lerman handed Denton his first loss of the season at Gateway. **Patrick Findley** (MidS) has the margin in ITB over perennial champ **Chris Albin** (Sill), who has not been as active as usual but still won his third at Gateway.

Mark Jeffery (Ark) would seem to have a comfortable 21-point margin in IT7, but **Nadeem Bari** (StL) has been on a late-season tear. The way the math works, if Bari could win the last two races, Jeffery could raise his score only 3 points and they would be tied at 60. Bari would win the tie-breaker, 5 wins to two. On the other hand, a Jeffery victory at either MAM or HPT ensures last year's ITA champ becomes the first-ever IT7 gold medalist.

—*Rocky Entriken*