

The TST Ice Bowl

By Russell Griner for MSA, photos by MSA Staff

“Hell yeah!” was my response. Mr. Hanyon stood before me, smile on his face, enthusiasm all around. I was to be sent to the Talladega Short Track, camera around my neck, pen and pad in tow. I hadn’t shot a race of any sort since my first assignment in college, and had never even seen a dirt track race. Two days, two days to race day.

Ice Bowl. 72 degrees. Ice Bowl. A lap around the pits revealed mud as the true adjective to describe the event. My black Nikes were quickly a reddish brown. My wife and I are new to the state of Georgia, she has it in her head that this red clay is exclusive to our backyard. I showed her my shoes at the end of race day, she will now stop describing it as “our mud that’s in our backyard.”

The facility has an excellent photography tower, which provided me with views of both the bowl and the fans, which were quickly filling the stands. “Filling the stands” can be an overused term, it is absolutely correct in this context. Not be-

ing sure what to expect, I was glad to see it near capacity.

The track appeared slick to me, and the bank around it daunting. Between races, I was given the opportunity to head to the infield. I had visions of me landing on my rear and sliding down the embankment. As I took off running, the compactness and stickiness of the track was my hero. I arrived safely and with my pride intact to the center, not a streak of clay on my clothes.

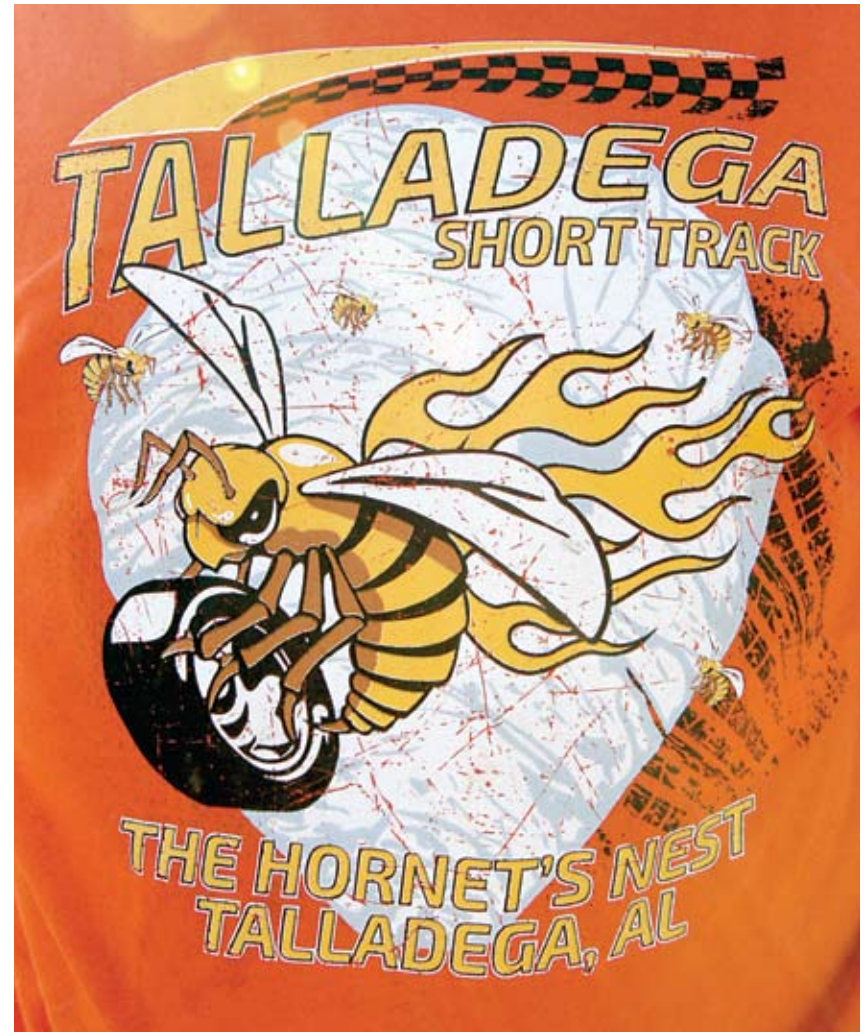
Chevy has a secret it will tell anyone who will listen. CT525. Whisper that name, revel in its glory, now, say it with pride, as it reigns supreme. Michael Page of Douglasville, Georgia is a believer. As the current Ice Bowl Champion, this marks the fifth year the CT525 took top honors in ‘Dega. 533 peak horsepower and torque topping out near 500 lb/ft. It screams when revved, happily reaching 7,000 rpms. Behind the wheel of the #18 car, Mr. Page breezed through preliminaries and onto victory, pushing the 6.2 liter engine for all its worth. The “big check,” handed over ceremoniously after the checkered flag, seemed a relief to Page.



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His excitement turned to concentration, as he jumped atop a parked car to watch the next round. Racers are fans, too.

If you have yet to check out a dirt track race, I suggest it. The extreme pitch to the aero package on the cars is reason enough. These guys (and gals!) spend more time sideways than straight, left wheel in the air for each turn, carefully working the throttle and tires to avoid any time loss via over/understeer. The

racing is tight, the rubbing is real, and the exhaust smells like happiness. I can only hope Mr. Hanyon allows me a return next year.

For more information regarding the event/track, head over to www.talladegashorttrack.com. Being right across the street from the world famous Talladega SuperSpeedway, it is fairly easy to find. I’ll look for you next year, don’t be shy to say hi.



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