

## The Dirt Track Fan

There's just something a little bit different about a dirt track fan. We are pretty easy to spot.

We are usually wearing a T-shirt with an all too colorful decal on the back. Jeans with the seat thinned from sitting on concrete bleachers.

All our socks and shoes are stained with that unmistakable red clay. Our favorite drivers number is on every article of clothing we own.

Stickers are pasted on every available spot on cars, trucks, boats, toolboxes, and coolers.

And our vehicles are all covered in red dust. The thing that makes us different WE LOVE DIRT TRACK RACING !!

Having a fan based race page has given me the opportunity to meet some amazing people, who are just as crazy as me. Every weekend we risk life and limb climbing bleachers, trudging through mud, swatting mosquitoes, freezing, sweating, Inhaling enough red clay to resurface an oval and getting a farmers tan. And all of these things are just a normal part of this dirt track life. And as crazy as it sounds we wouldn't change a thing.

I have often said that there's no middle ground for dirt track racing. You either love it and cannot get enough, or you absolutely hate it. And I think the reason for that is the fact that this sport is built from passion. Drivers are passionate about every detail of their race weekend.

Cars have to be perfect, details are combed over fifty times on Saturday morning while loading the trailer. Pits have to be set up a certain way, Pit crews have jobs to do, and do them with passion.

These folks are just as dedicated to this sport as any professional NASCAR race team circling the asphalt. And following these weekend thrill seeking, adrenaline junkies is a breed of folks like no other, the dirt track fan.

Standing on the top row every weekend recording races has allowed me to study fans in their natural habitat. For many it's date night, and it has been for years. For some it's just what they were raised doing, and really couldn't imagine doing anything else. I have overheard conversations between fans going over who were not there that weekend because their seats were empty.

Children run around with bare feet in cold weather, and it's OK, why? Because they are dirt track fans. Kids who have never met will group together and throw a football for hours, and leave having made a new friend. I have watched

kids fall asleep on bleachers with cars turning laps loud enough to vibrate your bottom side to another seat. But those race babies sleep as if it were a lullaby.

Old men telling the exact same story that they have been telling for the last twenty years. And it never gets old, it's those stories that keep this sport alive.

The race track is just what we do, it's where we go, this sport is who we are. It is ingrained in us, it is our sport. We are dirt track! We fans have opinions, and are happy to share them whether you are interested or not, you are gonna know.

We group together with the same folks every weekend, many who have been sitting together at the races for years, but never cross paths outside in the real world. We generally love to complain, about something, anything and everything, we just gotta complain. But it's just our way of participating in the night's events.

I have visited one particular track on multiple occasions and there is a gentleman who is there every time the gates open, wouldn't dream of missing it. But, he hates absolutely everything, every week he says the same thing "well this is the last time they get any of my money."

That only lasts for a week or so because he is right back in the same seat next race with the same list of complaints. And the thing is, that's ok, it's his dirt track, it's his sport. Things like this are what makes this sport so great. We are passionate about every aspect of our beloved dirt track.

I've heard thirty minute conversations about track food, whose is the best, why it's the best, how much it costs, and how long the line was. The lighting, the loud speaker, the bathrooms, I could make a list a mile long about the conversations I have had with fans about their opinions of their local dirt track.

And regardless of how positive or how negative it is, one thing does not change, the true dirt track fan always comes back. When I ask a group of fans why they keep coming back to their local track, without fail the same thing happens. They each look at each other, smile and in unison they all say, "it's home". They are true dirt track fans.

We all have different opinions about how to run a dirt track, that's a whole story within itself. Each of us love different classes, and in our hearts feel that it's the only "real" racing left on the planet.

We have our driver favorites, who can do no



wrong by the way. We all have a driver whom we love to hate, "that guy has no business driving a race car". And usually those two drivers end up beside each other at some point during the night.

We are invested in this sport, we feel as if the cars are fueled by our presence in the stands. And in many ways this is true, ask any driver and they will tell you, "man I love the fans, even the haters make my night."

Dirt track fan, this sport needs you just as much as a driver needs a fresh set of Hoosier tires. When you are not there things are just a little "off".

We turn to look at you and make sure that you saw what we saw, and when you are not there it kinda kills the vibe. Remember, WE ARE DIRT TRACK !

On any given Saturday night there are thousands of crazy folks who gather together, sit on bleachers, folding chairs and blankets, in the cold, the heat, and the dreaded rain. Many get there hours before cars ever hit the clay, just to complain at the end of the night about how long we have been there. (Told you we liked to complain.)

We eat burgers that have been wrapped in foil for hours and left under a heat lamp, and by the last bite it is covered in red clay dust, and swear it's the best burger ever.

We sit shoulder to shoulder and watch the

controlled chaos of man and machine on slick red mud do things. Amazing things, things that can't be explained, things that you just have to be there to see.

What makes this so special, is the fact that we are all at the dirt track together. And I guess you could say, we are more than fans, we are a family.

A dust covered, exhausted, grumpy, happy, family, and we get to sit together every week.

Goodness, this has made me ready to go to the races. I'll see you in the stands!



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