

NEMA NUMBERS

The 2016 season was the first since 2010 and only the second since 1996 that didn't see a first-time winner. Last year's winners were John Zych, who has 13 career wins going back to 2013, Randy Cabral, 49 going back to 2000, Todd Bertrand, seven going back to 2011, Seth Carlson, six going back to 2012, Doug Coby, five going back to 2013, Avery Stoehr, five going back to 2014 and Jim Chambers, two going back to 2015. Bethany Stoehr was a "first timer" in 2013, Ryan Bigelow in 2014 and Danny Cugini in 2015.

Among active drivers, Randy Cabral is the leader in the "tracks won at" category with 11, behind Drew Fornoro and Dave Humphrey, each with 19, and Russ Stoehr (13) on the all-time list. John Zych Jr., who has shown an aptitude at winning on tracks he's seeking for the first time, and Bobby Santos III, have won at nine different facilities.

Since 2011, Randy Cabral and owner Tim Bertrand have 40 top five finishers (including 17 seconds), a scant two better than John Zych Jr. and his car owner dad. The Zychs have been third 13 times. Other top five finishes over that span include 29 for Seth Carlson, 28 for Todd Bertrand (including 12 fifths), 19 for Jim Chambers and 18 for Avery Stoehr.

One of the great stories of 2016 is Joey Payne adding his name to the list of drivers who have won for the Scrivani family. Joey, subbing for his ailing (flu) son Anthony, won the Lites feature at Riverhead. Anthony added a win at Waterford to two he scored in '15 for Mike Scrivani Jr. In the longevity category, it's tough to top Mike and his dad, the late "Iron Mike," who had a car in the first NEMA race back in 1953. The first win came at West Peabody in '56 with Tony Russo driving. Among the others who won in Scrivani cars: Dave Humphrey, Johnny Coy and Joey Coy, Nokie Fornoro, Butch Walsh and Gene Bergin.

The number 47 or 47b has been in NEMA's victory lane 106 times, starting with George Tilton's victory on the dirt at Beech Ridge in 1955 through Randy Cabral's success last fall at Thompson's World Series. Hall of Fame car owner John McCarthy claimed 44 of them – 35 with Dave Humphrey, seven with Lou Fray and two with Al Pillion. Jeff Horn won 16 times in Bay Hayes' 47. Tim Bertrand has 45, the first with himself driving. Forty-two of Randy Cabral's win have been in Bertrand's 47. Lou Cicconi has won twice in a 47b. Only the 45 and 45b – Gene Angelillo's number – has more NEMA wins.

Unlucky 13? The top five on the list of NEMA career feature winners has won the 13th race of the season a combined 23 times: six for Randy Cabral, five for Nokie Fornoro and four each for Drew Fornoro, Dave Humphrey and Russ Stoehr.

Eleven times the winner of the season opener has gone on to win the championship. Bill Eldridge (1955, '58), Drew Fornoro (1983, '98), Ben Seitz (2004-05) and Randy Cabral (2008-09) did it twice. Joey Coy (1991), Armond Holley (1976) and Johnny Mann (1972) did it once.