

Speedy Siblings

Brothers find success in IMCA racing

By Jill Christensen



Jared Hansen



Kenny Hansen

Every Saturday from April to October the air around the Hansen garage is filled with the smell of fuel and the sound of roaring engines, as brothers Jared and Kenny Hansen get ready to hit the track.

The Hansen brothers have been racing IMCA racecars for the past four years, but racing has always been in their blood. Jared said, "I grew up around racing. Kenny and I used to race against each other in everything we did, from racing our go-karts around the shop, to racing pedal bikes against the neighborhood kids." He added, "My dad raced in '94 and '95 in the hobby stock but then sold the car. After he sold the car we would always help Jeff Nielsen on his stock car and watch him race every week. Dad finally bought a car in 2004, once Kenny and I could help him on it more, since we were older. Unfortunately, he also rolled that car that same year, but we found another car one week later. For the 2006 season, Dad built a new car and Kenny got the old one. I was a little upset but, I knew my day would eventually come to race on dirt."

The Hansen brothers did, for sometime, both drive in the hobby stock class, which caused a little tension now and again. Kenny stated, "When we both raced in the same class there was some rivalry, but now that we are in separate classes the only rivalry is between who gets (to use) the lift first. I like to see him win, but right now, I have more wins this year than he does."

Jared agrees, for the most part, stating, "There was some (rivalry) when we were both in hobby stocks, but I was just starting out and it was his second year so he had the advantage. Now he just bugs me all the time cause he wants to drive my car!" Kenny remains in an IMCA sanctioned hobby stock, Jared began in a hobby stock but moved to the IMCA sport mod class in July of 2007 and has remained there ever since.

The Hansen brothers race weekly at the "High Banks" of the Shelby County Speedway in Harlan, but also race, on occasion, at other tracks, including Buena Vista Raceway in Alta, the State Fair Speedway in Des Moines and at the Stuart Speedway. Kenny said, "I usually go to all the specials around the state like the stock car shootout in Marshalltown, the Iowa State Fair race in Des Moines, and the IMCA Super Nationals in Boone." Brother Jared follows a similar route in the sport mod division, making appearances at Shelby County Speedway, Buena Vista Raceway, Mineral City Speedway in Fort Dodge and the State Fair Speedway.

Jared and Kenny agree that the Shelby County Speedway is, by far, their favorite track but the IMCA Super National's, a weeklong racing event held each September in Boone, is their favorite event. Kenny stated, "There's just nothing like it."

When it comes to winning, the Hansen brothers are starting to collect the hardware. Kenny got his first win last year on a double feature night at the Shelby County Speedway, followed up by a win at a sprint car and hobby stock special at the Crawford County Speedway.

The 2009 season is proving even better. Kenny said, "This year I started off the season winning my first race at Des Moines opening night. I won two more races there. After that, I finished second quite a few times, usually to the defending



national champion."

Kenny has had some good luck at special races, too. He added, "Recently I went to the American Stock Car Shootout series and placed third in Alta. Then I went to Marshalltown and won there. I lead all 20 laps. That's my biggest accomplishment so far this year. The trophy was a big bronze eagle, which was pretty cool." Kenny's other accomplishments include top 5 finishes at several big specials, including Havoc on the High Banks in Marshalltown, and the Tiny Lund Memorial Nationals. He added, "And I've qualified every year for the IMCA Super Nationals in Boone."

Little brother Jared has seen similar success on the track. "Last season I picked up my first ever feature win at Black Bird Bend in Onawa. I also finished second in points at the Shelby County Speedway and second at the Tiny Lund Memorial. So far this year, I got my first ever IMCA win at SCS on May 30, then followed it up with another feature win on June 20 and my third win this season on July 11th."

When it comes to who the better driver is there's some obvious sibling rivalry, yet obvious respect at the same time. Kenny said, "I'm the better driver especially on a really dry track, but he never raced hobby (stocks) much so I'd probably smoke him in a hobby." He quickly added, "But in a sport mod I wouldn't stand a chance. I've hot lapped his car a couple times and those things are way different to drive. Maybe after a half a year of driving one I could take him, but right now I've gotta give it to him, he has it figured out." When Jared was asked who the better driver was he enthusiastically stated, "Me!" But quickly added, "Seriously though, if I had to get back into

a hobby stock, I would probably be the one at the back of the pack spinning out every other lap so he is definitely the better driver there. If he were to get into a sport mod, I could definitely beat him the first few times until he got it figured out, then it would be some good, close, door to door, paint trading going on."

Stock car racing is an expensive and time-consuming hobby. The Hansen brothers spend numerous hours in the shop preparing their cars for weekly races and special events and get generous support from friends, family members and sponsors. Kenny said, "I have to thank my crew guys and those that help me every week. My Dad, Otis, Jared, Bliss, Greg, Mykel, Bocker, Evan, Eric, Adam, Wahoo, Hess, Bauer, Austin, and everyone else that helps me. I'm sure there are a lot of people I forget about. My sponsors Jay Hansen Trucking, Nielsen Automotive, D & J Supply, Lance Meaie Construction, MTS & M K Mills Tree Service, Albertsen Farms, Sidewinder Chassis, Vic's Main Tap, Roundkick Gyms and Roundkick Promotions, Lumberjack Knickknacks, and JR Motorsports."

Jared said he sends his thanks out to, "Dad and Mom, Grandma and Grandpa, Shawn 'Bobo' Bohlmann, Otis, Kenny, Bliss, Greg, RaceDayPrints.com, Nielsen Automotive, Vic's Main Tap, Big Daddy's Bar, Jay Hansen Trucking, Roundkick Gym, Lumberjack Gifts, Finishline Racing Products, Erson Cams, and Arnold Motor Supply."

Both brothers agree that without their friends, family and sponsors, "There is no way we could be out there week after week."

While racing can be an overwhelming hobby at times, there are obvious rewards, beyond a few trophies and some prize money. Kenny said, "The best part has to be winning, makes you feel like you earned something after putting in all the hard work. It's neat to sign autographs for little kids who think you're the next famous racecar driver."

Jared echoes those sentiments stating, "[The best part is] The fans! Visiting with the people that cheer for you, either during intermission or after the races. The best ones are the little kids that really look up to you and think you are like a God or something, but all you really are is an everyday average person."

Off the track the Hansen's really are everyday average guys. Kenny is a student at Iowa State University, majoring in criminal justice and hopes to get a job in law enforcement somewhere in the area. Jared is employed at Arnold Motor Supply in Carroll.

As far as their future on the track, the brothers still have a lot they want to accomplish. Kenny stated, "As for racing, I'm not sure what next season will bring. I'm looking to switch classes either move up to a stock car or get a sport mod, but we will have to see how that pans out."

Jared said, "I someday hope to win a National Championship, qualify and hopefully win Super Nationals in Boone."

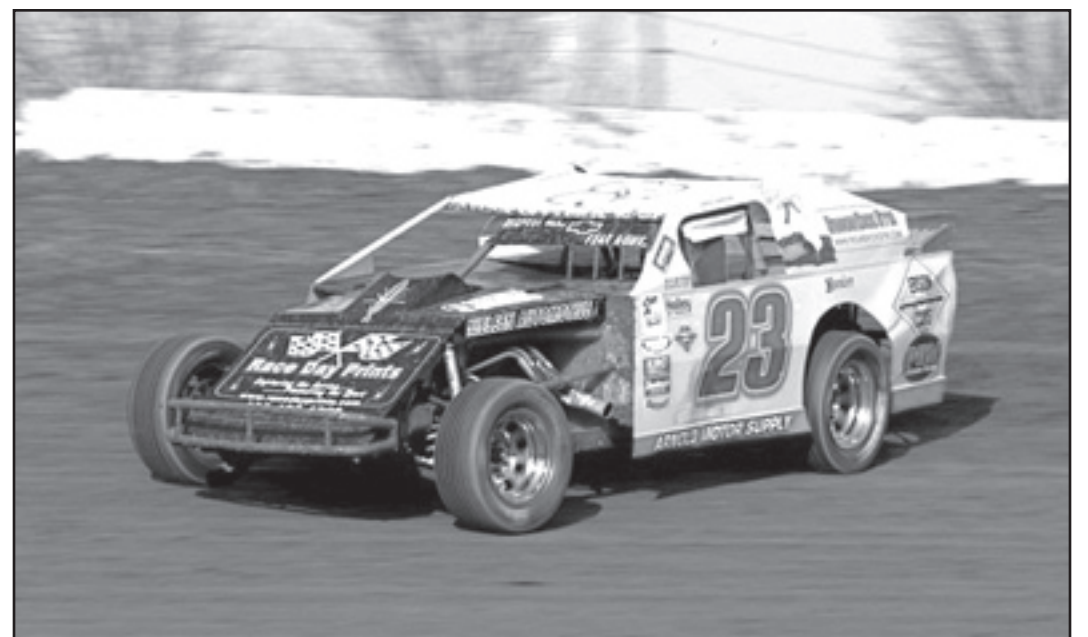
As for the immediate future, both brothers plan to be on the track buckled in and ready to race this Saturday night.

Photos courtesy of Race Day Prints



"The Best Part is Winning"

"The best part has to be winning, makes you feel like you earned something after putting in all the hard work. It's neat to sign autographs for little kids who think you're the next famous racecar driver," stated Kenny Hansen. Hansen and his brother Jared are finding success on dirt tracks all over the state of Iowa.



Average everyday person?

"The best fans are the little kids that really look up to you and think you are like a God or something, but all you really are is an everyday average person," said race car driver Jared Hansen. Jared and brother Kenny, both Audubon natives, having been racing since 2007.