

- [Home](#)
- [Jobs](#)
- [Homes](#)
- [Cars](#)
- [Classifieds](#)
- [Today's Paper](#)

## Inside racing: . . . to the grassroots

> Small talk with . . . Clint Smith

Rick Minter - Staff  
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Being a professional dirt track racer is the only job the 39-year-old Senoia resident has ever had. He followed in the tire tracks of his father, Roscoe Smith, who raced for years on dirt tracks across the South, and now has approximately 125 feature victories of his own. Last Sunday, Clint Smith won the Jimmy Thomas Memorial 100 at East Alabama Motor Speedway.

> On the status of dirt track racing: "It's in better shape than it has ever been in. We have such big shows now, but most of them are in the North and the West. The tracks in the South just don't seem to be able to handle the payouts we're used to getting."

> On spending his whole career on dirt: "I'm just not an asphalt racer. I'm at a level in dirt racing with the World of Outlaws that is as high as you can get on dirt. We just don't get the recognition that drivers in other series get."

> On the growth potential of dirt racing: "We've got a lot of TV coverage coming up, and if the right people can get their hands on it, our type of racing [dirt Late Models] can be as big as the Craftsman Truck Series."

> Around the tracks: The South Georgia Motorsports Complex, one of the best short track venues in America, will host its debut race on Saturday with a 250-lap Hooters Pro Cup event. The complex, located in Cecil near Valdosta, consists of an NHRA-style drag strip beside a half-mile oval that resembles Richmond International Raceway. A pyramid-shaped grandstand, topped by luxury suites, serves both tracks. South Georgia Motorsports Park is located off Exit 32 on I-75 South. For more information, see [www.sgmpracing.com](http://www.sgmpracing.com) or call 229-896-7000. . . . Clint Smith and many of Georgia's touring dirt trackers, including Ricky Williams and Shane Clanton, will travel to Columbus, Miss., tonight and Saturday for the Rebel Challenge, then move on Sunday to Gadsden, Ala., for the Bama Bash. . . . Jason Hogan, from Cleveland, Ga., led the last 50 of 200 laps to win the 29th annual Rattler at South Alabama Speedway and claim the \$10,000 winner's paycheck. "We've got one of the big ones under our belt now, and we've got a few more to chase," Hogan said. "To win this race, with as long as this race has been around and the kind of names that have won it, is just unbelievable." Former Rattler winners include Pete Hamilton, Buck Simmons, Russell Nelson, Billy McGinnis, Ronnie Sanders, Bobby Gill and Wayne Willard.

- [Monday](#)
- [Tuesday](#)
- [Wednesday](#)
- [Thursday](#)
- [Friday](#)
- [News](#)
- [Metro](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Living](#)
- [Opinion](#)
- [Home & Garden](#)
- [Movies & More](#)
- [Wheels](#)
- [Gwinnett News](#)
- [Front page](#)
- [image](#)
- [Gwinnett](#)
- [Weekend](#)
- [Northside](#)
- [Weekend](#)
- [Saturday](#)
- [Sunday](#)
- [Full index](#)

- [Nation/World](#)
  - [Main page](#)
  - [National](#)
  - [International](#)
  - [Iraq coverage](#)
  - [News Q & A](#)
  - [Science](#)
  - [Atlanta/World](#)
  - [Lottery](#)
  - [Print edition](#)
  - [Page 1 image](#)
  - [Archives](#)
  - [Photo store](#)
- [Metro](#)
  - [Main page](#)
  - [Traffic](#)
  - [The Vent](#)
  - [Maps](#)
  - [Election '06](#)
  - [Atlanta](#)
  - [Cherokee](#)
  - [Clayton](#)
  - [Cobb](#)
  - [Coweta](#)
  - [DeKalb](#)
  - [Fayette](#)
  - [Gwinnett](#)
  - [Henry](#)