

9.30.2009



# Newsletter Jessica Brunelli

## NASCAR Whelen Modified - 2009 "Rookie of the Year"

This year went well for the most part. I learned a lot and got a lot of experience in full sized stock cars. I loved driving the Modified. It was incredibly exciting. The car felt like a wild animal, hard to control with a mind of its own. I learned to respect the car. Happily, this year I not only had to handle disappointment, I got to feel accomplished, prideful, successful, and grateful. I was lucky enough to drive against some of the most experienced drivers on the West coast and I was able to study them and learn from them all season.

There were many ups and downs this year. This was the first time I openly had to deal with both gender and age discrimination. I have raced against adults since I was thirteen, but had never really had it thrown in my face like it was this year. You hear people tell you that it's going to happen, and you hear of people who have been through it, but none of it really prepares you for it. Honestly, I was angry, I was hurt, and I was confused, but then I got over it. Instead of pitying myself or trying to tell people how I deserved the same treatment, I decided to show them. In only my rookie year, I went on to win two trophy dashes and finish third in points. I finished in the top five, 10 out of the 15 races I competed in and I will be the youngest "Rookie of the Year" in the series history. I know my potential and I believe in me...it was a Great Season!

## A little NASCAR Whelen All-American Late Model seat time



Nascimento Motorsports had brought their Late Model to the track for a Friday test with one of their drivers. On Saturday, they rolled the Late Model out of the trailer and started prepping the car. They asked me to hop in it and see if the seat fit, close enough. "OK", they said, "we want you to shake the car down in the final practice" ...it had been almost a year since I was in a Late Model. I only got about 30 laps total, but I ramped up quickly. It was fun.

In August, they offered me to drive in two NASCAR Late Model races at Roseville. They had just finished painting the car white like my Modified and we decided to put the #3 on the car...it was so cool to race my first race in the Late Model with the #3 and everybody knew it was me. We qualified 11th, not bad for my first time out. I ended up finishing 11th in the first race and I held my own. The second race I got pushed into the wall and had to leave the track with 25 laps to go, I re-entered 19th, but fought back to a top ten finish. It was a great learning experience to drive in the NASCAR Late Model.

### Special thanks to:



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### Jessica selected for NASCAR— Drive for Diversity Combine

Jessica received the call from the ultimate leader in the auto racing industry; NASCAR Officials informed Jessica that she has officially been accepted into the 2009 NASCAR Drive for Diversity Combine which begins mid October. Drive for Diversity is the industry's leading development program for minority and female drivers and crew members. The Drive for Diversity program currently supports drivers in two of NASCAR's developmental series - the NASCAR Camping World Series and the NASCAR Whelen All-American Series. The Drive for Diversity Testing & Evaluation Combine presented by Sunoco brings together 25 of the country's top minority and female drivers for two days of on- and off-track competition. Drivers invited to the Combine are there for one reason - to showcase their skills in front of NASCAR officials, team owners and industry media.

### Special Thanks to all of my Sponsors and Supporters

Thanks to my fans and supporters who have followed me these many years, and whom I hope to continue to make proud in the years to come. Thanks to the drivers and crewmembers, who advised me and came to my aid in times where I didn't know what to do. Thanks to Eric and Mike Nascimento of Nascimento Motorsports for crewing on my Modified all year. Thanks to Dave Finklea for building my motors. Thanks to Ron Sutton and His Driver Development Program for all that he has taught me and all the opportunities he has offered me these past two years. Thanks to Lyn St. James and her Driver Development Academy for all the lessons I learned during her classes on and off track, and for selecting me this year as a recipient of her "Project Podium Grant" to assist me financially in my 2009 race season. Thanks to Pat Suhy from Chevy Racing, for taking time out of his very busy schedule to introduce me around to the NASCAR Cup Teams. Thanks to my Grandfather, for not only helping us out with financial support, but for always being at my races to support me emotionally. To everyone who supported me, financially or otherwise, thank you again... and I hope I made you proud.

We knew that the 2009 Season was going to be a very tough one financially, not only for my family, but for our sponsors as well. It was close, but we looked like we had enough to race the full season. Unfortunately, we ran into some problems along the way with a couple crashes and the worst when the timing chain broke, destroying the brand new engine. I really need to say thanks to Brian Morton, Mark Taylor and a special thanks to Charlie Bertucio for coming to our rescue when it looked like we were done for the season and helping us finish out the year strong, just when our finances were running out.

*Thanks again for all of your support, it means so much to me!*

*Jessica Brunelli*



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