

# Sportsman

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There are many different divisions in dirt track racing. The top divisions are Sprints, Late Models and Big Block Modified. These are the primary draw for the track and generally speaking, these divisions generate fan support and individual driver support. Driver recognition is at the heart of these classes.



The three top divisions look, feel and race differently. The winged sprints are fast, agile and requires real talent to race. The Big Blocks are cumbersome and lazy; they tend to lean deep into the turns. They have a sound all their own. The Super Late Models (open motors) , these cars are fast and they slide as they turn, The drivers are quick thinking and very talented. Holding these cars back is all part of the game. This kind of racing is not for the timid at heart. They don't race "nose to tail", so anything can happen and it often does...this is great racing.

Times have changed. Track promoters have sided with "sanction bodies". Sanction divisions often cross boundaries between organizations like World of Outlaws, MLRA, Lucas Oil Late Models and others. There are other sanction organizations including: IMCA , RUSH Dirt Cars, UMP Modifieds, Penn Ohio Pro Stocks and RUSH Sportsman. All of these and many others are designed and organized to offer local promoters a carefree racing package. I mean "carefree" eliminates the hassle of racecar rule legislation and politics. The sanction body collects money from drivers and then handles all the internal affairs that were once up to the track promoter. This leaves the track promoter to do his/her business without having to hire a technical staff to maintain the rules, support the drivers and deal with complaints. There are pros and cons, but I am not covering any of that here.

All racetracks have at least one support division. That comes in the form of wingless sprints, pro stocks, economy modified, four-cylinders FWD and the very famous pure stock division. There are other one "one of a kind" divisions, like dwarf cars, mini-stocks and pickups. These divisions, the Hornets and Chargers, they are generally the "grass roots" race teams that pull together on Saturday nights for some racing and a few beers afterwards. These classes are the most fun and in many cases, very popular among the fans. You don't see large payouts in these divisions, most racers run on "second hand" stuff and without them, the promoter has no "entry level" division to grow from. Grass Roots are the "little league" of racing and a lot of young teenagers graduate from "go-karts" to these entry classes. *As I did...I put my kid in a "Charger", and my wife and I footed the bill.*

The Sportsman Division is a clash between old and new. The new look more like Late Models. They are

built by professionals and pretty much require some heavy sponsorship. These “pro stocks” cost a lot of money. Don’t judge the book by its cover alone. Even the basic Sportsman racecar is floating 20 grand. The “pure stock” racecar is well under half that while the racing is pretty much as good if not better. The Sportsman Division, while it is considered a support class, a lot has to be said about how much support it really is. Many of these cars are far faster than the Crate Late Models that are supposed to rival these cars. If you are not an acute race-fan you will find it hard proclaiming one division from the other. [Yes, super lates, crate lates and pro-stocks all look alike.](#)

From the stands, there is very little to the eye that can tell them apart. However, lurking in the crowd is the “Street Stock”. Basically underneath the “Street Stock”, the “Limited Late” and the “Pro Stock”, these cars are pretty much identical. The fashion, the dress, the body, that is the only difference. The front end remains the GM Metric clip design. The cars are all square tube; the rear axle is solid and not active. The car requires separated coils from shocks and it must weigh 3000 pounds. The engines are generally 400 cubic inch or greater but they are limited intake angles and must remain steel block throughout, no aluminum.

While the Pro Stock body covers the entire tire (80 inches wide), the sportsman “Street Stock” is a 67 inch wide body. The tires hang outside the body panels. The “Pro Stock” chassis is usually wider than the stock GM original, but the “Street Stock” remains the same width between the frame rails as the original OEM from the late 80’s. The “Street Stock” is a less streamlined racecar. It has a full nose and tail, looks more like Granddad’s Regal or Cutlass. The “Pro Stock” looks like nothing you will see on the road.



[The Street Stocks race on 8 inch or 10 inch tires, they look like family drivers.](#)

The one important aspect of “Street Stock” racecars most general fans miss out on...the “Street Stock” racecars are built and maintained in the family garage, the barn or out back under a car port. These cars are fun to drive on race day, but the real comradery is the team, the family itself, getting together once a week to hash over the car and prepare for another event. These cars are “family affairs”. The pride in running well, turning wrenches, and maintaining tires is felt throughout the entire team, from youngest to Granddad. From the time race day comes around till the end of the night, there is an air of excitement from mom’s kitchen to the driveway. These “old school” racecars represent a time when families forgot the day to day grind and went all in for the race.

**This is what Sportsman Division is all about...**