

## PHOTO TRIVIA

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*...and he's outta there! What do you know about this spectacular wreck and how it relates to racing in NJ?*

Well, the track isn't in New Jersey – it's in Alabama. The division doesn't race in New Jersey. But the car and driver...

For dirt race fans in the New Jersey/Pennsylvania/New York/Delaware regions of the United States, Jimmy Horton needs no introduction. However, for the sake of history, we'll do it anyway.

James Horton III, from Folsom, NJ, is one of the state's favorite sons in dirt Modified racing. He was born July 3, 1956 in Trenton and grew up in Lebanon, NJ. He picked up the racing bug from his dad as a teenager and became an accomplished driver on the Sportsman circuit. George Smith of Statewide Racing saw his potential and added him to his team.

Horton won a Sportsman Championship in 1974 at Orange County Fair Speedway, a dirt track in upstate New York. He moved up to the Modified division and won that title in 1976, again at Orange County Speedway. He had particularly good luck at Bridgeport Speedway in Swedesboro, NJ, capturing the Modified title there eight times between 1975 and 2003.

Horton enjoyed a variety of racing opportunities in the 1980s and 1990s. He was a regular on the ARCA circuit. He made his debut in NASCAR's Busch Series in 1985. Two years later, Horton got his first ride in a Winston Cup race. Between 1987 and 1998, Horton made 48 Sprint Cup starts, ranking among the Top 40 drivers in three seasons. He was especially good in superspeedway races—a far cry from his mastery of dirt tracks.

Horton enjoyed great finishes in 1990. He won five of the first ten races on the ARCA schedule, including a win at Daytona Speedweek that year in the ARCA 200. A chance at the Big League came when Horton stepped in for Cup driver Darrell Waltrip when

Waltrip was injured that season. Horton finished 17th at Daytona's July race and 13th at Talladega.

In 1992, Horton took the checkered flag at Daytona again in the ARCA 200, in a car he bought from Waltrip.

One year later, Horton defied the odds by walking away from a horrible crash. During the DieHard 500 at Talladega Super Speedway (AL), he was clipped by Stanley Smith's car, hit three other cars, and went airborne, flipping over the retaining wall, rolling down a 30 foot embankment, taking out some chain link fence, and landing on an access road outside of the track. Amazingly, Horton walked away from the crash unharmed. When commenting on the wreck, Horton said, "You know you're in trouble when the first person to get to you after the crash is carrying a beer."



In 2002, Horton reached the 100-victory mark in dirt Modified racing. The Horton family continued its racing tradition when Horton's son, James IV, joined his father's Modified team.

Jimmy Horton continues to compete in Modified racing, showing the younger – *ahem* – newer racers the quick way around the track. His fan base is as strong as ever. Some fans have taken to honoring Horton with "memes" – photos with captions – on the internet. We leave you with a recent one that shows the result of the above trip out of the park:

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