

FASTBREAK



JAMIE BRADLEY/22CM

1ST-AND-3

STARS OF THE WEEK

1. **Devin Davidson (ABOVE).** The Highland Park freshman outfielder drove in a run with an RBI double in her team's loss to Mundelein at home on April 15.
2. **Grace Quirk.** Highland Park's seniior goalkeeper made numerous difficult saves during her team's loss to Mundelein.
3. **Ben Casey.** The Highland Park runner emerged victorious in the 800-meter race during a meet at Wolters Field in Highland Park on April 15.

Highland Park's David Levine making a mark in stock cars

KYLE POKREFKY, Staff Writer

When it comes to stock car racing, you don't typically think of the North Shore as a breeding ground for prominent names within the ranks of the sport.

However, Highland Park's own David Levine is proving that's not necessarily true.

Currently turning heads in the ARCA Racing Series — a Toledo, Ohio-based stock car series that has elevated the careers of multiple drivers currently in the NASCAR ranks — Levine presently sits fourth in the overall drivers standings and is leading the charge in the rookie of the year standings after three races.

Driving a No. 59 Gary Yeoman's Ford (a Daytona Beach, Fla.-based dealer) sponsored Ford Fusion for Lira Motorsports, Levine collected his best-ever career ARCA finish, a third-place result, in the April 11 Troop Aid 200 at Fairgrounds Speedway Nashville, a half-mile oval just south of Music City.

"We had a heck of a car all race long," Levine said minutes after climbing out of his race car. "Our Gary Yeoman's Ford Fusion was just wicked fast all day long. I believe we're rookie of the race too and I am beat tired right now. That was 200 laps of hard racing with a lot of great guys out there.

"To come home top-six with my best-ever ARCA finish three races into the

season is a great run and I'm real proud of the team."

First catching the racing bug after going go-karting with his father over a decade ago at what is now K-1 Speed in Buffalo Grove, Levine put in plenty of hard work to work his way into the driver's seat in the racing world in what was certainly no easy journey.

But, with racing history dating back to the inception of NASCAR running in his blood, it was almost destiny for the 2011 graduate from Lake Forest Academy to wind up in the seat of a race car.

"My dad and his whole family being from Atlanta, we definitely had the racing bug," Levine said. "Going back, his great-grandfather experimented with Indy-Car and running moonshine when NASCAR was started."

The journey into racing for Levine, however, proved to be a challenge considering the location of his upbringing.

"I definitely had that racing bug in me, but it's kind of hard to start racing in Chicago," he said. "There's really only one or two go-kart tracks. [Chicagoland Speedway] wasn't built until after I had started racing and obviously at that point I was too young to use it."

Levine's major breakthrough into the auto racing world came in the form of sports car racing after attending a sports car driving school out in Califor-



David Levine, a Highland Park native, has begun to make a name for himself in the ARCA Racing Series, which has launched the careers of multiple drivers now in the NASCAR circuit. LIRA MOTORSPORTS PR

nia. After impressing with his performance in class, Levine was asked to race in the IMSA Continental Tire Sports Challenge, racing a BMW 3-series in 2012 before racing a Ford Mustang for 2013 and 2014.

The 21-year-old's move into stock car racing was gradual as he made a lone start in the ARCA Racing Series in 2011 before making three further starts in the series in 2013 — including a start at Chicagoland Speedway in Joliet.

Now a full-time driver in ARCA, Levine's goals for the season are simple — to win rookie of the year and to finish as high in the points as he possibly can.

"I believe that's a realistic

expectation and a realistic goal," he said. "Obviously, we're two races into the season so we'll see how it goes."

With the ARCA Racing Series based in the Midwest, hometown fans of Levine have plenty of chances to see their driver in action with five races on the remaining ARCA schedule being four hours or less by car away from Highland Park.

If you're not a follower of stock car racing and to you it's just "that sport where they drive around in circles all day," Levine adds that if watching a full race on TV won't change your mind on the sport, being present at the track on race day certainly will.

"It's fast, it's fun and the racing is great," Levine said of the sport. "With short tracks like this like the majority of the ARCA schedule, you can come up into the stands and you can see absolutely everything.

"Even if you don't like racing or watching it on TV, if you can't get hooked on TV, come to the track and you'll definitely love it — especially with the ARCA Racing Series. Most of our tracks are in the Midwest so it's maybe a six-hour drive at the worst to come and get 200 laps of great racing."

Levine will be in action next in the Federated Auto Parts 200 at Salem Speedway in Salem, Ind. on Sunday, April 26.

LISTEN UP

"Dan's our No. 1. He pitches like that every time he comes out. Unfortunately, we haven't been able to put together seven innings for him."

Dan Casey — Highland Park baseball coach on Dan Wagner.

TUNE IN

Boys Tennis: The Giants will welcome CSL Crossover opponent New Trier to Highland Park.

• *Highland Park hosts New Trier, April 21, 4:30 p.m.*

INDEX

35 - Baseball

33 - Athlete of the Week

Fastbreak is compiled by Editor Jamie Bradley. Send any questions or comments to jamie@hplandmark.com.