

Racing for readers

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The Commercial-News in Danville, Ill., has used various sources over the years for its NASCAR coverage. When budget concerns prompted the Commercial-News to cancel its latest paginated service, Sports Editor Chad Dare turned to Member Choice's AP Complete content. Dare used AP Exchange to assemble stories, photos and a full slate of stats for the weekly page. He's been so happy with the Motorsports layout, he's thinking about scheduling it for a color page from now on.

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Reversal of fortune

Indiana native is trying to work his way back into the Sprint Cup

The Associated Press

WEST ALLIS, Wis. — David Stremme decided the only way to rebuild his racing reputation was to throw his career into reverse.

After losing his Sprint Cup ride at the end of last season, the South Bend, Ind. driver turned down other opportunities to drive in NASCAR's topseries in 2008. Instead, he's racing for Rusty Wallace's team in the second-tier Nationwide series. And it just might pay off.

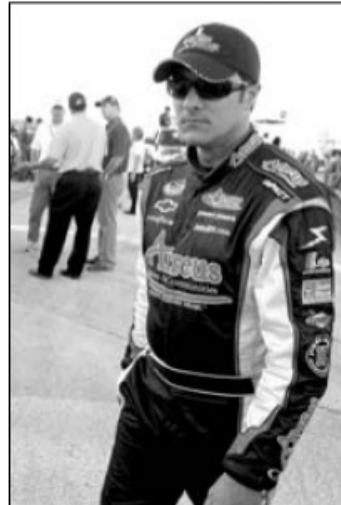
Teams are noticing Stremme's recent string of strong finishes, and he already is working on potential deals to return to Sprint Cup.

"A lot of people are talking, and we'll see what happens on the Cup side of things," Stremme said. "I feel very confident that I'll be back in the Cup series next year."

Stremme was considered one of NASCAR's top up-and-coming talents when he made the jump to Cup full-time in 2006. But he found himself out of a job late last season when team owner Chip Ganassi hired Indianapolis 500 winner Dario Franchitti to replace him in the No. 40 car in 2008.

The move was tough for Stremme to take. He finished a disappointing 24th in the points last season, but notes that teammates Juan Pablo Montoya and Reed Sorenson didn't fare much better — making Stremme suspect that he took the fall for organization-wide performance problems that have continued this season.

"I just think there's more than just one problem," Stremme said. "There's a lot of



Franchitti was injured, Stremme thought it was odd that team co-owner Felix Sabates called to thank him afterward but he didn't hear anything from Ganassi.

Especially since Stremme led the race twice before getting caught up in a wreck.

"That's the best that car's run all year, and I figured I'd at least get a phone call," he said.

Ganassi understands Stremme's frustration.

you can talk to him. And that's a little different on Chip's program, and I think he's just got a lot going on."

After learning he was out of a ride, Stremme said he spoke to three Cup teams but didn't consider any of them competitive enough. So he signed with Wallace, who agreed to field a second car along with the one driven by his son, Steve.

Stremme said his goal was to "get into the best situation that I can to kind of get my stock back up."

After some growing pains with his new team, Stremme has finished sixth or better in five of the series' last eight races, including second-place finishes at Talladega and Nashville.

"As good as he's done in this Nationwide car, it just woke a lot of people up," Wallace said. "It really has. I'm glad I was able to help him with that. But he has helped us twofold by getting some legitimacy back in our team."

Wallace won the Cup championship in 1989 and currently works as an analyst for ESPN's NASCAR coverage. Still, his team doesn't have the research and development budget to compete with major Cup teams that also run in the Nationwide series.

"But I still feel like we can beat them," Stremme said.

Perhaps. But before they can start thinking about checkered flags and championships, Wallace and Stremme must work through a snag: They don't have enough sponsorship to run a second car in every race for the rest of the season.

"We're working like hell trying to fill

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**"Every other service was NASCAR, NASCAR, NASCAR.
We have fans of other racing around here."**

Chad Dare
Sports Editor
The Commercial-News in Danville, Ill.

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