

# What the fans really come for

As appearing in the Lebanon Daily Record  
On Wednesday, June 29, 2005.

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The Daily Record

Let's face it –everyone likes a good wreck to watch on a speedway of any type. Add a little flame to the crash and it can make an ESPN highlight.

It might be good quality view for a race fan, but for a driver involved in an accident can be pretty memorable.

K.C. Prettyman, currently a Factory Stock driver at Lebanon I-44 Speedway, drove in the Bomber class during the 2004 racing season when he got into a severe crash. “Last year in that Bomber, I was going on the back straightaway and that Knudtson guy (Brandon) and I were going side by side and he crowded me out (of the track).” Prettyman said he hit tow other cars before his car began to flip. “About every time I'd hit, I'd black out from the whiplash. My head would hit my chest and I'd wake up real quick. I remember every hit because I remember (waking up) and flying in the air, then hit again.”

Like any other race track I-44 Speedway has had its share of memorable wrecks and crashes. Turns three and four of the race track were even notoriously known as “Calamity Corner.”

Not all crashes are free from serious injury. Early in the 2005 season at I-44 Speedway, veteran Factory Stock driver Jim Cox flipped his car into the infield, losing two fingers on his right hand. Cox was airlifted to the hospital from the speedway parking lot. Cox is currently back to racing in the Factory Stock class.

Late Model drive Brandon McCormick spend a night in the hospital for a broken arm. “Somebody spun out and I ended up getting into them and broke my arm, got caught in the steering wheel. I spent the night in the hospital, all that good stuff,” he said. McCormick said the doctor at the emergency room wouldn't even attempt to touch the break and kept him overnight to see an orthopedist the next morning.

Some drivers know that hindsight is often 20-20. Prettyman said his car flipped three times before it landed back on its wheels. He said he was able to watch his crash on video later. “It looked like a tornado, end over end and it never landed on its top,” he said.

McCormick also has had the opportunity to see things a little clearer after an accident. “I was at Dallas County Speedway and I was going around on a caution lap and I saw the breather was on fire,” McCormick remembered. “I started heading for the infield and everyone started looking, wondering, ‘What’s he doing?’ then it starting shooting flames out of there and I ran up to a track official that had a fire extinguisher – I drive it right up there to him. “As soon as the car stopped, I bailed (head first) out of there. They hit it with a fire extinguisher, then they picked me off the ground and I was walking by and they blew the fire extinguisher and breathed some of that stuff in.” Brandon doesn’t know how he got out of the car. He came out of his car without taking off the steering wheel—which he said he tried to reenact at his shop, but he said it was completely impossible to do. “That’s always your worst feat, catching on fire,” Brandon said.

Prettyman said one of the main things a driver feels when comes out of a wreck is thankfulness. “Thank God I’m alive, going through something like that,” Prettyman said. Prettyman said he learned a lot from the accident. “It’s kind of calmed me down,” Prettyman said. “I can watch the other guys more, I’m a little more cautious. I didn’t like the flip.”