

# SPORTS

## Former Chatham Resident Wins Southern Racing Championship

CHATHAM – Former Chatham resident Devin O’Connell, a 17-year-old junior at Daniel Hand High School in Madison, Conn. was recently crowned champion in the 2014 Allison Legacy Touring Series Champion.

O’Connell, who got his racing start on the Cape, finished third in the final race of the season on Nov. 1 at the Florence Motor Speedway in Timmonsville, S.C. He proved to be the best driver this season, winning 10 of 16 races and finishing in the top three in all 16 races.

“I am so happy to be able to win this championship,” O’Connell said through a press release. “Thank you to the Allison Brothers for a fantastic series. Thanks to my Dad for putting this car together week after week. Thank you Chatham Highlander Motel for the sponsorship. I had such a great experience driving this car for the past five years.”

O’Connell, the subject of a Cape Cod Chronicle feature this summer, has been racing in the southern Allison Legacy Series since 2012. Last year, he finished second in the point standings and won his first race, the Allison Legacy Challenge, at the final race of the season at Florence Speedway. In addition, O’Connell was the recipient

of the “Most Improved Driver Award” and he, along with his crew chief and father, won the Sportsmanship Award.

The Allison Legacy Series was started by the three sons of NASCAR legend Donnie Allison. The car is a three-quarter scale replica of a NASCAR and the series races at tracks in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. The Legacy cars have been a stepping-stone in the careers of many current NASCAR drivers including Joey Logano, Trevor Bayne, Regan Smith, David Reagan, and Brian Vickers.

A resident of Madison, Conn., O’Connell jumped at the chance to race in the southern series when his mother took a new job in Charlotte, N.C. a few years ago. Prior to that, he participated in the Allison Legacy North Series in 2010 and 2011, racing at tracks throughout New England. Another job change resulted in O’Connell’s family returning to Madison this past fall. In addition to racing in the Legacy series, O’Connell added Legend car racing to his 2014 season, racing for 860 Motorsports. Legend cars are five-eighths-scale race cars powered by a Yamaha motorcycle engine and are designed to resemble American automobiles from the 1930s and 1940s.



Devin O’Connell. COURTESY PHOTO

O’Connell has had an impressive rookie season, winning his fifth start on the road course at Charlotte Motor Speedway during the Winter Heat Race Series in January. His success continued at the U.S. Legends Winter Nationals at Auburndale Speedway in Winter Haven, Fla. in February, where he finished second in points, recording one win and four top-five finishes.

The highlight of O’Connell’s Legend season came at the Summer Shootout at Charlotte Motor Speedway, where he finished in the top five in seven of the 10 races with two wins and three second place finishes. His first win on June 16 was televised nationally on MAVTV.

O’Connell had the points lead heading into the final race of the Shootout when an unfortunate incident on the track resulted in a cut right front tire. The flat tire cost the young racer several laps as his car underwent repairs in the pits, resulting in a 15th place finish. The unfortunate turn dropped O’Connell to third place in points, but it was still an impressive effort for a rookie in the Summer Shootout.

O’Connell rebounded on Aug. 2 by picking up the Semi-Pro divisional win and the famed guitar trophy during Legendstock at Bethel Motor Speedway in White Lake, N.Y. In total, O’Connell won 12 Legends races in 32 starts during his 2014 season, including a win at Stafford Motor Speedway (CT) on Sept. 12 and a Semi-Pro divisional win at Seekonk (MA) on Oct. 3. His overall 2014 winning percentage in both the Legacy and Legend car divisions is an astounding 43.75 percent with an average finish of approximately third place (3.21 to be exact).

O’Connell, who experienced a five-race winning streak this season, has two more races in his Legend car to wrap up the 2014 season. He will be racing in the “Turkey Derby” at Wall Stadium in Wall, N.J. on Nov. 28 and 30. His final Legend race for the year is the U.S. Legends World Road Racing Championship at Virginia International Raceway on Dec. 7 in Alton, Va.

Plans for the 2015 season include racing a full season in the Legend car at tracks located in the northeast. O’Connell also plans to race the Winter Nationals in Orlando, Fla. in February, “The Battle of the Big Top” in April at Texas Motor Speedway, and the Summer Shootout at Charlotte Motor Speedway. O’Connell is also hoping to make a debut in a full-scale late model car.

### Monomoy Soccer Alumni Game On Friday

HARWICH – The annual Monomoy alumni soccer game will be held this Friday, Nov. 28 at the Monomoy Athletic Complex at 3 p.m. All former Chatham, Harwich and Monomoy players are invited to attend and participate. For more information, contact: Keith Clark at 508-930-5980 or email at keith.e.clark@gmail.com

## ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Yan Gomes broke a monumental barrier two years ago when he became the first native of Brazil to play in the major leagues. The former Chatham A’s standout and Cleveland Indians catcher made a little more history after recently winning the American League Silver Slugger Award.

Gomes, who batted .278 with 74 RBIs in 135 games, with a .313 on-base percentage and a .472 slugging percentage, is the first Cleveland catcher to outright win a Silver Slugger award, which recognizes the top hitters at each position in the two major leagues (in 2004, former Indians catcher Victor Martinez shared the honor with Ivan “Pudge” Rodriguez of Detroit).

Gomes’ 21 homers this season placed him third among AL catchers, while his 518 total plate appearances were the fourth-most for an AL backstop. He also provided a big presence behind the plate. Just ask Cleveland ace and Cy Young Award winner Corey Kluber (18-9, 2.44 ERA), who publicly credited Gomes for his success this season.

Drafted by the Toronto Blue Jays in the 10th round in 2009, Gomes was traded to Cleveland after the 2012 season. Throughout his three-year career, he’s compiled a .275 average with 36 home runs and 125 RBIs spread across 266 games.

A standout at the University of Tennessee, Gomes played in 111 games as a collegian and batted .313 with 131 hits, 13 home runs and 82 RBIs. The summer of 2008, between his sophomore and junior year with the Volunteers, Gomes came to the Cape and hit .313 with two homers and 15 RBIs in 17 games for the Chatham Anglers.

Gomes became the third former Cape Leaguer from the University of Tennessee since 2003 to earn Silver Slugger honors, joining Tennessee Baseball Hall of Famer Todd Helton (Orleans, 1994) and current New York Yankees third baseman Chase Headley (Cotuit, 2004). Helton won in 2000 and 2003 with the Colorado Rockies, Headley captured the prize in 2012 as a member of the San Diego Padres.

In 2013, Gomes helped the Brazilian national team qualify for its first-ever berth in the World Baseball Classic by leading them out of the WBC qualifying round. Gomes and the Indians finalized a six-year, \$23 million extension on March 31, the day before the MLB season began.

Gomes grew up in São Paulo, Brazil before he and his family moved to Miami when he was 12. Gomes is married to Jenna Hammaker Gomes, the daughter of former All-Star pitcher Atlee Hammaker.



YAN GOMES

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK IS SPONSORED BY

# Helping you pursue your financial goals.

## STIFEL

### Investment Services Since 1890

Stifel, Nicolaus & Company, Incorporated | Member SIPC & NYSE | www.Stifel.com

Stocks • Bonds • Mutual Funds • Annuities • CDs  
IRAs • Retirement Plans • UITs • Money Market Funds  
Cash Management • Financial Planning

(508) 432-2079 or (866) 779-2412

105 Route 137, Suite A | Harwich, Massachusetts 02645