

Silas, New Focus in 2009; 4th in Points and Way Confident Headed to Kentucky Speedway

SPARTA KY (4-30-09) - In cars fielded by Andy Hillenburg, Stuart, Florida's Bryan Silas finished ninth in championship points in his rookie season back in 2007. Not bad. With high hopes from there, Silas, with the same team, sputtered in 2008, finishing 12th overall in points. Now fast-forward to 2009 where Silas is headed in a different direction.



"Our team chemistry is so much better this year," Silas said. "We've always had a decent team, but our communication is much better now. We know what each other is thinking. It's very cool."

Whatever is going on, it's working. Silas, after four events, is tied for fourth in points with Patrick Sheltra headed to Kentucky Speedway for the next event on tour - the Drive Smart Buckle-Up Kentucky 150 Saturday, May 9.

Silas also has a new crew chief to connect with - veteran Cal Boprey, whose methodical and mathematical methods are making things happen.

"Cal is phenomenal. Our communication level is the best I've ever had with a crew chief. He's got a very unique style and approach to the whole thing. He's not one to yack your ear off; he's more the silent type. He'll stand there and stare at the car, going over mathematical equations in his head - anything that makes the car go faster."

And there's no doubt that Silas is faster on-track this year. The driver of the no. 11 Rockingham Speedway-Oasis Outsourcing Ford just finished a career-best fourth at Rockingham Speedway in the Carolina 200. Prior to that, he was eighth on the Salem short-track; and finished 12th at Talladega just last Friday.

"I've gotten a lot smarter as a driver too. I'm starting to figure out that you can't race every lap like it's a qualifying lap."

Silas is also quick to point out that his comfort level is on the rise regarding all the different types of tracks that ARCA competes on.

"I think it (experience) absolutely makes a difference. Now I have a general idea of what's coming at me with all these tracks. So if I'm not handling well in practice, I know more what to expect during the race."

Like most fulltime racers, Silas's favorite track is the next one on the schedule. However, he's keenly aware of the tracks that present greater challenges for the 21-year-old driver.

"I've always struggled at MIS a little, and I don't know why. But I think Cal's going to help me get past that this year; I really do. I'm really confident that even on my weak tracks, we're going to run great.

"Salem's actually, if I had to choose, one of my best tracks. I've always run good there, and we get better every time.

"And as far as the intermediate tracks go, I've always run good at Kentucky; it's definitely a favorite of mine. Track configuration-wise, it's a lot like Kansas and Chicagoland, but I seem to run better at Kentucky. I have the line down better at Kentucky; it fits me like a glove."

Unfortunately, Silas, unlike many of his title-contending counterparts, didn't get the chance to participate in the open test Wednesday at Kentucky.

"Funny story actually. I was driving up to Kentucky Speedway from Concord (NC) yesterday, got within an hour from the track, when the crew called and said they would not be coming. At the time, it looked like a strong possibility that it'd be raining all day, but they got the whole test in. It's too bad, though. It would have been nice to have had the opportunity to test. I feel like we may be chasing it a bit compared to some of the rest when we go back for the race."

Regardless, Silas is starting to talk about that "W" word - winning.

"I've always felt like I could win; but honestly, in my first two years in the ARCA RE/MAX Series, I thought if it did happen, it'd be more out of luck than anything. This year, with how things are going between me and Cal (left), and the whole crew, I feel like I can drive to the front.

"I just need to drive smart 22 races in a row. I still have a lot to learn, but I've definitely gotten smarter over the off-season. I know I have really good people around me. I know our communication is better than it's ever been. A win and a championship are possible."

Silas will get his next chance for that career-first win next weekend at Kentucky Speedway. The Drive Smart Buckle-Up Kentucky 150, the 18th appearance of the ARCA RE/MAX Series at Kentucky since its 2000 debut, is scheduled to roll off at 8:00 PM ET Saturday, May 9. Practice and Menards Pole Qualifying presented by Ansell precede the race action Saturday afternoon. The event will feature live timing and scoring at ARCARacing.com as well as live streaming audio of all the on-track activity.