



## Ickler Becomes an Instant Success in Camping World East This Season by Mike Twist Move From Out West Produces Three Victories Heading into This Week's Finale

Brian Ickler didn't really come out of nowhere to win three events this season in the NASCAR Camping World East Series. After all, he also won three NASCAR Camping World West Series races last season for the powerhouse team of Bill McAnally Racing.



Ickler's #15 CW East ride. (51 Photo)

So it just seemed that Ickler showed up at the beginning of the season and started to run up front with his #15 cars.

However, Ickler can be considered somewhat of an overnight success in the East Series because he put together his family-owned team in what was not really much longer than overnight. Ickler announced his plans to head East in the off-season and showed up for the season opener well prepared and well ready to go.

"Last year, I drove the NAPA car for Bill McAnally and I was offered that ride to return to this year in the West Series. I held off for the last minute to see if I was going to do that. I had the opportunity to race an East Series car at Dover last year. That went well and at the last minute, I told Bill that I wasn't going to return to his team. We came back and built two cars to run the [East] Series and here we are.

"I started off and we actually built that first car to run Dover in Johnny Sauter's garage. Johnny helped us out and he's got a nice shop behind his house with machine tools and everything. We built that car there and started from there. Eventually we got a

shop and a hauler. We started slowly from there. Well, I say slowly, but this was all in the period of about a month."

Ickler sits ninth in the Camping World East Series heading into this weekend's season finale at Stafford Motor Speedway (CT). He's second to champion Matt Kobyluck when it comes to the number of victories scored in 2008. Ickler has three to Kobyluck's four. Like Kobyluck, Ickler enjoys the backing of a well-funded team. Also like Kobyluck though, their teams are not a Cup affiliated ones. There's no wind tunnel time, notebooks from the Cup shop or engineering staff to make their cars go quicker.

"We don't have an engineering staff or access to a wind tunnel," said Ickler. "We just have a small, but great, group of guys in the shop who work really well together. They've been getting it done too."

One of the most influential guys in the shop, and at the track, is racing veteran Joe Shear, Jr. - who has been able to help out Ickler with both his knowledge and racing contacts.

"Joe is a consultant for us and he got me hooked up with Johnny [Sauter]," said Ickler. "Joe has won with everyone he's been with and he is a big asset to our team. The car's are awesome and he is definitely good at what he does."

Ickler won in only the second CW East race of the season at Iowa Speedway. It was an East/West combination race that attracted the best teams and drivers with Camping World Series equipment. Even Kasey Kahne was in the race. But Ickler surprised the field by beating them all. But was that a surprise to Ickler?

"You know, it really wasn't because we ran really well at Greenville [the season-opening race]," said Ickler. "The results didn't show it, but we had led a bunch of laps there. But we burnt up a right rear tire. So we knew that we had good cars. I'm not sure that my knew our intermediate track program was that good. But it ended up being great. There

were 60 something cars that showed up for that race, so there wasn't any lack of competition."

Competition is one thing that Ickler has had to adapt to in his first full season out East.

"It's mostly the caliber of drivers and equipment...mostly the equipment," said Ickler of the differences between the Camping World East and West Series. "There are DEI cars here, Santerre cars, Childress cars. The equipment is a big thing and so are the tracks that we run on. I get to race at Dover, Watkins Glen and Loudon. We get to go to some bigger and nicer racetracks in the East Series."

Another difference out East is the networking that Ickler has been able to do. Off the track, he is friends with drivers from not just the Camping World East Series, but PASS Super Late Models and even the NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series as well. There are a lot of young up and comers in the Charlotte, North Carolina area and that has forged some friendships for Ickler.

"I didn't have any friends in racing on the West Coast. It wasn't big out there and I come from off road racing. Out here, Alex Hogg and I



Ickler (#15) has been hanging tough this year even against Cup-affiliated teams like DEI (represented here by Jeffrey Earnhardt's #8 car). (Jamie Williams Photo)

I didn't have any friends in racing on the west coast. It wasn't big out there and I came from off-road racing. Out here, Alex Haase and I have become great friends. He lives with Kyle Busch, so Kyle has been influential too. And I've become friends with Corey [Williams]. So it's been a good year where I've met some good friends."