

Successful race car team promotes ethanol

By TOM C. DORAN

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Race car driver Mario Clouser is not only a leader in United Midget Auto Racing Association National Midget Series points this year, but also a leader in promoting ethanol.

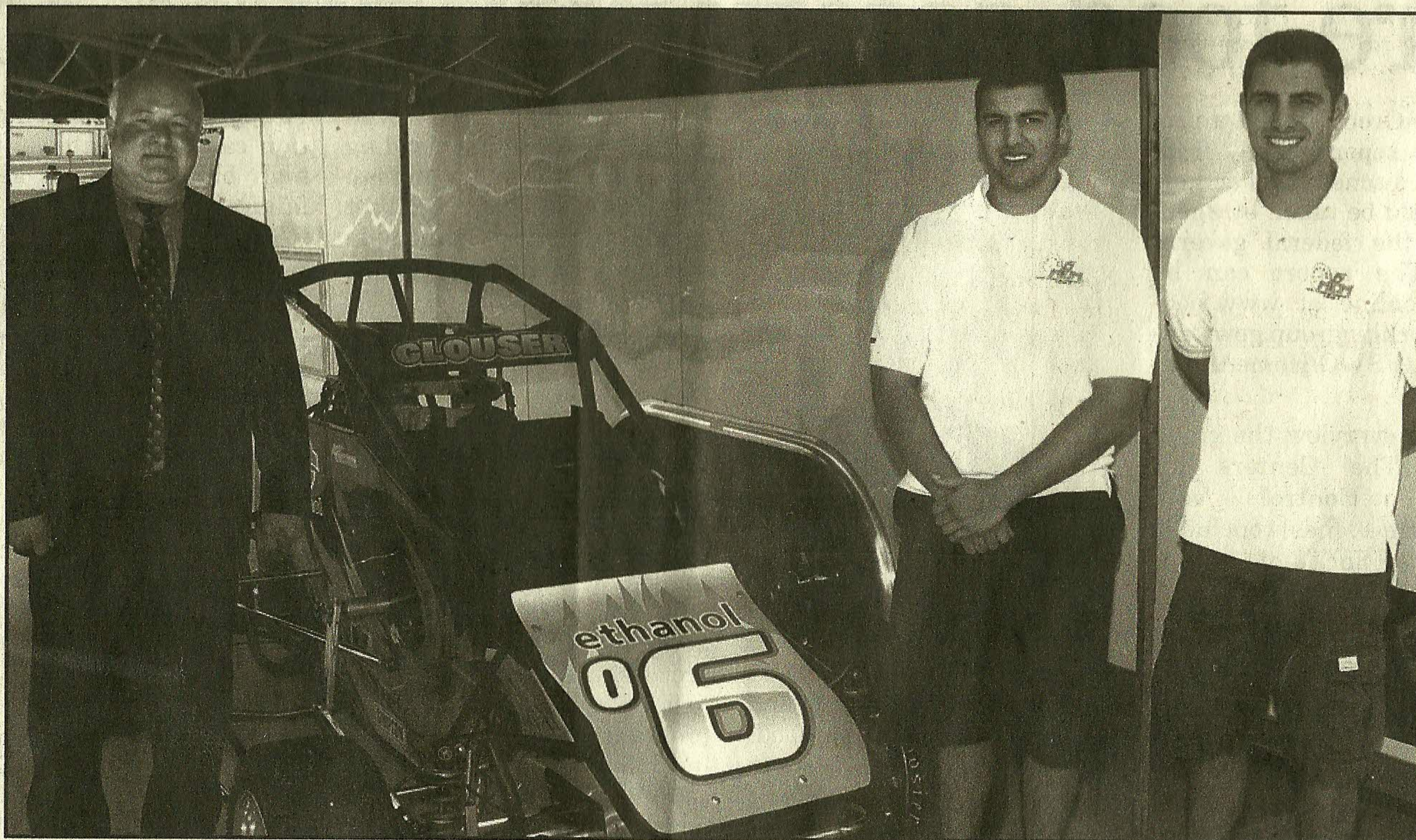
The Clouser Motorsports team is pushing for the use of ethanol in the association, similar to what the Indy Racing League did three years ago.

Mario Clouser and his brother, Dominic, had their car on display at the Illinois Corn Growers Association headquarters recently and have been conducting ethanol blend tests for the past few years. Team sponsors include E85 Ethanol and the Illinois Corn Marketing Board.

“The ethanol has been working pretty good for us,” Mario Clouser said. “We’ve been doing a lot of testing with it in practice and we’re working real hard to get (United States Auto Club), our sanctioning body, to convert the series over to ethanol.

“The IRL series already switched over a few years back, and that’s kind of what sparked our interest to do it.

“Both our series and theirs used to run on methanol, and we’re still on methanol, but the ethanol is obviously something that’s produced in our country and by our farmers,



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Rob Elliott (left), Illinois Corn Growers Association president, checks out the Mario Clouser Motorsports race car while it was display recently at the ICGA headquarters in Bloomington, Ill. Mario Clouser (right) and his brother, Dominic, were on hand to discuss their efforts to promote and incorporate ethanol in racing.

and that’s something that we want to try to incorporate in our racing,” Clouser said. “We’re racing here in the United States, so why not use a U.S. fuel to race on.

“That’s what we’re really work-

ing hard to try to get is to get USAC to incorporate ethanol into their series and hopefully be able to boost the economy around here a little bit, as well.”

Clouser was asked if he sees any

difference in the car’s performance when it is fueled by ethanol.

“We’ve seen a little bit of a difference. The ethanol burns a fair bit hotter, which has been a struggle for us, but we’re working really

hard to get the fuel dialed in to where it is not too much different,” he said. “It is just something that takes a little bit of time, but it’s worth the effort for us.”

While the Clousers aren’t farmers, they have always appreciated agriculture and its importance.

“We’re from a small town and obviously there are a lot of farmers around there and farming is real big,” said Mario Clouser, who resides in rural Auburn.

“So it is something that we’ve been around our whole lives, and something that when IRL did it, we saw a good opportunity for us to do something about it also.”

Racing has been a part of Mario Clouser’s life since he began racing quarter midgets as a 5-year-old. He moved up to the Ford Focus Midget – Midwest Pavement Series in 2006 after 11 seasons with the quarters.

In 2007, he competed in the UMARA/USAC Ford Focus Midget Car Series at Grundy County Speedway, and he moved up to the UMARA/USAC National Midget Series last year where he won UMARA Rookie of the Year honors.

Mario Clouser Motorsports will compete in the Illinois state championship Aug. 15 at Grundy County Speedway in Morris in hopes of maintaining the series lead, while keeping the idea of ethanol on the front burner.