

I asked Dale Shaw Sr. if his son DJ was going to win as many races as Dale Sr. has. “Nope” Dale said “He’s going to win more.” At just 18 years old, Dale “DJ” Shaw Jr. is well on his way to making his father’s statement come true.

It would be hard to argue that DJ’s racing talent isn’t at least partially genetic; his father is Dale Shaw Sr., a legendary New England racer and car builder with 226 career Camping World East Series starts, 19 wins, 89 top-fives, and 134 top-tens along with a championship in 1994. Dale Sr. has also raced competitively with wins and top finishes in the Pro All-Star Series, The American-Canadian Tour, The NASCAR Nationwide Series and The NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series. He is also a two-time NHMS track champion as well as the Maine Late Model State Champion in 1993. Further down the family tree you’ll find grandfather Steve Blood with 46 career feature wins and a championship at Oxford Plains Speedway in Maine.

DJ’s first memories of his father’s racing career come from the 1995 Busch North season. Just 5 years old at the time, it was nearly a decade later before DJ decided to follow his father and grandfather and become a racer. “I had a go-kart in the shop for two years and DJ never expressed any interest in it. Then one day he did and we put him into that.” Dale Sr. says.

“I started racing in 2002 at Boxshop Speedway in the Intermediate Blue Plate division of go karts” DJ says. Success followed over the next 3 years, with DJ lapping the entire field to win his first race and having one season where he won 17 of 18 races, beating out both adults and other teenagers for the checkers.

In 2006, DJ made the leap from a go-kart to a full-size late model and a full season campaign at White Mountain Motorsports Park in NH. There were, of course, some struggles during the year, but DJ kept himself in contention for the championship all year, grabbing his first late model win in the final races of the season and then clinching the overall championship in his rookie campaign by a mere 3 points over veteran late model driver Stacy Cahoon.

In storybook fashion, DJ’s winning the track championship was not the only Shaw accomplishment that evening. In the accompanying PASS North feature, Dale Sr. went on to win, fighting off Cassius Clark in a controversial finish. “I didn’t even want to race after my son won the championship,” Dale Sr. said afterwards. “He way exceeded my expectations in his first year in a Late Model

coming right out of go-karts. I just find it unbelievable. I am so proud of him. No matter where I would have finished, it wouldn't have mattered, but I wanted to show him that the old guy could still drive."

Later that season young DJ became the youngest qualifier in the history of Thunder Road's Milk Bowl at Thunder Road. His learning at the tough track was costly, though, when a crash in segment one of the three segment race ended his day. "It's not the way I wanted to end my Milk Bowl that's for sure" he said afterward. "I'm glad I was able to take the start. I'm just going to have to figure out how to avoid that front stretch wall the next time."

At the 2007 PASS opener at Beech Ridge, The Shaw men finally got to race together, forming an all-Shaw front row in their qualifying heat. DJ went on to win that heat race with his father finishing in 2nd, putting DJ on the pole for the feature. DJ finished 10th in the feature after racing his father, who finished 26th.

"It was fun," said DJ after the race. "The car was a little loose at the start but then it came to me. Then I made a rookie mistake. I overdrove it for a little while and it blistered the right front. The last 30 laps, I had nothing left. That last restart, I gained a couple of spots, but that was all that I had left. Dad didn't have as good of a car as I did, but it was still fun."

Despite his poor finish in the race, Dale Sr.'s focus was on his son. "I'm really proud of DJ." he said after the race. "I drove the wheels off my car to try and race him, but I just couldn't do it. He did an awesome job with a converted ACT car. He came out and showed his father how to do it. It was my first race with my son and maybe I should quit now because he beat me his first time trying. We'll see where my racing goes. My priority now is to help DJ race."

Memorial Day weekend in 2007 brought DJ his first win in a major race event, beating veteran driver Mike Rowe in the Coastal 200 at Wiscasset Raceway in Maine. At just 17, DJ held off a driver who was winning races and championships long before DJ was even born.

"That little kid can drive!" said Rowe after the race. DJ was equally complimentary of his challenger. "I was nervous with Mike Rowe beside me. He knows every trick in the book, but I knew I had a good car. He raced me clean, but he made me earn it."

For the rest of 2007 DJ ran a Pro Stock weekly at Beech Ridge Speedway in Maine, where he finished sixth overall in points. There were also a handful of PASS starts, an Oxford 250 attempt and a \$5,000 win in an open Late Model show at Lee, NH. "I didn't have a great year 2007 but we started to turn things around at the end of the year, so I was just looking for seat time. I was excited to go down there."

An off-season trip to Speedfest 2008 at USA International Speedway in Florida did not yield a win but did give the young driver one thing he wanted; "Its good competition from all across the country and seat time is what I needed." says DJ. No wins but a lot of experience was gained on the winter trip south.

The start of the 2008 New England racing season, however, marked another step up in the teenager's life. Graduating from high school seemed to coincide perfectly with graduating from home track racing to a major touring series. Continuing to race for car owners Julio and Rita Miglioli from Quebec, DJ set his sights on a full PASS North season. In a pre-season press release, DJ was quoted as saying "The PASS Super Late Models are fast and fun to race and the competition is tough. PASS racing will give me the chance to gain more experience in long distance races at tracks that are mostly new to me. The Miglioli's have given me a great opportunity. Our goals for 2008 are to win two races and have a top five in points as well as Rookie of the Year. I would enjoy a win at any track but to win at White Mountain or Beech Ridge would be special to me because they have been my home tracks so far in my career."

Tackling the PASS North schedule in 2008 has not been without its challenges for the Conway, NH teenager. However, he has one thing that other drivers (many several times DJ's age) don't have; Dale Shaw Sr. in their pit. "For so many things, my dad has already been there and done that" says the younger Shaw. "So when it comes to giving me tips and setting up the car my learning curve was shortened. My dad has been the crew chief and car builder for every race I have ever been in. Even when he races against me he helps with the chassis set-up at the track."

Dale Sr. is not just builder and crew chief, but also DJ's #1 fan. "I'm surprised at the patience he has" says Dale Sr. "Where he goes in his racing depends on how much DJ wants to succeed and how hard he works to make that happen. He's a hard worker and fun to be around. I enjoy being his dad but also being his crew chief."

The balance between older and younger racers is evident in DJ. "I look up to guys like my dad and Mike Rowe, and respect them because of what they have done in the sport." says DJ. "When it comes to advice I usually turn to my father but Mike Rowe has also been helpful too, giving me tips and walking around the track with me to show me the line. That really helps me a lot."

"The biggest challenge for me in racing is to keep my confidence up when I have a bad race." DJ says. "I try not to have many bad races but when it happens it's hard for me to keep my confidence up for the next race. I am very competitive and I always want to be the best every time I hit the track."

"Since the start of my career I haven't ever really thought about doing anything but racing." DJ says. "So far in my career I don't feel that I would change anything."