

# PENNTRUX

The Voice of the Trucking Industry in Pennsylvania

## Truck Driving Championships

Meet all of this year's winners including  
Grand Champion Brian Smeltzer from  
R.H. Crawford, Inc.



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## PA Truck Driving Championships

*Record-breaking 2014 Pennsylvania Truck Driving Championships Showcased the Best of the Best*

**B**rian Smeltzer, a professional driver with R.H. Crawford Inc., achieved what no other professional driver has done in 29 years of competition. He had a nearly perfect score, 290 out of a possible 300, in the skills portion of the 2014 Pennsylvania Truck Driving Championships and Step Van Driving Championships. This is the highest score for the driving skills portion ever achieved by a driver competing in Pennsylvania. Combined with his high scores in the written exam and the pre-trip inspection, Smeltzer earned the title of 2014 Pennsylvania Grand Champion. He won first place in the flatbed class.

Held June 13 and 14 at Harrisburg Area Community College, the Truck Driving Championships bring the best truck drivers in Pennsylvania together for the chance to show off their skills and promote safety. This year, 127 drivers

participated, bringing their accident-free driving records, knowledge and professionalism to the forefront.

Kevin Stewart, PMTA's safety director, said, "The drivers here really have an opportunity to showcase their talents, to compete against each other. There's some team pride here. A lot of carriers have multiple drivers in the competition."

The drivers completed the pre-trip inspection competition and written examinations on Friday, June 13. Competitors also did a walkthrough of the driving course. A torrential downpour necessitated a 30-minute pause in the schedule, and the nonplussed drivers continued with the pre-trip inspections despite having to kneel and crawl through deep puddles. Saturday morning was clear and cool with a strong breeze to dry the course. At 8:15 a.m., Baylee Zimmerman, daughter of PMTA member Randy Zimmerman of Lehigh Career

and Technical Institute, sang the National Anthem. Last year's Grand Champion, Leo Flack of A. Duie Pyle, Inc., carried the flag, and then the driving began.

The competition went smoothly and quickly on the two courses designed by Dave Foughty of Con-way Freight, Dean Yockey of Pitt Ohio, Ken Martin of Lawn Care Distributors and Steve Freysz of Lester R. Summers, Inc. By 2:00 p.m., all drivers had completed the course. Several hours later, the drivers lined up for the traditional Parade of Champions where each contestant announces his or her name and company.



*Joe Drugo from Ward Transport and Logistics, a judge for the TDCs, explains the course.*

Once dinner had been served, TDC chairman Mark Laurusevage of Great West Casualty Company introduced PMTA board of directors members present and asked PMTA's chairman of the board, Rebecca Summers, to present the

annual Gogolin Safety Award for the outstanding safety professional. The Gogolin Safety Award was developed in 1972 to recognize the person in the trucking industry who has an exceptional record of contributions in safety. A committee of judges who are not PMTA members selected Steve Freysz from Lester R. Summers, Inc., for the Gogolin Safety Award this year. Freysz is a valuable asset to the safety of the Pennsylvania roadways through his patience and understanding in difficult situations, his ability to teach and convey a safe driving message, and his dedication to following current and upcoming rules and regulations. He volunteers his professional knowledge at numerous driver safety meetings, high school drivers' education classes and the Pennsylvania State Police familiarization programs. He's been involved in PMTA's Safety Management Council since he joined Summers Trucking in 2004,



*Puddles or no puddles, to do a proper pre-trip inspection, you have to look under the truck, in the wheel wells, and around the tires.*

was the TDC chairman in 2012, organized the first Safety Day this year, and is active in the Share the Road program, among other safety activities.

The winners in each class are as follows:

#### **Three axle**

1. Scott Mullen, Con-way Freight
2. Chris Sutton, UPS Freight
3. Kevin Miskiewicz, YRC Freight

#### **Four axle**

1. Will Chrvala, A. Duie Pyle, Inc.
2. Dean Herb, Giant Food Stores
3. Jason Kise, Pitt Ohio



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#### **Five axle**

1. Paul Waite, Friendlys Ice Cream
2. Tom Allison, Walmart
3. John Burns, R.H. Crawford, Inc.

#### **Flatbed**

1. Brian Smeltzer, R.H. Crawford, Inc.
2. James Bauer, Klapec Trucking Co.
3. Daryl Miller, Lift, Inc.

#### **Sleeper**

1. Stephen Altland, R.H. Crawford, Inc.
2. Michael Zinz, Klapec Trucking Co.
3. Steve Allison, Walmart

#### **Straight Truck**

1. Robert Kircher, Pitt Ohio
2. Michael Palovich, FedEx Freight, Inc.
3. Thomas Yerkes, Pitt Ohio

#### **Tank Truck**

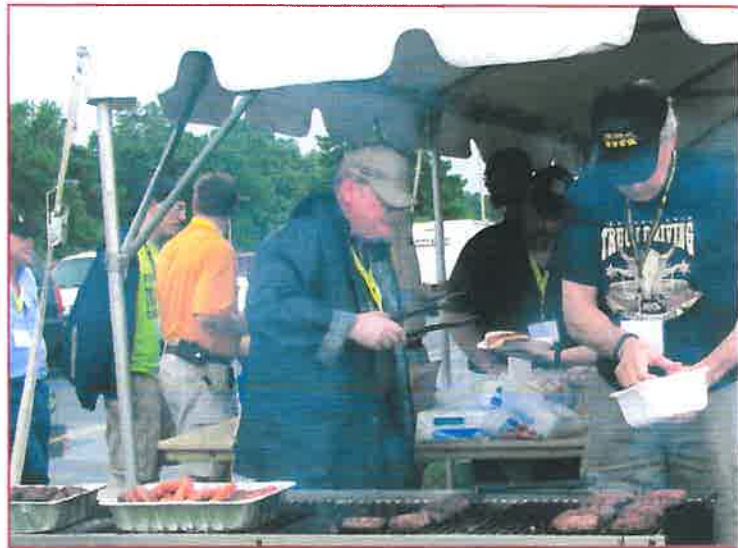
1. Ronald Fitzgerald, UPS Freight
2. Ed Koser, Giant Food Stores
3. William Bennett III, UPS Freight

#### **Twins**

1. Michael Wallis, Con-way Freight
2. Darryl Green, Old Dominion Freight Line
3. Robert Emig, UPS Freight

#### **Step Van**

1. Kenneth Fream, FedEx Express
2. Tim Stevens, FedEx Ground
3. Robert Burnett, FedEx Ground



*Steve Freysz, Lester R. Summers, Inc., and Doug Marcello, Marcello and Kivisto, cook lunch for the judges and volunteers on Saturday. They have been the official lunch chefs for the TDCs for at least 10 years.*



Winners in the three axle class are, from left, Chris Sutton, UPS Freight, second place; Scott Mullen, Con-way Freight, first place; Kevin Miskiewicz, YRC Freight, third place.



Winners in the four axle class are, from left, Will Chrvala, A. Duie Pyle, Inc., first place; Dean Herb, Giant Food Stores, second place; Jason Kise, Pitt Ohio, third place.



Winners in the five axle class are, from left, Paul Waite, Friendly Ice Cream, first place; Tom Allison, Walmart, second place; John Burns, R.H. Crawford, Inc., third place.



Winners in the flatbed class are, from left, Brian Smeltzer, R.H. Crawford, Inc., first place; James Bauer, Klapac Trucking Co., second place; Daryl Miller, Lift, Inc., third place.



Winners in the sleeper class are, from left, Steve Allison, Walmart, third place; Stephen Altland, R.H. Crawford, Inc., first place; Michael Zinz, Klapac Trucking Co., second place.



Winners in the straight truck class are, from left, Thomas Yerkes, Pitt Ohio, third place; Robert Kircher, Pitt Ohio, first place; Michael Paolovich, FedEx Freight, Inc., second place.



*Steve Freysz from Lester R. Summers, Inc., received the 2014 Gogolin Award for achievements as a safety professional. Rebecca Summers, president of Lester R. Summers and chairman of PMTA's board of directors, shown at left, presented the award.*



*Brian Smeltzer from R.H. Crawford, Inc., was named 2014 Pennsylvania Grand Champion. He received the highest score ever in the driving skills portion of the competition. Presenting the trophy is Mark Laurusevage of Great West Casualty Company, chairman of this year's Truck Driving Championships.*



*Drivers wait for their turn to do the pre-trip inspection.*



*Trucking companies set up camp for the day, giving friends and family shelter, food and fellowship.*



*As soon as a driver completes the course, volunteer runners take their scores and place them on the score sheets displayed on the side of the trailer.*



Winners in the tank truck class are, from left, William Bennett III, UPS Freight, third place; Ronald Fitzgerald, UPS Freight, first place; Ed Koser, Giant Food Stores, third place.



Winners in the twins class are, from left, Robert Emig, UPS Freight, third place; Michael Wallis, Con-way Freight, first place; Darryl Green, Old Dominion Freight Line, second place.



Winners in the step van competition are, from left, Kenneth Fream, FedEx Express, first place; Tim Stevens, FedEx Ground, second place; Robert Burnett, FedEx Ground, third place.



The team from R.H. Crauford, Inc., won the large team trophy. Team members are, from left, Brian Smeltzer, flatbed; Clinton Grimm four axle; John Burns, five axle; and Stephen Altland, sleeper. Gregory Warner, sleeper, is not picture. Warner and Grimm are rookies.



The team from A. Dute Pyle, Inc., won the small team trophy. Team members are, from left, Will Chrvala, four axle; Rich Kaczynski, safety director; Tom Smith, straight truck; Fran Stevens, four axle; and Leo Flack, the 2013 Pennsylvania Grand Champion. Both Smith and Stevens are rookies.



Daniel Smiley from YRC Freight received the rookie award. He competed in the three axle class.