

Knightstown's Lane wins for second time at Mt Lawn

(From Josh Bolden) The Champion Racing Association would return to Mt. Lawn Speedway on Sunday evening June 13th for the 2nd time in 2021 with the Van Hoy Oil CRA Street Stocks in action along with the Claborn Motors Modifieds, the American Vintage Sprint Car Association, the Owens Electric Stock Compacts, the Marcum Welding & Steel Pro Compacts, and the Sunnyside Motors Crown Vics.

In the Van Hoy Oil CRA Street Stocks, Jason Atkinson has been on a dominant run as of late. Prior to Sunday, the Mooreland, Indiana driver had won 3 events, including last Saturday's Hoosier Daddy 100 at Winchester Speedway. Atkinson would get off to a strong start in qualifying by setting fast time over Jeff Lane of Knightstown, with a time of 17.592 seconds around the 3/10 mile oval. As is sometimes customary in grassroots racing, a field inversion in which the fast qualifier draws a number from a container that will determine their starting position. Atkinson would draw the number 6, putting Jimmy Kirby of Indianapolis on the pole for the 40 lap feature. For the first 14 laps Kirby would hold the lead of the event before sliding out of the groove on lap 15 allowing Atkinson to take the lead. Atkinson appeared to be in clear sailing when on lap 29 Brian Hopkins of New Castle would make contact with Kevin Claborn of Cambridge City, sending Claborn into a spin in the infield. Claborn, not pleased by this outcome, would make contact with Hopkins under caution sparking an on track automotive confrontation between both drivers. Following the ruckus, Hopkins' car would be too damaged to continue, while Claborn would be parked by CRA and as of press time placed on indefinite suspension by the organization. Following cleanup, Atkinson would take the lead on the restart and lead the final 11 laps of the race to take the victory, his fourth of the season and second in a row. Kirby would finish second with Andrew Teepe of Indianapolis, Frankie Oakes of Cambridge City, and Jordan Hahn of Indianapolis rounding out the top five.

In Claborn Motors Modifieds competition, parity and consistency has been a large part of recent events, as 20 plus Modifieds have been at each event with two different winners to date in 2021. 23 Modifieds would qualify on Sunday with JJ Schafer of Columbia City setting the fastest time of the night with a time of 17.026 seconds, starting in 3rd position for the 30 lap feature. The front row for the event would see youth battle experience, as Adam Lee of New Castle, a driver in his second year of modified competition would start on the pole alongside Harold Scott of New Castle, a modified veteran of 30+ years and a driver who has turned thousands of laps over his 5 decade career. Youth would win, albeit briefly however, as Lee would spin in Mt. Lawn's infamous short turn, collecting the cars of Schafer, Ryan Amonett of New Castle, Austin Coe of Ft. Wayne, Ralph Lane of Greensburg, and Don Skaggs of Modoc while sending numerous cars scrambling to the safety of the track's run-off area. Only one driver and car would not be able to continue miraculously enough, as Adam Keasling of Cambridge City would be eliminated from the event in a secondary collision with Joe Jennings of Richmond. On the restart, Schafer would take the lead and hold it until lap 5 when Amonett would take the lead on the front stretch. While Amonett was pulling away from the pack and beginning to lap slower cars, a battle would develop between Schafer, Coe, and Jeff Lane for the top 4 spots over the next 10 laps of the event with Lane steadily making his way past Coe and Schafer. On lap 16, Lane would take the lead from Amonett and hold off all comers over the 14 laps to take an improbable victory after experiencing problems earlier in the day. Coe would finish second with Amonett, Schafer, and Scott rounding out the top five.

In the Owens Electric Stock Compacts, Donald VanValkenburg III of Indianapolis and his team have been consistent to date, winning both the A-Main and B-Main on the second night of racing on May 23rd. On this night, 22 cars including "DVV3" would attempt to claim their spot in victory lane. VanValkenburg set fast time in group qualifying with a time of 19.296 to stake a spot in the A-Main. In the A-Main, Corey Slavey of New Castle and Jim Meeks of Indianapolis would start on the front row with Slavey taking the lead. The lead would evaporate as quick as puddle on a summer day however, as by lap 5 VanValkenburg would take the lead and begin pulling away, notching his 2nd consecutive feature win. Slavey would finish second with Cody Griffith of Greenfield, Jacob Johnson of New Castle, and Jonathan Claywell of New Castle rounding out the top five in his new car for 2021. Johnson's top 5 was all the more impressive and a sign of his and his teammate's spirit in that Johnson's car had caught fire during practice due to numerous mechanical issues. The Pushin Limits team of Johnson, Griffith, Chuck Cook of Kennard, and Brandon Kindler of Knightstown along with their crew members all pitched in to diagnose the issues and remedy them.

The Stock Compact B-Main would see Robert Bryan of Indianapolis jump to the lead on lap 4 and never look back, besting Brad Miller of New Castle, Darrell Thompson II of New Castle, Kaleb May of Middletown, and Kindler rounding out the top five. Kindler, Bryan, and Claywell all won heat races held earlier in the evening. In the night's other racing action, Trent Gossar of Markleville would win the Marcum Welding & Steel Pro

Compact feature over Rodney Sutton of New Castle, Gary Dunkle of Shirley would win the American Vintage Sprint Car Association feature over Dan Ingram of Indianapolis while John Lister of Louisville, Kentucky would pick up the victory in the Sunnyside Motors Crown Vics, proving to be one of the track's most consistent drivers over the past two years.

The next event at Mt. Lawn Speedway will be June 27th and will mark the return of two classes to the track, the Kenyon Midgets and the Fatheadz Eyewear Late Models will make their first appearance at the track in 2021. Joining the Midgets and Late Models will be the Claborn Motors Modifieds, the Fields Auto Parts Street Stocks, the Owens Electric Stock Compacts, the Sunnyside Motors Crown Vics, and a firework display presented by Circle City Pyrotechnics. Mt. Lawn Speedway is located at 1494 South County Road 400 West in New Castle. Additional information can be found at www.mtlawn.com or the Mt. Lawn Speedway 2020 Facebook page.