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By J M Hallas
Photos available from Jamie Brabson at jbhotshots.com

Pleasanton, Tx.,(March 24th, 2012) After a very successful opening night, driver, crew and fans returned for the second points nights of the season on the semi-banked, ¼ mile clay oval, south of San Antonio. Along with the normal cast of IMCA Modifieds and Southern Sportmods, Limited Late Models, Street and Pure Stocks, plus the Front Runners it was the Dwarf Car Racing Series of Texas making their first appearance of the year.

Earlier in the day, the racing community came together to help JL Wingo, owner of Bubbas Burgers & Fries, who lost his home after a lightning strike and fire during the early week storms. Charles Earnhardt helped spearhead a fundraising event hosted by Track Smack's, Dawn Murphy and Mike Haag at the restaurant, earlier in the day. Wingo, who has been a supporter and sponsor of racing, was overwhelmed by the turnout and support from the racing community.

The racing action was highlighted by several hard fought scraps for the lead in the IMCA Modifieds, Limited Late Models, Street Stock and Pure Stocks and capped off with a first ever main event win for one young IMCA Southern Sportmod driver.

Dinsmore Outduels Leonard for Modified Win

Greg Dinsmore(Kerrville) had to drive the race of his life to take home the hardware in the 20-lap IMCA Modified main event. Dinsmore, who started at the back, had to first work his way up past 2010 champ Bill Pittaway, then 2011points rival Jamie Campbell. His final task was getting by Darin Leonard, driving Dinsmore's 2009 championship car, as the laps wound down. Dinsmore got inside Leonard and slid up with the two making slight contact as Dinsmore edged past for the lead and win.

As the IMCA Modified main event roared to life, Leonard lead the way into turn 1 trailed by Campbell, Pittaway, Dinsmore and Jimmy Tidwell. Dinsmore wasted little time picking off third from Pittaway on lap 1. Dinsmore then closed the gap on Campbell as the top three ran within a

couple car lengths of each other. Coming to the crossed flags it was Leonard, Campbell, Dinsmore, Pittaway and Chuck Chesler in the top five.

Dinsmore began putting the heat on Campbell and after two laps was finally able to take the spot. Campbell slowed and stopped in turn 4 for the races only caution on lap 12. Once back to green it was the Harris Chassis team running one-two-three. Dinsmore began to pressure Leonard for lead taking looks low, while Chesler and Tidwell had their own battle going for fourth.

Dinsmore got alongside Leonard on lap 17 going down the back stretch and got the nose out front in turns 3-4. As Dinsmore drifted back up to the top he caught the bumper of Leonard, putting them both out of shape briefly. Leonard backed off and both regained control with Dinsmore leading the final two laps in the racetechinfo.com, Custom Concrete, HHR Home Improvements, Guadalupe Electric, JB Hotshots, Wells Designs, Ryan Bard Safety Foundation, J&V NAPA, KS Engineering, Harris Chassis.

"It was a lot of work to get that one," replied Dinsmore. "It was pretty much one lane out there around the top. I was about to just settle for second, but Darin(Leonard) started to bobble a bit and I make the decision to do it and got up to his door. That last time I rolled in really hot and knew I had him. It rolled off good, the car was super fast and I found a little moisture in the middle of turn 4 and that's where I stuck it."

"When I looked over I didn't see him and thought I was clear. We made a little contact and I saw the wall coming for a second. When I felt him in my quarter panel, I knew he'd let me go. That's what people do. If you get into someone's quarter, it's your job to let go. If you get to their door, it's their job to let you go."

"Darin's got my old car working good. The track was on top and that's where he went and ran the best line. I had to choose something else and make it work better. I had the better, newer car and equipment, not sure about the better driver though. Darin works hard with what he's got, I can't take anything away from him and he made me work for it."

"It was a top three Harris Chassis finish. I'm sure Bob Harris(racetechinfo.com) and John Logue at Harris Chassis will be glad to see that. We were all flying."

IMCA Modifieds

8g Greg Dinsmore, 26 Darin Leonard, 37 Bill Pittaway, 49 Chuck Chesler, 117 Jimmy Tidwell, 16 Carson Bednarz, 29 Jamie Campbell, 99 Billy Meyer---DNS

IMCA Modified heat; 26 Darin Leonard, 29 Jamie Campbell, 117 Jimmy Tidwell, 16 Carson Bednarz, 37 Bill Pittaway, 8g Greg Dinsmore, 99 Billy Meyer, 49 Chuck Chesler

Leonard Outlasts Field for First Sportmod Win

Everyone routs for a first time winner, especially when it's a 14-year old driving only his fifth race in an IMCA Southern Sportmod. Sinton's Cody Leonard was up to the task Saturday night, but it wasn't easy. Leonard out raced Allen Torres at the start of the 15-car Sportmod feature for the lead. Multi-time track champ Johnny Torres then took up the challenge on the young Leonard who held his ground. In the waning laps it was veteran Lawrence Mikulencak putting the heat on Leonard who was up to the task taking home his inaugural Sportmod, and first ever victory.

A. Torres led the 20-lap IMCA Southern Sportmod main through turns 1-2, but it was Leonard getting the advantage in turns 3-4 to lead lap 1. A. Torres got in line second pursued by Robby Minten, Randy Bennett and J. Torres. R. Minten went around and collected Barber on lap 1 to bring out an early caution. On the restart J. Torres got by Bennett for second with A. Torres now in fourth.

Last week's winner, JJ Jennings saw his night end early when mechanical problems brought him to a halt in turn 3 for a lap 4 yellow. Once back under green, J. Torres began looking under Leonard for the lead, while Mikulencak, driving Ray Doyon's car, moved past Bennett for fifth. Mikulencak then passed Robert Williams for fourth and was quickly on A. Torres.

Mikulencak got third on lap 8, with some three wide action in the pack. Coming to halfway it was

Leonard, by three car lengths, J. Torres, Mikulencak, A. Torres and Williams rounding out the top five. Anthony Gordon went around on lap 10 after contact with Barber, who was sent to the back. Back under green with the top three in a close battle, R. Minten worked his way back up to sixth after his earlier spin.

Leonard slipped a bit in turn 2 giving J. Torres a look low, but Brad Titzman, Barber, and Larry Jernigan tangled on the front stretch to bring out the yellow on lap 13. Once back to green J. Torres again looked low on Leonard off turn 2. This gave Mikulencak a chance to sneak past J. Torres for second. J. Torres tried a crossover move on Mikulencak, but couldn't get the spot back.

With two to go, Leonard had two car lengths on Mikulencak in a battle between youth and exuberance versus old age and experience. Mikulencak gave Leonard his best shot on the final lap diving low off turn 4, but it was Leonard in the CD Electric, Pittaway Racing, Wells Race Engines, HOT Chassis holding on for his first Sportmod checkers.

"It was pretty cool to get my first ever win," said the quiet, young Leonard. "The car felt really good. I knew I couldn't mess up or they'd get past me. The air cleaner blew off on the final lap and the torque converter or flywheel is messed up, but it held together for the finish."

"I just kept driving my line and didn't know who was behind me. I was watching the earlier races and found out the top groove was going to be the best. The bottom wasn't as fast and really rough."

"This is Bill(Pittway's) car while we finish building our own. I try to take it easy on his equipment and not tear anything up, but at times he tells me to just go for it."

"We may try to run for the championship, I don't know for sure yet."

"I can't believe you let the kid beat a blind, old racer," joked runner-up Mikulencak in the Leonard pits. "I didn't cut him any slack either; the kid drove his butt off."

"I've got to give him credit," said J. Torres. "He held the fast line and the few little mistakes he made, I couldn't take advantage of."

"I'm one proud dad," beamed his father, Darin, who fell one spot short of a father-son double win. "I can't thank Bill(Pittaway) enough for giving the kid a chance to drive his car. We were going to build him one, but Bill let him jump in his car. After nearly winning a heat race in Abilene, a track I have trouble with, against Sportmod national champ Dean Abbey, then finishing seventh in his first ever feature, I knew he was going to be good."

IMCA Southern Sportmods

37 Cody Leonard, 9d Lawrence Mikulencak, 66 Johnny Torres, 94 Allen Torres, 4r Robby Minten, 22 Randy Bennett, 57 Jason Kelly, 118 Anthony Gordon, 02 Robert Williams, 60 Pat Lyon, 18 Larry Jernigan, 56 Brad Titzman, 17b Bruce Barber, 26g JJ Jennings, 14t Talon Minten---DNTG

IMCA SSM heats

Heat 1; 94 Alan Torres, 26g JJ Jennings, 02 Robert Williams, 9d Lawrence Mikulencak, 14t Talon Minten, 57 Jason Kelly, 60 Pat Lyon, 18 Larry Jernigan---DNS

Heat 2; 22 Randy Bennett, 4r Robby Minten, 17b Bruce Barber, 66 Johnny Torres, 37 Cody Leonard, 118 Anthony Gordon, 56 Brad Titzman

Votion in Motion for Limited Late Model Win

Defending track champ Trey Votion(New Braunfels) earned his second win of the season in the 15-lap Limited Late Model feature. After a three wide battle with Andrew Hesler and Craig

Crawley, Votion executed a perfect slide job on Ron Sprayue to grab the lead with two to go. He would then ease away on the final lap for the victory.

The Limited Late Model feature saw Sprayue beat Hesler off turn 2 to take the point early. Hesler fell in line second with Crawley, Richard Bartosh and Votion trailing. As Sprayue began to ease away, Votion got past Bartosh for fourth. Crawley snagged second from Hesler on lap 6, with Votion trying to follow on lap 7. Crawley, Hesler and Votion were nearly three wide on lap 8 as Votion secured third.

Crawley and Votion then chased down Sprayue catching the leader on lap 10. Votion then put a picture perfect slide job on both Crawley and Sprayue to take the top spot on lap 13. Votion, in the Northside Ford, BG Products, Mission Racing, ZDT Amusement Park, Kelly Automotive, Northside Collision, Kelly Chassis eased ahead to the win, as Crawley fought past Sprayue for second.

"I really worked my tail off for that one," stated Votion. "It took a while to get going and I wanted to run the top, but I wasn't going to get anywhere if I did. So I had to figure out a way to make the bottom work. It seemed like the harder I ran the car, the better it worked. I finally got it going down there and I was happy with the move, but I was definitely tired after the race."

"Once I started getting a feel for running the bottom, it got better. The car was sticking better and I think my lap times were better towards the end than Ron(Sprayue) or Craig(Crawley). That was fun, it was good hard racing."

"I wasn't sure if we were three that one time. I saw Andrew(Hesler) next to me and thought I saw Craig outside of him and said to myself, there's really not that much room out here. We all held our lines and stayed straight. That's racing. That's when it's really fun and you can run like that and bring the car home in one piece."

"I'm so glad to not to do any major surgery on the car this week. Last week was tough, between working on the car and other home stuff, we were busy."

Limited Late Models

99 Trey Votion, 6 Craig Crawley, 42 Ron Sprayue, 1x Andrew Hesler, 7 Richard Bartosh, 13 Howie Marcx, 14 Gary Hunter, 48 Greg Dinsmore---DNS

Limited Late Model heat winners; 6 Craig Crawley, 99 Trey Votion

Dancer Outdoes Stout Street Stock Field

Red Rock's AJ Dancer picked the 20-lap Street Stock checkers in the hotly contested event. Dancer got the top spot after a three wide fight with early leader Frank Okruhlik and a slower car. During the mid-stages, AJ Wernette and multi-time track champ, Wade Jones took up the challenge until the two made contact on the final circuit leaving Dancer to cruise on to the checkers.

A 16-car field took the green for the initial start of the Street Stock feature that was quickly slowed after spins by polesitter, Curtis Opiela and Patricia Lucas trying to avoid contact. On the second start Tommy Casey beat Opiela into turn 1 for lead trailed by Okruhlik, Dancer, Opiela and Richard Wells. Okruhlik got alongside and by Casey for the top spot on lap 2, with Dancer coming along to second.

Okruhlik got slowed by Shawn Moore, who had spun but continued, giving Dancer the chance to close the gap. They went three wide as Dancer came away with the lead on lap 6. The lead duo had just about caught the back of the pack when Nathan Robins spun for a lap 11 caution. Once back under green, Dennis Hilla, Wernette and Jones began a battle for fourth.

Wernette took over third from Casey on lap 13 right before a spin by Danny Schroat in front the leaders shook up the order. Okruhlik and Casey fell back evading D. Schroat with Wernette, Jones and Hilla moving to second, third and fourth. On the last lap Wernette tried a challenge on Dancer, but half spun collecting Jones shaking up the order again and giving Dancer a run to the checkers in the Meta-Link Powdercoating, Dancer Motorsports, El Camino.

"It was a lot of work and whole lot of luck, I guess," commented Dancer. "My crew helped me out and got the car handling a lot better than last week. I think we changed every part on the car. That's how I usually do it. It(the track) changes every week, this time we finally were on the right track."

"It looks like everyone has gotten a little faster this year. It's going to be a fun year in our class. There are a lot of new players running up front. It's going to get tougher to get wins. That's the way I like it, with a lot of competition. It's much more that way."

"We don't plan on running for the championship. We're just going to run wherever it's the most fun. Of the other track(Cotton Bowl) opens up, we may run some over there. I'm not 100% sure of anything right now. Even though we lost out to Wade(Jones) by just a couple points, we don't have the funding to be sure we can make every race. Running three cars this year takes a lot of time and money."

Street Stocks

52 AJ Dancer, 37w(99) Frank Okruhlik, 2x Dennis Hilla, 37 AJ Wernette, 41 Wade Jones, 15 Tommy Casey, 53 Brian Becka, 40 Mike Lyon, 141 Curtis Opiela, 7 Danny Schroat, 5 Rick Schroat, 22 Patricia Lucas, 04 Nathan Robins, 82 Richard Wells, 18 Shawn Moore, 93 Aaron Leddy---DNTG

Street Stock heat winners; 2x Dennis Hilla, 37w(99) Frank Okruhlik, 52 AJ Dancer

Hilla Outhustles Pure Stock Field for Victory

After winning the Pure Stock feature last weekend after tech and missing the accolades, Janel Hilla got her night of glory. Hilla battled with early leader Frank Okruhlik and Adam Torres before getting the spot just past halfway. Okruhlik tried several times to find a way back around Hilla, but came up short as he had to fend off Torres for second. At the checkers it was Hilla

with a four car lengths advantage taking the win.

Jerry Jones led the 20-car Pure Stock field into turn 1, but it was Okruhlik on the top, coming off turn 2 with the early lead. Jones, Charles Earnhardt III, Tim Watson and Ryan Doyon completed the top five on lap 1. Jones tried the inside of Okruhlik, but gave up the spot to Earnhardt as Jones slowed with a flat right front. Hilla began her charge to the front getting by Karoline Campbell for fifth with Torres following to sixth.

Hilla put Doyon back a spot taking fourth on lap 7 just as Earnhardt spun and got drilled, head-on, by T. Watson. This put both out for the night, while Doyon pitted under yellow. This left Hilla on the bumper of Okruhlik for the restart. Hilla got beside Okruhlik with the duo running side by side, while Torres looked for an opening or mistake.

Behind them, Marcus Mikulencak and Devin Adler had a door to door fight going on for fifth. At halfway the top three were all close enough to throw a blanket over them with Campbell fourth and Mikulencak getting fifth. Hilla finally completed the pass on Okruhlik for the lead on lap 12, leaving him and Torres side by side for second.

As they continued to scrap it out up front, Campbell and Mikulencak were swapping fourth. A caution for debris slowed the pace on lap 17, with Hilla getting a good jump on the restart. As the white waved Hilla had four car lengths on Okruhlik, who was under fire again from Torres. At the checkers it was Hilla in the Riley Welding, Johnny's Paint & Body, Mission Racing, Sunset Beach, Alamo Bolt & Screw, Engineered Explosive Services, Chevy snaring the victory.

"My car was running great," replied Hilla. "Every lap I was closing the gap between Frank(Okruhlik) and myself. I knew if I could pass him, he would have a tough time getting back by me, if I hit my marks. Even though I won last week because of a disqualification, I wanted an on the track win. It was a great feel knowing I earned it this week. This year i believe you will see many different Pure Stock drivers in the Winners Circle."

Pure Stocks

7x Janel Hilla, 44 Frank Okruhlik, 66 Adam Torres, 10c Karoline Campbell, 9m Marcus Mikulencak, 117 Devin Adler, 14 Trey Heald, 33 Mereda Major, 9 Philip Haywood, 15 William Cavender, 4 James Watson, 43 Eric Watson, 5 Ryan Doyon, 33c Charlie Earnhardt III, 1x Tim Watson, 13 Cameron Smith, 95 Jerry Jones, 9s Jarrett Payton, 31/2 Bill McCall, 83 Kary Scott---BF, 88 Brandy Ramzinski---DNS

Pure Stock heat winners; 88 Brandy Ramzinski, 44 Frank Okruhlik, 5 Ryan Doyon

Gaither Grabs Front Runner Feature

After having the car break while leading last week's Front Runner feature, Dillon Gaither was right back at it. Gaither would go wire to wire in the 15-lap feature with an early challenge from Landon Sowder. Gaither then stretched out his margin to nearly a full straightaway at the finish as he rolled on to the win.

As the 8-car Front Runner took the green, Gaither jumped into the lead followed by Sowder, Roy Easler sr., Hailee Marcx and Trevor Bettis. Gaither and Sowder quickly put some distance on the third place battle between Easler, Marcx and Bettis.

Gaither got some breathing room after Sowder got hung up behind a lapped car losing a lot of ground to the leader. Gaither built his advantage to a ½ straightaway margin, while Bettis got by Marcx for fourth. Coming to the white flag Gaither, in the Rohmer Racing, First Choice House Leveling, TJ Hopper, Tiburon, had increased his lead to ¾ straightaway easily cruising to the checkers.

"The car was fast," said Gaither. "The track was a little rough, but it was alright. I just took it easy and wanted to finish the race. I just try to drive this car smooth and keep out of trouble. "

"I didn't want to push the car too much because we're going to run for a championship this year .We broke three studs last week while running up front, so I try to take it easy."

Front Runners

5 Dillon Gaither, 08 Landon Sowder, 12 Roy Easler sr., 57 Trevor Bettis, 113 Hailee Marcx, 01 Lindy Schroat, 223 Jeff Poll, 82 Blaine Markgraf, 66c Cindy Snyder---DNS

Front Runner heat winner; 5 Dillon Gaither

Havelka Heads Dwarf Car Challenge

Portland's Butch Havelka chased down early leader Jim Mokry in the 20-lap Dwarf Car Series of Texas feature. Havelka got by Mokry after Mokry slipped high on lap 7 giving Havelka and Michael Dion an opening to get by. Havelka then motored away from Dion after a mid-race caution to take the win with a comfortable margin.

Mokry jumped out front at the start of the DCRST feature with Dion, Eric Robbins jr. and Havelka on his tail. Dion slipped high giving Robbins second. As Mokry eased away, Robbins, Havelka and Dion slugged it out for second until Robbins spun for a lap 5 caution.

Havelka got by Dion on the restart for second and reeled in Mokry for the lead getting the spot on lap 7 after a mistake by Mokry. Robbins brought out a second yellow with a second spin on lap 10. Once back to green, Havelka pulled away from Dion and Dwain Groff for the victory.

Dwarf Car Racing Series of Texas

27 Butch Havelka, 07 Michael Dion, 85 Chris Silvas, 15 Dwain Groff, 8 Chuck McCormick, 61 John Flake, 86 Chris Silvas jr, 2 Jim Mokry, 10 Eric Robbins jr., 60 Richard Smith---DNS

DCRST heat winners; 07 Michael Dion, 27 Butch Havelka