By J M Hallas

Pleasanton, Tx.,(June 23rd, 2012) After a scheduled week off, I-37 Raceway at Newsome Motor Park returned to action on the ¼ mile, semi-banked dirt track. Being the first race of summer, the on-track action in Sportmods, Street Stocks and Pure Stock was as hot as the south Texas sun as drivers battled to the finish on the dry slick track conditions at feature time.

In action tonight were the IMCA Modifieds and Southern Sportmods, Limited Late Models, Street and Pure Stocks, Front Runners and making their I-37 Raceway debut, the Texana Dwarf Cars. This club is kind of a marriage of the Dwarf Cars and Modifieds, with a Dwarf Car chassis and motorcycle motor, but Modified sheet metal body styles.

Pittaway Picks up Modified Payday

After several runs as a bridesmaid, Corpus Christi's Bill Pittaway finally grabbed his first win of the season. Pittaway, a two-time I-37 track champion, got by Carson Bednarz for the lead near halfway using the high side to go around for the spot. From there Pittaway was able to ease away to a comfortable lead in the 15-lap main.

On the initial start Marlin Samford, from the pole, spun in front of the field. Darin Leonard, Chuck Chesler and Pittaway all got caught up in the scramble. The second try saw Leonard back over the turn 3 hill. Finally under green, Samford led through turns 1-2, but it was Rob Sanderson with the advantage coming off turn 4 with the lead and Samford, Bednarz, Jason Borlace and Chesler hot on his heels.

Bednarz and Borlace got by Samford for second and third on lap 1, followed by Chesler to fourth on lap 2. Sanderson slid too high in turn 2 giving up the lead to Bednarz on lap 4. Borlace moved in to challenge Bednarz, while Jamie Campbell made his way up to fourth. Chesler made contact with Campbell on lap 5 sending Chesler around for a yellow that saw Dennis Taylor stop under caution.

On the restart Borlace slowed and pulled to the infield with a blown motor. Pittaway caught Bednarz for the lead on lap 7 and made his way by to lead lap 8. Coming to halfway it was Pittaway, Bednarz, Leonard, Sanderson and Chesler in the top five. Chesler and Campbell both worked past Sanderson on lap 10 for fourth and fifth.

Campbell then put Chesler in his wake while Pittaway was easing away. With two to go Pittaway had a big lead over Bednarz and Leonard, who now had Campbell on their bumper. Campbell made a last lap pass on both for second, but Pittaway was cruising to the win in his CD Electric, Wells Racing Engines, Harris Chassis.

"I just ran a smooth, consistent race," explained Pittaway. "We put a new body on the car and Darin(Leonard) came over and tweaked on the suspension some. The track was really dry slick. You had to go to the top. There was nothing in the middle or bottom. I tried to keep it up on the bars and it ran real smooth."

"Patience! You can't get in a hurry. Guys that got in a hurry got their cars torn up. I'm glad to

take mine home and not have to work on it this week. I do have some changed I want to make though. Still have a few tricks up my sleeve. I was fortunate to have Ron Efkamp come down from Harris and help me with the new chassis. It's nice to have the manufacturer come give hands-on help with the car."

"I do think about running for points even though I've won championships in 2006 and 2010. Right now we're pretty tight in points. I was in third behind Jamie(Campbell) and Chuck(Chesler). I picked up a point on first and should be tied for second now. I have a good time racing with Jamie, Chuck, Darin and Jason(Borlace). We're all good friends and have fun racing. That's what it's all about."

IMCA Modifieds
137 Bill Pittaway, 29 Jamie Campbell, 16 Carson Bednarz, 26 Darin Leonard, 49 Chuck Chesler, 24 Tracy Fink, 141 Rob Sanderson, 31 Marlin Samford, 21 Jason Borlace, 87 Dennis Taylor, 37b Matt Banker---DNTG

IMCA Modified heats
Heat 1; 26 Darin Leonard, 49 Chuck Chesler, 21 Jason Borlace, 16 Carson Bednarz, 31 Marlin Samford, 37b Matt Banker
Heat 2; 87 Dennis Taylor, 137 Bill Pittaway, 29 Jamie Campbell, 24 Tracy Fink, 141 Rob Sanderson

Minten Out-Muscles Sportmod Field for Win
Robby Minten(La Coste) had the battle of young career with Patrick Kelly at the beginning of the IMCA Southern Sportmod feature. R. Minten would get inside P. Kelly coming off the corner, but P. Kelly with the momentum up top would hold the point. After several attempts off turn 2, R. Minten tried off turn 4 and eased by coming to the crossed flags. A late caution put multi-time winner, JJ Jennings on his tail, but R. Minten held off Jennings to pick up the victory.

As the 16-car IMCA Southern Sportmod main took the green P. Kelly jumped ahead with R. Minten making a charge to second chased by Jason Kelly, Michael Hernandez and Tommy Grimes. Hernandez and Grimes got past J. Kelly, but Grimes lost positions after slipping high in turn 4. R. Minten made his first challenge on P. Kelly during lap 2.

Back in the back, Anthony Gordon and JJ Jennings were cutting through the field moving to fifth and sixth. Gordon continued his march getting fourth from Grimes on lap 4 and third from Hernandez a lap later. R. Minten again gave P. Kelly a good look on lap 6, but was unable to get clear. Johnny Torres made contact with Hernandez sending him around, and J. Torres to the tail on lap 7.

R. Minten ducked low again on the restart, but P. Kelly held the line. R. Minten tried again in turn 4 this time and got enough bite off the bottom to get the spot on lap 9, with Gordon following to second. Coming to the crossed flags it was R. Minten, Gordon, Grimes, Jennings and P. Kelly, giving up a couple more positions.

As R. Minten and Gordon inched ahead, Jennings and Grimes were side by side for third, P.

Kelly and Cody Leonard wheel to wheel for fifth, with Ray Doyon III, Hernandez and Larry Jernigan three wide for seventh. After three laps, Jennings finally got the spot from Grimes, with p. Kelly, Leonard and Jernigan now three abreast.

R. Minten ran up on his brother, Talon Minten and finally had to lap him adding a buffer between him and Gordon. Jennings took over that spot on lap 18, but nowhere near R. Minten. Jennings got his chance when Doyon, R. Minten's uncle got spun by Jernigan for a lap 19 caution. R. Minten got a good jump on green leaving Jennings behind as he tallied the win in the 3-D Landscaping, Doyon Motorsports, Ace Transmission, Shepherds Racing Engines, Empire Chassis. The middle of the pack was forced to scatter after Grimes did a 360 spin that sent Alan Torres into the wall.

"I had to keep it up top," commented Minten. "I couldn't get by the 84(Patrick Kelly) on the low side. He gave me a hell of a run, but I finally got by him and got away. It was pretty fun. I wanted to win tonight. I had it in my head to win."

"I knew the high line was going to be the line. I know that JJ(Jennings) is real good on the low line and that he would be coming sooner or later. He came up next to me under that last caution and we gave each other the 'thumbs up', let's race."

"I tried to stay behind Talon and not lap him. I finally had to go past him because I was afraid someone would go by on the bottom if I followed him around the top. There was too much left in the race.

IMCA Southern Sportmods
4r Robby Minten, 26g JJ Jennings, 118 Anthony Gordon, 37 Cody Leonard, 9 Ray Doyon III, 84k Patrick Kelly, 2r Michael Hernandez, 11 Tom Grothues, 57 Jason Kelly, 18 Larry Jernigan, 10 Eric Robbins jr., 22t Tommy Grimes, 94 Alan Torres, 14t Talon Minten, 60 Pat Lyon, 66 Johnny Torres

IMCA SSM heats
Heat 1; 118 Anthony Gordon, 57 Jason Kelly, 26g JJ Jennings, 84k Patrick Kelly, 14t Talon Minten
Heat 2; 22t Tommy Grimes, 37 Cody Leonard, 4r Robby Minten, 60 Pat Lyon, 10jr Eric Robbins Jr.
Heat 3; 66 Johnny Torres, 2r Michael Hernandez, 9d Ray Doyon III, 18 Larry Jernigan, 94 Alan Torres, 11 Tom Grothues

Crawley Captures Limited Late Model Loot
San Antonio's Craig Crawley found what no one else did during the 15-lap Limited Late Model feature, grip. Crawley, using the low groove caught early leader Chris Brock and got the top spot before halfway. Once clear Crawley, in the Odie Racing, Duffin Engine Service, Ron and Nina Crawley, Garfield and Ruth Shanklin, Danny's Bar-B-Q, CNC Graffix, Chevy motored away for the win.

Brock led the pack into turn 1 at the start, trailed by Howie Marcx, Richard Bartosh, Crawley and Gary Hunter. Crawley wasted little time getting by Bartosh and Marcx for second, bringing Bartosh along to third while Trey Votion moved past Hunter to fifth. Crawley caught Brock on lap 5 and worked his way past for the top spot on lap 6.

As Crawley started to gap the field, Votion got fourth from Marcx. With Crawley sailing away, Bartosh reeled in Brock for second, with Votion closing on both. As Crawley was cruising to the checkers, Votion slipped in turn 2 losing ground, while Brock and Bartosh traded some paint off turn 4 as they fought to the finish.

“We made some adjustments between the heat and feature,” said Crawley. “We changed a spring and pumped up the tires like we were running asphalt and it worked like a charm. Hitting the line tonight was all about throttle control. I missed it a few times. As long as you could get it to rotate through the corner and stay on the bottom I could get traction with the left rear tire.”

“I slowly worked my way up past the others to Chris Brock. It was slow reeling him in. Once I got up next to him I knew I could get by him. I had no idea where anyone was behind me, I thought for sure there would be a freight train coming. It felt like I was running really slow.”

Limited Late Models
6 Craig Crawley, 10 Chris Brock, 7 Richard Bartosh, 99 Trey Votion, 13 Howie Marcx, 1x Andrew Hesler, 42 Ron Sprayue, 14 Gary Hunter

Limited Late Model heat winners; 7 Richard Bartosh, 13 Howie Marcx

Gordon Grabs Green in Street Stocks
After picking up his first Street Stock feature win the previous race, Anthony Gordon(San Antonio) backed it up with another trophy. In a hotly contested race that saw numerous lead changes and a three abreast scrap for the lead, the young hot shoe finally secured the lead as the race reached the mid-point. Gordon then had to hold off multi-time track champ, Wade Jones and was able to pull away to snag the win.

Brian Becka was first into turn 1 as the 13-car Street Stock feature fired off. AJ Wernette gave Becka a look low off turn 2, but fell in line with Gordon, Dennis Hilla and Jones in pursuit. Wernette got alongside Becka again on lap 1, but had Gordon sneak past for second. Gordon then went side by side with Becka and got the nose out front on lap 4.

Becka fought back retook the point on lap 5, with Jones now joining the fight and making it three wide for the lead. Jones got spot as they hit lap 6 with Becka on his flank. A spin by Nathan Robins slowed the action on lap 7. On the restart Gordon got by Becka for second while Johnny Torres took fourth from Wernette.

Gordon tried the high side and got beside Jones taking the lead back as the field hit halfway, with Becka, Torres and Wernette rounding out the top five. Becka’s top run turned ugly when he slid off the back stretch into the billboards. He was alright, but the car was unable to

continue. Once back to green Okruhlik, challenged his teammate Wernette for fourth, as they swapped the spot.

Up front Gordon was beginning to build an advantage over Jones, while Mike Lyon got around Okruhlik for the fifth spot. As the white flag waved it was Gordon now by a half straightaway going unchallenged to the checkers in the Alamo Hot Rod Parts, Screen Pro Graphics, Dewalt Tools, RTM Construction, Swenson Race Products, Delivery made Simple, Rising Star Racing Bodies, Mission Race Engines, Swenson Chassis.

“It’s definitely a competitive class,” replied Gordon. “Jumping into it(this class) we knew that Wade(Jones) was going to be tough and Frank(Okruhlik) was moving up and to be in the mix we really had to be on our A game. We’re just dialing the car in race by race.”

“Knowing I was three wide I mainly just wanted to keep the fenders on the car. It’s a great bunch of guys and we’re all clean racers. It kind of takes your breath away going three wide and not know what’s going to happen, especially on dirt. I let them go to battle it out and capitalized when it mattered.”

“After racing in the Sportmod I knew the groove was going to be up top. I ran higher than I’ve probably ever been here. Starting seventh I had to search for my line. I tried the middle and the bottom and found the high side was the way to go. No one could touch me up there.”

“I was glad to see Brian(Becka) get out of his car. When we went by under yellow I saw his car sitting on a 45% angle in the billboard. It’s good he was alright.”

Alamo Hot Rod Street Stocks
118 Anthony Gordon, 41 Wade Jones, 1 Johnny Torres, 37 AJ Wernette, 40 Mike Lyon, 99 Frank Okruhlik, 3 Abraham Mares III, 2x Dennis Hilla, 726 Robert Robbins, 31 Jeff Hendricks, 04 Nathan Robins 141 Curtis Opiela, 9 Brian Becka, 82 Richard Wells---DNS, 11w Nathan Faulkner---DNS

Alamo Hot Rod Street Stock heat winners; 118 Anthony Gordon, 9 Brian Becka

Lucky Leddy Takes Pure Stocks
They say ‘it’s better to be lucky, than good’, but being good enough to capitalize on the chance to be lucky is part of the equation. Aaron Leddy(Von Ormy), in an unfamiliar ride from the Earnhardt Racing stable, found himself in the right place at the right time at the Pure Stock finish. Leddy, third at the time, watched as Adam Torres and Ryan Doyon got together in turn 4 coming to the checkered flag. As the duo hooked up and headed towards the infield, Leddy snuck past to steal the victory.

The 18-car, 20-lap Pure Stock feature saw Jeremy Hernandez lead the initial start, but Ben Franke and Trey Heald got tangled as Torres beat Hernandez back to the line. Hernandez fell in line second, with Karaline Campbell, Doyon and Darin Blevins in pursuit. Janel Hilla got past Blevins and Jarrett Payton for fifth. Doyon began his move to the front getting by Campbell on lap 5 and Hernandez on lap 6.

Behind him, Campbell and Hilla were door to door, with Brandy Ramzinski catching the two other Pure Stock ladies. Once past Campbell, Hilla went after Hernandez for third as Ramzinski took fifth. Enter Leddy, who after starting dead last, made the top five on lap 13. Leddy then passed Ramzinski for fourth and then by Hilla before she spun on lap 16.

Once back to green, Torres Doyon and Leddy pulled ahead, as Doyon took a look low off turn 4. Doyon and Leddy were side by side on lap 17, but Torres held the faster line. While the duo scrapped it out for the lead, Leddy looked for an opening or mistake. With two to go Leddy was looking outside Doyon for second but Doyon not only held the spot, but kept the pressure on Torres.

Doyon got under coming off turn 2 on the final lap, but Torres inched back ahead on the back stretch. Doyon again ducked low in turn 4 and as the two touched and hooked up, Leddy, in the Big Lou's Pizza, Bubbas Burgers, Earnhardt & Sons Automotive, CNC Graffix, Reflective Wrecker Service, Auto Care Paint & Body, Custom Control Modules, Chevy, slipped past to snag the win. Torres and Doyon, the two points leaders, stayed hooked and crossed the line, literally, door to door.

"Charles(Earnhardt) took me to drive it like I stole it," joked Leddy. "So, I did. Those two were running pretty strong in front of me. Once I saw then get together, I saw the door open up. When we took the white flag I was content with settling for third. I just tried to keep with them and hope they made a mistake. They were driving each other hard and the door opened up for me."

"We had the body rubbing some on the right rear. The body got roughed up last race and we tried to straighten it out. We got most of it but must have missed a spot. So we got lucky that it didn't cut the tire down."

Pure Stocks
33x Aaron Leddy, 66 Adam Torres, 5 Ryan Doyon, 57 Ben Franke, 10c Karaline Campbell, 6p Jeremy Hernandez, 117 Devin Adler, 7x Janel Hilla, 1c2 Dustin Blessing, 99 Frank Okruhlik, 14 Trey Heald, 15 William Cavender, 28 Darren Blevins, 88 Brandy Ramzinski, 9s Jarrett Payton, 19 Brent Reeves, 95 Jerry Jones, 60 Adam McKinley

Pure Stock heat winners; 6p Jeremy Hernandez, 7x Janel Hilla, 117 Devin Adler

Gaither Green to Checkers in Front Runner
Dillon Gaither(Floresville) put one on the Front Runner field during the 12-lap feature. Gaither jumped out front as green waved and showed the pack nothing but his tail lights as he cruised off to the checkers. The closest anyone got was under a yellow for debris, but Gaither was again to rebuild his lead in the Rohmer Racing, First Choice House Leveling, TJ Hopper, Earnhardt & Sons Automotive, Rays Auto & Truck Salvage, CNC Graffix, Tiburon

"I just kept the car out of trouble," stated Gaither. "I drove my own race, kept the car smooth as I could, working the throttle. When I get out to a big lead sometimes I start over thinking. I almost messed up once in turn 3, but I was able to bring it back down. I guess seat will help

with that."

"I worry about the car failing now and then since it's happened before. I do go over it every week now and do a nut and bolt check on everything. I guess it helps when you work on it to keep it going."

Front Runners
5 Dillon Gaither, 08 Landon Sowder, 113 Hailee Marcx, 8t Ryan Franklin, 66c Cindy Snider, 82 Sam Markgraf

Front Runner heat winner; 5 Dillon Gaither

Sexton Sweep Texana Dwarf Cars
In their first appearance at I-37 Raceway, the Texana Dwarf Cars fielded 8 cars for the 15-lap feature. It was the Greg Sexton show as he went wire to wire to pick up the win. Sexton was able to put some distance on his son, Greg Sexton jr. and Mike Christians, who were battling it out for second and losing ground to the leader.

Texana Dwarf Cars
14 Greg Sexton, 7 Greg Sexton jr., 13 Mike Christians, 2ez Easy Casey, 1 Ken Bulsterbaum, 11 Jerry Godfrey, 89 Geoff Youngblood, 24 Victor Vargas

Texana Dwarf Car heat winner; 14 Greg Sexton

Go-Karts(combined)
37 Aaron Trevino
11 Caitlyn Leddy
82 Andrew Garcia
9 Camryn Leddy
93 Cavin Leddy