

By CAREY FOX
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PUTNAMVILLE, IN

The weather finally broke and dirt track racing took over the state this weekend and Lincoln Park Speedway was part of the action.

The track was in great shape, smooth and tacky to the end and the competition was tough as 24 sprinters unloaded at the Putnamville oval for the season's opening night after wet conditions claimed the regularly scheduled opener.

Defending track champion, Billy Puterbaugh, was back and showed off his beautiful, brand new black and red No. 71. Looking around the pits at LPS, there wasn't a shabby sprinter to be found as hot shoes like Brent Beauchamp, Kent Christian, Shane Hollingsworth, Casey Shuman and Ty Deckard were in attendance and a couple of rising youngsters were looking to make their marks with a trip to victory lane. Todd Kimmell was one of those young pilots looking for his first win and he was coming off an impressive third-place run at Bloomington Speedway the night before. Chase Briscoe finished the 2008 season with his first sprint win of his very short career in the class and was looking for No. 2. Add in Kenny Niflis and the competition was bound to be hot in the season kicker.

Jon Sciscoe came out of the gates well on Friday night, claiming a seventh-place on the red clay at Bloomington. On Saturday, he continued to keep the pedal mashed, pulling away for a win in the first heat.

The Bloomington-based pilot held off the No. 5J of Joss Moffatt and Shane Hollingsworth with Timmell and Niflis rounding the top-five.. Kent Christian wasn't to be outdone in heat two, he tackled the circuit with a fever and was able to hold off a spirited attack by Beauchamp and Josh Cunningham followed by Puterbaugh.

The third heat of the night went to Shuman, whose success on opening night is well documented at LPS. Deckard crossed in second followed by A.J. Clark and the gorgeous No. 32 First Financial Bank machine of Chase Stockton of Sullivan.

Jason Holt was the B-main winner, earning a spot in the back of the field for the A-Main.

As the green dropped on the opening A-Main, Christian had the hammer down and held a tentative lead over Shuman and Beauchamp. A.J. Clark was in the mix early ahead of Sciscoe and Hollingsworth.

A three-way battle developed early on between Christian, Shuman and Beauchamp, but Shuman wasn't going to be denied. He darted into the lead, riding the cushion into turn three to get past Christian.

With multiple lines available to the drivers, sprinters were comfortable competing three-wide, slinging sideways through the corners in pursuit of an extra position.

Beauchamp followed in Shuman's wake to take over the second spot. Behind the group, Kimmell and Hollingsworth were dueling wheel-to-wheel for several laps, darting through

some lapped traffic in a chase for the leaders.

Moffatt was in contention with the leaders as well, holding down a fifth-place position past the halfway mark as JJ Hughes brought out a caution when he bounced off an infield tire marker.

The restart had Shuman leading with Beauchamp, Christian, Sciscoe and Moffatt in to. Shuman got out to a quick jump on the restart and he wasn't going to be caught in a well-run A-main that clicked off quickly.

Shuman claimed the victory in the Clifford's Custom Collision, Physical Medicine, Keicher Engines, U.S. Automation machine also sponsored by Geiger Seamless Guttering.

The Arizona-based hotshoe is no stranger to opening victories as he claimed night one last season in Putnamville. Beauchamp remained in the second spot followed by Christian, Moffatt, Hollingsworth, Sciscoe, Kimmell, Deckard, Puterbaugh and Cunningham in the top-10. Holt raced his way up from 16th-starting spot to 11th at the checkers.

Nineteen tough modifieds unloaded at LPS on Saturday night in search of adding a victory in the opener and gaining a foothold in the season points.

Daryl Herbert was one driver looking to change some unfortunate luck in the early stages of the season. The Greensburg, Ind. competitor mentioned that he hadn't been able to finish any of the

previous several races due to a variety of mechanical issues. His luck changed Saturday when he held off early challenges from Travis Shoulders and survived a battle of attrition to claim the victory.

Herbert won his heat race to set himself up outside of row one alongside Wayne Cooper, who claimed the second heat.

On the green, Herbert jumped into the top spot followed closely by Shoulders, Phil VanSant and Cooper.

The group quickly found their way into lapped traffic and both Herbert and Shoulders continued to skillfully weave through backmarkers while still remaining in a battle with each other.

Defending track champion, Paul Bumgardner, was sidelined as a tire went down, ending his night with a 16th-place finish.

He wasn't alone as Mark Auler, Robert Albright, Tom McKinney and Mike Trimble went to the pits early.

Near the midway point, Gary Hall and Jaymie Turner got locked up bumper-to-bumper to bring out an extended caution.

On the restart, Kenny Weaver was quickly sidelined and Shoulders' pursuit of a win went by the wayside with something broken in the right front side of his No. 166.

With Shoulders out, Herbert pulled away in the SPEC Racing, Stone's Farm Service, R&S Fleet Service, VanHorn Graphics and Prince Excavating machine.

Cooper crossed the finish line in second ahead of Albert Gardner, Harold Grayless, Hall,

Josh Fagg, Carlos Bumgardner Sr. came from 16th to seventh ahead of Jared Hix and VanSant.

The 2008 season was all about near misses for Kris Starks in the super stock division, seemingly always near the front, but narrowly missing that elusive trip to Victory Lane.

On Saturday, he was able to hold off a determined Greg Amick, a four-time winner last season.

Starks also had to maintain the lead after several restarts to earn the victory as Kenny Carmichael Jr. charged to third ahead of Scott Carrington, Joe Starks, Travis Heramb, Mark Dickerson, Dennis Morgan, Michael Conner and Roy Bruce Jr.

Starks win came in the Franklin-built No. 26 superstock.

A very balanced bomber field was in contention for victory on Saturday night with Ron Smith, Ben Williams and Ryan Freeland claiming heat victories in the 23-car field. Freeland and Smith started on the front row ahead of Williams and Ron Wallen Sr.

Williams got out to a strong start on the rest of the field with Freeland close behind.

Moody and Wallen had an entertaining side-by-side tussle going for several laps before Dustin Shoulder entered the fray late in the feature.

Shoulders came up from his 11th-place starting spot to eventually slip by Freeland for

second-place. Ron Wallen Jr. started in 10th-place and battled through traffic to take fifth behind his father. Moody placed sixth ahead of LeRoy Sherfield, Kelly West Jr., Daylan Chambers and Jordan Almanza.

Next week will feature the sprints along with UMP Modifieds, UMP Super Stocks and bombers.

Main gates open at 4:30 p.m. with hotlaps at 5:30 p.m. and racing beginning at 7 p.m.

Kids five-and-under are free with ages 6-10 just \$5. Adult general admission is \$13. Saturday will be Salute to Greencastle Night with Greencastle residents with state-issued ID receiving \$2 off admission.

Sprint car feature

1. Casey Shuman, 2. Brent Beauchamp, 3. Kent Christian, 4. Joss Moffatt, 5. Shane Hollingsworth, 6. Jon Sciscoe, 7. Todd Kimmell, 8.. Ty Deckard, 9. Billy Puterbaugh, 10. Josh Cunningham, 11. Jason Holt, 12. Chase Stockton, 13. Troy Link, 14. Russ Harper, 15. Kenny Niflis, 16. A.J. Clark, 17. Brandon Mattox, 18. JJ Hughes, 19. Bub Cummings, 20. Chase Briscoe

B-main winner: Jason Holt
Heat winners: Jon Sciscoe, Kent Christian, Casey Shuman

UMP Modified feature

1. Daryl Herbert, 2. Wayne Cooper, 3. Albert Gardner, 4. Harold Grayless, 5. Gary Hall, 6. Josh Fagg, 7. Carlos Bumgardner Sr., 8. Jared Hix, 9. Phil VanSant, 10. Travis Shoulders, 11. Doug Bryant Jr., 12. Jaymie Turner, 13. Kenny Weaver, 14. Steve Carpenter,

15. Mike Trimble, 16. Paul
Bumgardner, 17. Robert
Albright, 18. Mark Auler, 19.
Tom
McKinney
Heat winners: Wayne Cooper,
Daryl Herbert

Super Stock feature

1. Kris Starks, 2. Greg Amick,
3. Kenny Carmichael Jr., 4.
Scott Carrington, 5. Joe
Starks, 6. Travis Heramb, 7.
Mark Dickerson, 8. Dennis
Morgan, 9. Michael Conner, 10.
Roy Bruce Jr., 11. Doug
McCullough, 12. Elijah
Heminger, 13. Jake Byers, 14.
Tami Lawson,
15. Rob Paris, 16. Cullen
Goodman, 17. Mark Blalock
Heat winners: Doug McCullough,
Kris Starks

Bomber Feature

1. Ben Williams, 2. Dustin
Shoulders, 3. Ryan Freeland, 4.
Ron Wallen Sr., 5. Ron Wallen
Jr., 6. Mike Moody, 7. LeRoy
Sherfield, 8. Kelly West Jr.,
9. Daylan Chambers, 10. Jordan
Almanza, 11. Corey Gregory, 12.
Marlin Burns, 13. David Wallen,
14. Dennis Jackson, 15.
Ron Smith, 16. Robbie
Rainwater, 17. Josh Presley,
18. Justin White, 19. C.J.
Bryan
B-main winner: LeRoy Sherfield
Heat winners: Ryan Freeland,
Ron Smith, Ben Williams