

T-Mez makes a mad dash count in claiming LPS sprint victory
Carmichael, Starks and Williams earn checkered flags

By CAREY FOX

Times Sports Editor

PUTNAMVILLE: Lincoln Park Speedway has become a very popular destination for sprint car hot shoe, Thomas Meseraull. The Arizona native has unloaded four times this season at the Putnamville oval and has come away with three wins and a fifth-place finish. On Saturday night, T-Mez earned his third victory, but it certainly didn't come easily.

Thirty-seven sprinters were in the pits on another weekend that has shown just how popular the central Indiana oval has become since Joe Spiker has taken over the promoting reigns. More than 100 total cars were in the pits, but the sprint car field was loaded with talent once again.

Meseraull's night got off to a rough start in his heat race as he broke a steering arm and was forced to the first of two B-mains on the night.

Dave Scott piloted his No. 7X machine to a win in the first heat and Danny Holtsclaw claimed a stacked second heat that also included USAC veteran, Levi Jones, as well as up-and-comer, Jesse Cramer, Brent Beauchamp, who already owned one feature win at LPS this year and Kenny Carmichael Jr. Jones grabbed the final qualifying spot in the iTi Performance Motorsports No. 38.

Todd Kimmell claimed the third heat race and Kent Christian was able to hold Billy Puterbaugh at bay in the final sprint heat of the night.

In the first B-main, Meseraull had his Paul Hazen owned, Physical Medicine Consultants, Bud's Auto Sales machine hooked up and the Kercher Engine rocketed him from his eighth starting spot to a victory ahead of Kenny Carmichael Sr. The win earned Meseraull the 17th starting spot in the A-main.

In the second B-main, Jesse Cramer came forward to earn the win ahead of Shawn Krockenberger, who both earned spots in the main event.

Kenny Niflis got the night's hard luck award along with Aaron Mosley, as neither driver could get their sprint cars to fire in the heat or the B-main.

Veteran Troy Link would take the green flag on the pole of the feature alongside Chris Kopczynski with Christian and Kimmell lined up in row two.

On the drop of the green, the story quickly became Meseraull, who was a man possessed from lap one. By the time a lap two caution waved, T-Mez was already into eighth-place and was in the top-five several laps later.

Christian got to the front and looked like the car to beat as he built a sizable lead early, however Kimmell and Puterbaugh would get together off turn four in their dash to the front and Kimmell would end up on his lid to bring out a red flag.

The EMT and fire crews were quickly on the scene to check Kimmell out and would later take him to the hospital where he was diagnosed with a concussion.

When racing resumed, Christian again held onto the lead with Kopczynski in second ahead of the charging No. 71p of Puterbaugh. Immediately behind them though was Meseraull who wasn't going to be denied this time around.

Christian built another solid advantage ahead of the field as Kopczynski, Puterbaugh and Meseraull fought tooth-and-nail for second. Puterbaugh and Meseraull would get by a couple of circuits later and put on a show for the crowd, swapping spots at each end of the track before Eric Smith went over in turn one to bring out a second red flag.

Smith was uninjured in the accident, but his evening was over as he took the car back to the pits.

On the re-start, Meseraull was able to move into second and began to reel

Christian in as the laps dwindled. The two moved into a side-by-side struggle , but Meseraull was able to jet past coming out of turn two and into the lead. From there, he wasn't going to be caught as he cruised to the win over the final five laps in the K&N Filters, Keco, Hunt Magneto's machine.

Christian maintained second in the feature and in the season points behind Puterbaugh, who was third in the race. Shane Hollingsworth moved up from 13th to finish fourth ahead of Jones, who started in 14th.

Kopczynski was sixth ahead of Cramer, Seth Parker, Holtsclaw and Jeff Wimmenauer.

In the UMP Modified feature, 20 tough drivers lined up to compete for the top prize and bragging rights.

Travis Shoulders was on the pole inside of Kenny Carmichael Sr. Both drivers have had their share of tough luck this season despite owning some feature wins.

Shoulders grabbed the lead at the start and opened up a small gap ahead of Carmichael, BJ McCammon and Roger Mills with Jimmy Hayden and Chase Sterrett duking it out side-by-side for fifth.

The first caution came as Mills and Carlos Bumgardner got together and were forced to the back. On the green, Shoulders maintained the lead for several more laps before getting a bit loose coming off the second corner. Carmichael took advantage and nabbed the point a couple of laps before McCammon spun diving low into turn four.

The re-start set up Carmichael and Shoulders for a dual, however, Shoulders luck again turned sour as he headed to the pits with a mechanical problem.

Paul Bumgardner, who started 10th, had arrived up front with a spirited battle with Hayden, Bradley Sterrett and Wayne Cooper.

Cooper was able to slip by Hayden just before a late caution, but on the final re-start, Carmichael was able to hold onto the win ahead of Bumgardner, who edged out Sterrett and Wayne Cooper. Bradley Sterrett was fifth ahead of Rodney Haris Jr.

Hayden was spun coming off the final corner and was forced to settle for 14th after a strong run. Phil VanSant was seventh followed by Mills, Doug Bryant Jr. and Carlos Bumgardner Sr.

Carmichael's win came in the L&R Roofing, Specialty Grafix, Carmichael's Exhaust, Spence/Banks Oil Company, Bud & Sons Auto Inc. machine.

Carmichael's son nearly doubled the feature win total for the family with a lightning quick run in the UMP Super Stock feature. However, a small mistake that saw him partially jump the large cushion provided by JD's Curb Service, allowed Kris Starks the opportunity he needed to edge past and grab his third feature win of the season.

Slick Griffin had the early lead ahead of Carmichael and Starks before a pileup in turn two sent Steve Sheeks to the pits and sent both Scott Carrington and Gary Archer to the back.

Carmichael would get by Griffin, who would later succumb to his own mechanical woes as Starks took second ahead of Doug McCullough, Michael Conner and Jack Byers.

Travis Heramb was charging from the back and moved into the top-10 midway through the race and battled with Conner for position.

Up front, Carmichael appeared ready to add his second feature win of the season before jumping the curb as Starks pounced on the chance. He would power his Franklin built race car to the win with Carmichael settling for second ahead of the points leader, McCullough. Heramb rolled to fourth ahead of Byers and Jacob Wright. Conner took seventh ahead of Matt Jordan, Randy Newport and Archer.

In the final even of the night, Ben Williams started outside of row one and made that position count, scoring the victory in his Specialty Grafix, Trump Stix sponsored No. 3w.

An early collision sent Cullen Sandusky into the backstretch wall, which brought out a red flag as EMT's checked his condition after the contact.

On the restart, Williams was able to hold his position up front despite a late challenge from David Wallen in lapped traffic. C.J. Bryan came home third ahead of Dustin Shoulders and Josh Settles. Ryan Freeland raced forward from starting 16th to place sixth ahead of Barry Hicks, Sean Yakel, Chad Nolte and Chuck Walden.

Bryan maintains a slight points advantage (894 to 869) over Freeland.

Next week will be the **King of Non-wing** event for sprint cars with every car running a feature. There will also be the modifieds, super stocks and bombers and the **End of Summer Fireworks Extravaganza** for just a \$15 entry fee for adults.