

Winters, Bender, And Fischer CGS Dwarf National Champions

BY BEN DEATHERAGE
 COTTAGE GROVE SPEEDWAY

The cars and stars of the Dwarf Cars returned to racing at Cottage Grove Speedway on Saturday, August 10th for the finale of the Dwarf Car Nationals. Also on the card were the Late Models, IMCA Sport Mods, and Hornets.

Like the night before the significant Dwarf event drew over seventy entries, divided into three individual divisions, with teams from Oregon, Washington, California, Idaho, Nevada and Colorado represented as well as the Canadian province of British Columbia. The event is held under the sanction of the Western Dwarf Car Association but hosted by the Northwest Dwarf Cars club. Those seventy-plus cars got split into three divisions: Pro, Veteran, and Sportsman.

The Pro Dwarf main event witnessed Camden Robustelli taking charge of the field in the early laps. The Medford racer obtained the lead on the first start only to lose it shortly after a restart within the first ten laps. Ryan Winters got around Camden and refused to let go. The race went non-stop after a few early cautions and Winters dominated the rest of the way. The Galt, California traveler scored a massive victory in his first Cottage Grove visit.

A massive melee was on hand for the fight for second. Night one winner Darren Brown, of El Cajon, California, picked up the runner-up position over third finishing Jonathan Henry from Stockton, California. The rest of the top five was made up of Central Point's Josh King, in fourth, and Portland gasser Ryan Martinez, in fifth.

Heat races winners were Sean Banks of Colorado Springs, Colorado, Josh King and Jonathan Henry. Camden Robustelli was victorious in the scramble. Josh King finished in first place in the consolation feature.

Placerville, California's Mike Reeder set the pace on the first lap of the Veteran Dwarf main. An early caution bunched the field up and Mark Biscardi of San Jose, California made the pass on him on lap two after the restart. The fourth circuit witnessed another lead change at the hands of Tim Fitzpatrick. The Wheatland, California driver, based initially out of the Las Vegas, Nevada area, fought valiantly to hold off contenders the rest of the race.

Both Fitzpatrick and Kevin Bender duked it out for much of the last half of the main event. Bender took control on lap fifteen only for Fitzpatrick to reclaim the position on lap seventeen. The ensuing lap Bender of Rocklin, California secured the top spot and went on to win the fea-

See **SPEEDWAY 4B**

CG Skatepark, 15 years on



Local scooter riders, BMX riders and skateboarders make use of one of the grinding rails at Cottage Grove skatepark. The chain link fence, which has become a hazard, can be seen in the background. PHOTO BY NICK SNYDER/CG SENTINEL

Future of skatepark care unclear after years of operation

BY NICK SNYDER
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A decade and a half after its inception, Cottage Grove skatepark looks a bit worse for wear at 15 years old.

The skatepark, originally completed in 2004, celebrates its 15th anniversary this week, which would typically be a cause for celebration. However, due to years of repeated vandalism and graffiti as well as an unclear delegation of maintenance and cleaning responsibilities, the future of the park is as murky as the water that gathers in the main bowl due to its perpetually clogged drain.

"The maintenance department oversees taking care of our city parks and the skatepark is one of

the parks that we try to manage, mow and cleanup on a regular basis," said Public Works and Development Director Faye Stewart.

"It's not uncommon for me to drive by and notice that there's garbage and paper cups and different things that are littered around the park ... but we're trying to get folks to acknowledge that this is their park, their skatepark and, you know, please help us keep it clean for all the users to use."

Upon taking a trip to the park, visitors will instantly notice what Stewart is alluding to. There is indeed trash strewn around the inside and outside of the park. The park rules sign is tagged with enough graffiti that parts have become illegible. Pine needles from nearby trees gather on the concrete, creating small hazards for users.

While the park receives regular garbage pickup every Monday, it remains unclear if the inside of the park sees regularly-scheduled

maintenance and sweeping from city officials. But it has, at least, received periodical care as Stewart mentions several times in the past few years where officials have been out to the park to plunge the flooded bowl after receiving calls from local residents.

"I have received several calls in the last couple years that the drain needs to be unplugged ... once in a while the fencing gets damaged and we have to go in and fix it ... the police department brought to our attention that the steps needed some attention and we worked on that a couple months ago. So besides routine garbage, we try to recognize when things need to be cleaned up, but it's not swept on a daily basis," Stewart continued.

According to Stewart the city provides the same services to the skatepark as the other parks in the area, however the daily users of the park feel like their favorite hangout - for skateboarders and BMX and

scooter riders alike - has long been forgotten.

"It just kinda seems like nobody cares about it, but this is where we like to hang out. There's not much to do in Cottage Grove so if this skatepark goes away or gets too messy to use then we have nowhere else to go," said one of the users present at the park last week.

"Lots of people probably think it's us that's making a mess at the skatepark, throwing garbage, doing graffiti, but this is where we hang out. It's not us. It's like having a dirty bedroom," he continued.

While there is undoubtedly a group of people who wantonly throw trash into the park, break bottles or tag the concrete with spraypaint, the users and city officials seem to disagree on who exactly those people might be. In any case, taking a sense of ownership in maintaining a shared-use public space sometimes requires tools and

See **SKATEPARK 2B**



Justin Lemon and his little brother, Austin, pose after competing at Cottage Grove Speedway. PHOTO C/O CAMERON GRANT

Young racers with big time goals

Local boys get to work fundraising for big race in California

BY NICK SNYDER
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For some, sport is about recreation. For others, it's about fitness. For a select few, it's a burning passion and even further, for some individuals and families, it's an all-encompassing lifestyle.

Local Cottage Grove racers and brothers Justin Lemon and Austin Ellertson, their family and Justin's best friend Cameron Grant fall into that final category. They will spend the next two weeks pouring all their energy into fundraising efforts to allow Justin, 14 years old, and his little brother Austin, seven years old, a chance to participate in the Fifth Annual Kyle Larson Outlaw Kart Showcase, held September 2 and 3 at Cycleland Speedway in Orville, California.

According to the event's own website, it is known as "the Indy 500

of outlaw kart racing."

"We are doing, like, pretty much anything. Car washes, collecting cans and donations, we're doing house care, animal care, anything pretty much to make money. Our overall goal is to raise about \$2000," said Lemon when asked about the details of their fundraising efforts.

As one could imagine, racing isn't the most cost-friendly activity to get involved in. With other sports, all you often need is a ball and some space, but when the necessary equipment includes high-performance engines, specialized tires and the ever-rising cost of fuel, meeting the financial demands of your passion requires some help and a particular attitude.

"One thing that I'm very proud of as a parent, he didn't just go around saying, 'can someone give me money,'" said Justin's dad, Nate Ellertson, when asked about his son's efforts. "He looked at it as a way to get out there and provide a service to people doing side jobs, whatever it is, to achieve his goal. So now he has a

See **FUNDRAISING 3B**

Athlete of the Week



This week's athlete of the week is Eric Ashley of Jasper, Oregon. Ashley led every lap to claim his third hornets title of the current campaign on Aug. 10 at CG Speedway.



Eric Ashley shows off his winnings with family.

PHOTO C/O BEN DEATHERAGE