

Exciting racing action prevails at St. Helens Rivercity Speedway

By Richard Nix

The W.E.S.C.O. Sprint cars' welcome return to River City Speedway in St. Helens was a true crowd pleaser as thirteen of the thundering power-houses took to the 1/4 mile clay oval for the A Main, and treated the crowd to 25 laps of flash, slash and dash.

Sprints

Rob Squillace was merciless as he mauled his way from the fifth row to the lead by lap 5, fending off numerous attacks by Bill Jensen in the Adkins Racing entry. As Squillace and Jensen dueled to the mid-teen laps, Mike Adkins Jr. in another Adkins Racing entry cut his way into third place and took over second from Jensen on lap 15 with a daring wheel-hopping front straight pass.

After being challenged for the lead, Jensen now found himself defending third place against an aggressive Ron Stratton in his LaHacienda sponsored sprinter. Always a contender, Marshall Schlenz drove his Lacey Auto & Boat Licensing entry into the fray and, after Jensen's spin, challenged Adkins for second while Jason Thomas in the Road Knights Racing sprinter fought his way from the sixth row to fourth place. Doug Brown kept his Transmission Outlet racer on all four wheels, most of the time, to take fifth. If it sounds like total mayhem, you're getting the point. It was a true edge of your seater...

Sportsman

The problem with experience is that eventually you outgrow the challenge and need to move up. The top drivers in the Sportsman class have achieved that level of expertise, which is wonderful from one point of view, but makes for a dreadfully boring race. I know I'll catch hell for saying that, but it's not my fault they got so good. Track and tires will handle only so much speed and, with the top

five finishers all running at maximum, it left little to the imagination.

Doug Lockwood-Hamm's Monte Carlo led from the pole followed by Scott Wells WEBCO Malibu, followed by Mark Sayre's Bearing Service T-Bird, followed by Scott Dorie's WEB-CO Gran Prix with Jack Kauppila's Aloha Station Gran Prix as caboose. (Yawn)

Street Stock

There were twenty laps of excitement as Dale Holland drove his Dancin' Bare Tavern Nova in a flag-to-flag, knock-down, drag-out race to the checkers. For the first four laps, Mickey Allerding kept his Neb's Auto Parts Nova in Holland's mirror, then passed the torch to Sean Fitzgerald whose Bellcrest Auto Monte Carlo became the trailer Holland was towing up through the late teen laps.

Mitch Martinez, who started the Blake's Auto Repair Monte Carlo on the fifth row, slashed his way to Fitzgerald's back door and took over second on lap 17. Martinez looked strong enough, but the time-shortened race wasn't long enough, so we'll never know if he could have beaten Holland.

Ernie Connall had his hands full holding on to fourth as his Luigi's Piza Torino came under attack from both Matt Sayre's Plainview Auto Parts Torino and Doug Lockwood's Hamm's Monte Carlo. Aside from Martinez' march to the front, these three were the show as they battled three-wide through the turns, falling in line only to move through traffic. In the end, Connall nosed ahead, leaving Sayre fifth, Lockwood sixth.

The mixed class Hardtop A Main pits stock hardtops against their alcohol-guzzling big brothers and always makes for exciting racing. Stock points leader Richard Petty's Hurler Athletics Ford led the pack from the pole into turn one, with Glenn Hester's Northwest Metal Products Chevy in hot pursuit. By the stripe, Hester powered into the lead, only to spin away in turn two. This left Petty

and Karl Peterson's Mountindale Garage entry to battle for the lead. By lap six Peterson made his move and began driving away. While the rest of the pack sorted themselves out, Peterson and Petty found the groove and it appeared they would go unchallenged for first and second.

Then, in what had to be the drive of the night, Hester methodically picked off one competitor after another as he fought his way from the infield to third and set his sights on Petty by lap 13. A caution pulled the field together and after the restart while Peterson muscled ahead, Petty and Hester went at it tooth and nail. With one corner to go, it was even money who would take second, but the outside line gave Hester the bite he needed to nose ahead at the stripe.

Peterson, Hester, Petty, M. Hinkle, Dick Tow, 1 through 5.

Women's Division

This points chase is a whole new ball game. August 5th: While vacationing in Reno, Jackie Olson decided to fly back early to race. She won and took over the points lead. August 12th: Second in points Brenda Martinez (Blake's Auto Repair Monte Carlo) was forced to miss the race due to urgent family business. Third in points Sundee Pogue (LeRoy White Racing Camaro), was caught in traffic and finished sixth. Put it all together and Olson and her Silver Star Sports Bar Camaro are going to be extremely difficult to stop.

In the race, Sharon Cook in the Rainier Exhaust & Tire Malibu did a tremendous job fending off Annie Greenfield's Doug's Auto Service Firebird and Traci Johnson's Cellular One Chevelle, whose early lap fight for second became a three-wide back-stretch battle for the lead on lap five. Somehow, Cook was able to thread the needle and muscle her way out of turn 4 in front, setting up a one-lap drag race between Johnson and Greenfield that ended in a lap seven turn two spin-out. Both Greenfield and Johnson re-entered but

their opportunity to win had passed. From that point, Cook extended her lead and never looked back.

Olson, starting from the fifth row, knifed through the pack looking strong enough to win. Sheryl Matilton had other ideas, and made her Scappoose Muffler Monte Carlo extremely wide as she tried to hold second

place. It took some turn four heroics by Olson to get a drive out of the corner that would allow her to nip Matilton at the wire. Micki Mears borrowed the Jordan Racing Maverick and drove the unfamiliar racer to a respectable fourth place finish; Greenfield was able to recover and take fifth.

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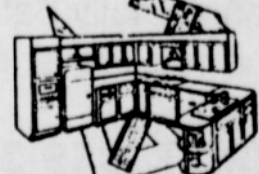
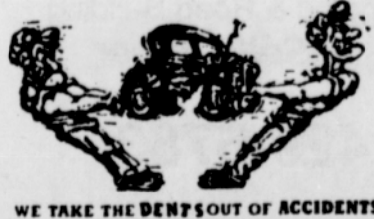
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