

## Sitterly Wins Heat... Takes 4<sup>th</sup> in Main

By Dan Jonson

A pair of familiar faces returned to Victory Lane at Oswego Speedway Saturday night as Doug Didero and Mike Bond each crossed the start-finish line first with crowd pleasing finishes. Didero grabbed the lead on lap 21, and barely held off the late dashes by Joey Payne and Dave McKnight as lapped traffic dramatically slowed Didero in the last five laps. Bond raced his SBS car from fifth to first in the last ten laps of his race to pick up his victory.

Jason Spaulding and Todd Stowell paced the 21 car supermodified field to starter Donnie Forbes green flags to start the 45 lap feature. Spaulding raced out to the top spot, while the field looked for precious racing real estate behind. Doug Didero pulled the Xtreme #3 to the inside, while Joey Payne and Otto Sitterly chose the outside groove to move forward.

As Spaulding controlled the pace, fans watched the pack shuffle, as Dave McKnight, Didero and Sitterly wheeled to the front quickly. McKnight shot his way to sixth place by lap two, with Didero close behind the 08 and Sitterly in the tire tracks of Didero's 3.

Lap 4 saw the first yellow flag of the event, as Tim Snyder's 0 lost traction in turns three and four and looped around, while running in a top five spot. On the restart, the scoreboard read Spaulding, Stephen Gioia, Joey Payne, Ray Graham, Dave McKnight, Pat Lavery, Doug Didero, Otto Sitterly, Todd Stowell, and Jerry Curran. On the restart, Didero went right to work as he went back to the inside lane, and passed Lavery, then McKnight within a lap. Sitterly continued tracking Didero, again following the defending Classic winner through the pack.

Caution again flew over the speedway on lap 6, as New Hampshire driver Dave Sanborn looped his #12 in the turn three foam. Sanborn was able to continue, but not before a lengthy delay in the race, as a portion of the lighting system failed at the speedway, forcing a half hour delay in the racing action with darkness over speedway.

Once the lights came back to full power, Payne quickly shot to second place, as he shot to the inside of the Gioia 9 on the take off. Once clear of the 9 car, Payne chased down Spaulding and took the lead of the race with an inside front straightaway pass on lap 10. The "Jersey Jet" quickened the race pace his first lap upfront as he clocked in a 17.67 lap up front.

Just behind the high flying 99, fourth running Ray Graham's 90 slowed off turn four, allowing Didero, McKnight and Sitterly by for position. Not wanting Payne to get too far away, Didero went to work on McKnight for position. The pair raced side by side, until coming up to third running Gioia, with Didero sliding by first. McKnight followed him through the whole, with the scoreboard now reading 99, 23, 3, 08 and 9.

With the tight action behind, Payne raced out of a 1.38 second advantage in just three laps in front. Lap 15, Didero and McKnight again tag teamed their way forward, as they grabbed second and third places away from Spaulding, now 1.15 seconds behind Payne. Payne's lead began to shrink, as Didero closed a quarter second per lap on the 99, and on lap 19, the 99 and 3 ran nose to tail, with the 08 eight lengths back in third.

Lap 21, Didero pulled the Xtreme Chassis #3 to the inside of the 99, and came out of turn four in the lead. Just behind, Sitterly chased down the Gioia and Spaulding cars, and gave chase the lead pack. Just a few laps later, Spaulding's fine run ended as he pulled the #23 pitside, out of the race.

At the halfway point, Didero was clocked at 17.05 seconds, with a 1.37 second lead on Payne, McKnight, while Sitterly, Gioia, and Greg Furlong were eight lengths back. Keith Champine,

Keith Gilliam, Todd Stowell and Tim Snyder rounded out the top ten at the crossed flags point. Seventh running Shampine ended his fine run on lap 32, as he pulled the 88 car pitside with terminal problems.

As Didero built his lead to 3.89 seconds on lap 33, heavy traffic loomed ahead, as a pack of five cars ran for position. The long green flag run, uninterrupted racing since the lap 6 red flag period, saw cars all over the race track, with the leader coming up on a pack of slower cars, which were sure to alter the race.

Didero was anxiously patient in the 3, looking for any racing room he could find, but still bottled up in the lapped cars running side by side. Payne substantially cut into the once over 3 second lead. On lap 39, that lead was now cut more than in half, down to 1.87 seconds. Payne and McKnight chopped the lead even more, as lap 42 the gap was now five car lengths.

Fans rose to their feet, as the 99 and 08 were two lengths back with two to go, with Didero still not getting a clear track ahead. The white flag waved with Didero bogged in slower cars, with the 99 and 08 now on the back bumper. Coming into turn four, Payne went to the outside for the win, with Didero then taking away the preferred line, sliding up ahead of Payne and McKnight, blocking to perfection as they raced to the checkered flag.

Didero crossed the line first, with Payne, McKnight and Sitterly all nose to tail behind, with Gioia rounding out the top five.

"I owe this one to everyone on the crew," Didero said after the hard earned victory. "It was a tough one, coming back from last weeks accident. Everyone really worked hard, and put in a long week. The passing flag came out and I had to look for any opening, as they obviously didn't look at the passing flag."

"It was a good run for us tonight," a happy Payne said after the crowd pleasing finish. "We were running him down, and we just needed a few more laps. I want one of these non winged feature really bad, and we came close tonight."

Andrew Schartner and Stan Gates drew front row starting assignments for the SBS feature, with the pair running side by side the first lap, before Schartner taking the lead on lap 2. Mike Bond went to the outside early, while three time winner in '09 Dave Gruel was deep in traffic, starting in 12<sup>th</sup> spot.

Russ Brown peaked his #60 to the inside in the first few laps, racing his way to fourth place, just behind Schartner, Rob Pullen and Jack Patrick, as these top four pulled away. Schartner circled the 5/8's mile track in consistent 19.67 laps, as the rookie led his first laps on pavement. Just behind the lead pack, Tim Barbeau, Dave Cliff, Mike Bond, Kevin Knopp and Brian Sobus were chomping at the bit, just out of the top five, looking to close the gap on the leaders.

Yellow came over the speedway for the first time on lap 9, as the Mark Castiglia 90 and Steve Abt 85 cars came to a rest just out of turn four, Both were able to continue after assistance.

Brown grabbed third on the restart, and began to work on the 18 & 25 cars for the point. Racing action was again slowed, this time on lap 12 as the top ten cars of Stan Gates and Dave Cliff raced for position, making contact on the grandstand straightaway. Gates #28 was worse for ware, as he hit the turn one foam, damaging the 28, ending his fine run.

Schartner protected the inside throughout the race, and the restart was no different, as if someone was going to get by the 18, they would have to do it on the outside. With 10 laps to go, Schartner led Pullen, Brown, Patrick and Mike Bond. Bond went by Patrick on the restart with an inside pass to take over fourth, just behind Brown's 60. As Schartner continued leading upfront, the 60 and 26 disposed of Pullen in the next few laps for second and third places.

Lap 27, Bond kept his furious charge going as he stayed low and passed Brown for the runner up spot, just behind rookie Schartner, still leading with laps winding down. One lap later, Schartner bobbed out of turn four, allowing Bond to slip by on the inside with the lead. His ten lap charge from fifth to first was now complete. He drove unchallenged the rest of the way, and picked up his first win of 2009. Schartner and Brown held on to top three spots with Rob Pullen and Kevin Knopp filling out the top five.

“The inside has been the way to go, and our car was really good tonight,” the happy winner said on the Victory podium. “I have to thank my crew, as they really did a good job.”

News and notes.....21 cars were pitside in each division. Tim Barbeau, Rob Pullen and Mike Bond won Small Block Super heat races, while Otto Sitterly, Doug Didero and Joey Payne won Supermodified heat races. Dave Gruel had been looking for a record fourth win in a row in the SBS division, but never cleared traffic in the 30 lapper. John “Luther” Gray drove the Gilliam 87 in practice and heat races, as a gift from Gilliam for Gray’s work with the “Make-A-Wish” foundation. ISMA raced at Toledo and Berlin raceways Friday and Saturday, with Russ Wood taking the Toledo checkered, and Chris Perley victorious at Berlin. It was a rough weekend on both driver and equipment in the midwest, as Bobby Bond crashed his 25 at Toledo, suffering a broken foot, and Johnny Benson involved in grinding crash, with fire coming over the 21 Saturday at Berlin. Sunday morning, Benson was listed in serious, but stable condition in a Spectrum Hospital. There are no races at Oswego until July 4, with the Jim Shampine Memorial 58 and Tony White 34. Gates open at 4:30pm, driver autographs at 5:45pm, and the first heat race at 6:30pm.

#### Supermodified finish

1)Doug Didero 3, 2)Joey Payne 99, 3)Dave McKnight 08, 4)Otto Sitterly 7, 5)Stephen Gioia 9, 6)Greg Furlong 72, 7)Keith Gilliam 87, 8)Todd Stowell 89, 9)Jerry Curran 24, 10)Bentley Warren 15, 11)Pat Lavery 2, 12)Tim Snyder 0, 13)Bob Magner 22, 14)Lou Levea Sr 03, 15)Hal Latulip 56, 16)Dave Sanborn 12, 17)Lou Levea Jr 04, 18)Keith Shampine 88, 19)Jason Spaulding 23, 20)Danny Connors 01, 21)Ray Graham 90