

## Otto Grabs 3<sup>rd</sup>

Dan Johnson

Both the supermodified and SBS features were mirror images of each other Saturday night at Oswego Speedway, as Ray Graham and Dave Cliff each parlayed top cars and good starting spots into features wins. Both winning drivers also had a trip of cars on their back bumpers that they had to contend with in the second half of their races. For Graham, it was his second feature win of the season, while Cliff grabbed his first win of 2009.

Tim Snyder and Graham led the 22 car supermodified parade to Jerry Kritzman's green flag, with Graham jumping right out to the advantage. The field shuffled behind, as they all looked for racing room early on. Joey Payne and Otto Sitterly pulled their cars inside, while Dave McKnight, Joe Gosek and Doug Didero went to the high side of the speedway to move forward.

Graham circled the track at a 17.60 clip early on, while Bobby Magner, Snyder, Jason Spaulding, Pat Lavery, Stephen Gioia, Payne, McKnight, Jerry Curran and Keith Champine trailed early. Graham and Magner broke away as it looked in the early laps that the 90 and 22 wanted to separate themselves from the seven car third place pack.

Otto Sitterly began his march forward on lap 9, as he disposed of Champine and Curran in the same lap to move to ninth. McKnight was Sitterly's next victim, as a lap 12 inside front straightaway pass saw the #7 up to eighth. Pre race favorites Joe Gosek and Doug Didero were still mired in heavy race traffic at this juncture, as the 00 and 3 ran in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>.

Yellow flew over the speedway for the first time in the race on lap 15 as Didero's 3 came to a stop on the front straightaway, with a broken sway bar putting the 3 out of commission.

Graham remained in control of the race, while fifth running Pat Lavery perfectly timed the restart to move up a spot, passing Spaulding in turn four when the race went green. Second place Magner suddenly slowed in three, ending the fine run by the local driver, as he pitted the 22. A lap 17 Todd Stowell spin in one bunched the field once again.

The race behind the leader reached fever pitch at this point of the race, as Joey Payne moved the Plum Crazy 99 up to fourth once racing, wheeling by Spaulding, and Pat Lavery continuing to move up. Lavery and Payne snuck by the Snyder 0 for second and third spots on lap 19, as they tried to catch the high flying Graham 90.

At the halfway point of the 45 lapper, Graham held a 1.23 second gap over Lavery, Payne, Gioia and Sitterly. Snyder's 0 couldn't stay low on the speedway, and faded back from the top five. The 2 and 99 caught fans attention as they cut the lead down to .71 seconds in a few laps, as they reeled in Graham.

Lavery's fine run ended on lap 27, as his second running car came into contact with a foam block in turn four, bringing out a caution flag. He attempted to get by a lapped car, and slipped out of the groove, contacting one of the safer barriers. Top runners Snyder and Greg Furlong pitted under this slowdown, with only Snyder returning to action.

Payne, still looking for his first non-winged win, tried to snooker Graham on the restart, but the crafty veteran from Iowa wouldn't have it. Graham pulled out to a .83 second gap in a few laps. With 10 to go, it was a four car breakaway for the win, as this one would be decided between the 90, 00, 9 and 7. Graham was stronger in the straightaway, Payne was better in the corners, Gioia was stuck in the box waiting for an opening, while Sitterly was the wild card trying the high side. Dave McKnight was 10 lengths back in fifth place. Graham protected the inside lane, as if Payne was to get by, he would have to do it on the high side. Payne went for it

as he stepped the 99 in the outer groove, but couldn't pull even with the 90. Sitterly stole a podium spot from Gioia with two to go, but ran out of laps to catch the lead duo.

As the checkered flag waved, Graham raced to his second career Oswego win just a car length ahead of the "Jersey Jet". Sitterly held on for third, Gioia fourth and McKnight fifth.

"I know Joey was closing in at the end," the winner started minutes after taking the checkered flag. "We were starting to get loose, getting in. The guys keep working on the car., they are the ones that make it happen. I really have to thank the guys on the crew. We were getting good drive off the corner, and loose on entry, and I could hear Joey coming at the end."

Local drivers Jason Simmons and Dave Gruel drew front row assignments for the 20 car SBS 30, with Simmons wasting no time in jumping to the top spot. Dave Cliff went right to work when the initial green came out, as he cranked the black 06 inside from his second row start, by Steve Abt and Danzer on lap 1, for second spot.

Lap 3, Cliff went to the outer groove to take the lead past Simmons with a outside front straightaway pass for the top spot. A pair of lap 3 caution flags slowed the pace, with top runner Russ Brown involved in one of the caution periods.

Dave Gruel and Tim Barbeau moved up to the top three on the restart. Brown began his charge from the back of the pack, as the 60 worked well on the outside of the speedway. Cliff held a 1.27 lead over the Gruel-Barbeau race, with Knopp in fourth and Brown all the way up to fifth by lap 10.

Lap 11 saw a two car tango in turn one, as Knopp's 04 and Andrew Schartner's 18 were in the foam. Knopp's damage on the 04 was terminal, while Schartner was stepping gingerly coming out of the 18.

Back to green, as Cliff pulled away easily, all eyes were on Brown as he shifted the 60 in overdrive, as he shot by Barbeau for third on lap 14, and stayed outside to get by Gruel on lap 15 for the second spot, behind only leader Cliff.

Cliff circled the track at a 19.30 clip, as this one was going to be decided between the 06, 60, 50 and 58 cars. Cliff remained up front, driving as hard as he could to stay on point. Brown tried high and low, but couldn't shoot by for the lead. The pair raced hard, but clean, neither giving an inch. Cliff remained in control, and kept Brown back at the finish.

"It was a good race, and I have to thank Russ, Dave and Tim for racing me clean," victor Dave Cliff said after his win. "We had a good starting spot, and not as good a car as we hoped, but it was enough for tonight. These guys are so tough, our competition is so close, getting a win isn't easy in this division, that's for sure."

News and Notes.....22 supermodifieds and 21 SBS cars were pitside. Bobby Magner, Stephen Gioia and Joe Gosek won supermodified heat races, while Dave Gruel, Dave Cliff and Brian Sobus won SBS heats. Joe Gosek made his first appearance of the year in the 00, while Michael Barnes was behind the wheel of the brand new Osetek-Buske 66. Samantha Todd kept her winning streak intact as she won the Powerpuff 8 lap dash, ahead of Janine Regan, in an entertaining race. Kathy Harrington came home third. There is no racing this week for the Harborfest break. Racing returns on August 1, with the Mr. Supermodified \$10,000 to win supermodified, and \$1000 twin Mr. SBS race.

Supermodified results

1)Ray Graham 90, 2)Joey Payne 99, 3)Otto Sitterly 7, 4)Stephen Gioia 9, 5)Dave McKnight 08, 6)Keith Gilliam 87, 7)Todd Stowell 89, 8)Jason Spaulding 23, 9)Keith Shampine 88, 10)Pat Lavery 2, 11)Tim Snyder 0, 12)Lou Levea Sr. 61, 13)Jerry Curran 24, 14)Dan Connors 01,

15)Joe Gosek 00, 16)Greg Furlong 72, 17)Hal Latulip 56, 18)Lou Levea Jr 04, 19)Bobby  
Magner 22, 20)Doug Didero 3, 21)Bob Bogwicz 09, 22)Mikey Barnes 66

SBS results

1)Dave Cliff 06, 2)Russ Brown 60, 3)Dave Gruel 50, 4)Tim Barbeau 58, 5)Mike Bond 26,  
6)Brian Sobus 79, 7)Jason Simmons 91, 8)Jack Patrick 9, 9)Shawn Walker 68, 10)Guard  
Nearbin 78, 11)Stan Gates 28, 12)Barry Kingsley 23,13)Brian Haynes 86, 14)Chip Wood 2,  
15)Mark Castiglia 90, 16)Dave Danzer 52, 17)Steve Abt 85, 18)Kevin Knopp 04, 19)Andrew  
Schartner 18, 20)Rob Pullen 25