

Sitterly heads into final regular-season night with 26-point lead over Payne, 28 over Didero

By Keith Shampine

Oswego, N.Y. (Aug. 18, 2009) – The hard work and long hours in the shop, which for Otto Sitterly and the John Nicotra No. 7 team date back to the earliest days of 2009, will now prove their importance with the Oswego Speedway supermodified season's most pivotal weeks upon us. This Saturday marks the final regular-season night at Oswego with the only Twin 30s program on the '09 schedule. After the two 30-lap mains, Otto Sitterly will either be crowned with a second consecutive Oswego supermodified track championship, or he'll be a disappointed second or third after leading most of the season's title chase.

Sitterly, who suffered a hard fourth-turn crash Saturday night which led to his first non-wing super DNF of the season, now holds a 26-point lead over Saturday's feature winner Joey Payne heading into the twins. Two-time '09 feature winner Doug Didero sits third, 28 points back of Otto.

The two-time Oswego champ offered some very honest remarks regarding this weekend's important Oswego Quality Carpet / Chris Nelson Insurance-sponsored Track Championship Night.

"We're just going to come and race. I can't BS anybody – do we want it? Yeah we want it, absolutely. Are we going to try our best? Absolutely. And at this time next week, we'll know what happens."

The battle for the title has been mostly evenly matched from the start. Sitterly and Didero each have two feature wins and each have displayed the fastest cars on the track at times this year. Payne, driving a mid-90s West chassis, has even looked to be the fastest at times this year and picked up his first 45 lapper Saturday, driving away from the pack and appearing ready to give Otto a run for the title this weekend.

The New Jersey racer closed the points gap by taking full advantage of Otto's tough night, which included the Nicotra crew changing the G&I Homes-sponsored No. 7's rear wing after damage from an early multi-car wreck. Sitterly charged his way back toward the top five while driving a slightly damaged car and was attempting to make an outside move on Pat Lavery for sixth position on lap 21 when he hit the wall hard in Turn 4, riding it for a time before landing on all four.

The St. Johnsville, N.Y., driver described the accident: "I passed a bunch of cars and figured we were going to get up into the top five and just pushed it a little too hard on the outside of Pat (Lavery) and it got really loose. I got up into the marbles too far and just rode the wall. It really looked much worse than what it is. (The car) is not that bad. We'll have it back 110 percent this week and give it our best shot."

Otto and the Nicotra crew will be putting in those long hours in the shop this week much like they did over the winter, meticulously going through every part of the car and making necessary repairs to the blue 7.

Of course, the work won't stop. After Track Championship Night, the team will have two weeks to prepare for the Classic 200 on Sunday, Sept. 8, the richest supermodified race in the world. Sitterly will be gunning for his first ever Classic win and Indy car star Davey Hamilton will be in town to drive the Nicotra-owned No. 6 super. Hamilton has one Classic win to his credit; he won the 200 in 1997.