

## **“Team effort” leads Sitterly to 2009 Oswego supermodified champion**

**by Keith Shampine**

Oswego, N.Y. (Aug. 25, 2009) – Otto Sitterly’s finishes of second and seventh in Saturday night’s Oswego Quality Carpet / Chris Nelson Insurance-sponsored Twin 30s at Oswego Speedway were good enough to net the driver of the Nicotra Racing No. 7 his third Oswego supermodified track championship.

Sitterly entered the night 26 points up on New Jersey’s Joey Payne. The Jersey Jet, who picked up his first ever non-wing super victory the week before, had a legitimate shot at the title with dual 30-lap features on tap. But Sitterly was flawless, as he’s been all season. He started in the back in the 12-lap heat and maneuvered his way through traffic to finish second behind Joe Gosek. Starting fourth in the first 30, Sitterly quickly got to second and challenged Gosek in the caution-plagued race, ultimately settling for the runner-up spot – two positions ahead of Payne in fourth.

Only needing to finish 13<sup>th</sup> in the second 30 to clinch the title, Otto drove a careful race on his way to a seventh-place finish. In his sight for the distance was Payne, who finished just a couple spots ahead to round out the top five.

Sitterly was extremely gracious after pulling off the hat trick – his third title in four years. He took time to thank the many who have helped him. “First and foremost I have to thank John Nicotra because without him I wouldn’t be here. Obviously my wife and kids, who put up with a lot of stuff and there’s a lot of support there. All the crew guys, Joe Hawksby – I mean, he built the damn thing. Doug Holmes gives us fabulous motors and he’s a great person. There have been so many people over the years who have helped. I’m very thankful.”

The Canajoharie, New York, driver’s second consecutive title has him entering the discussion as one of the lakeside oval’s all-time greats, although Sitterly deflects much of the credit. He instead gives it to some “30 people” who make the Nicotra Racing team what it is.

“All of these people who are involved work very hard,” Otto began. “Whether it’s somebody who makes deals for us and puts this thing together with money, or somebody who’s in the garage every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday who does the thankless jobs like taking (the car) apart, cleaning it – most of the jobs the other guys don’t really want to do.

“There are so many good people. I’ve got a guy who if there’s a little machining project to do or welding project, I just call him up and ask him and he takes care of it. It’s not one person; there are probably 30 people who if I call them up and ask them to do something, there’s no hesitation.”

Car owner John Nicotra, who is a lifelong supermodified fan and began field cars for Sitterly and Indy 500 veteran Davey Hamilton in 2007, accomplished his second straight Oswego championship. But like Sitterly, Nicotra gives much of the credit elsewhere.

“Otto is the guy who makes this happen,” John said Saturday night. “The guy is unbelievable. He works on it all winter, all week. He drives the truck to the track, adjusts on the car all night, drives it and then drives the truck home to start the week all over again. I’m just the guy who’s in charge of the stickers. I keep the stickers on the car and help keep the team going. Otto and all the crew are the ones who deserve the credit.”

The Sitterly / Nicotra combination put together one of the most consistent Oswego regular seasons in recent memory. In 12 starts – 10 of them non-winged – Otto wheeled the Hawk Jr chassis to two wins, eight top-five and 10 top-10 results.

But the team’s fast, strong and steady showings were more impressive than their consistency. Only one DNF in a crash-filled feature put a scuff mark on an otherwise stellar year, which saw the blue 7 continuously charge to the front and net more top-fives than any other team.



*Otto leads Keith Champagne Saturday night* *Otto and team after winning the track title*  
– Mike “Pinner” Johnson photos