

Otto has option for Oswego opener; Hamilton to drive opening day at Oswego

HOMESTEAD, Fla. (Jan. 24, 2010) – John Nicotra Racing, led by 2009 International Classic winner Otto Sitterly, is preparing for another assault on the supermodified world this season which will begin with an open practice session May 1 at Oswego Speedway. At the practice, Otto will test the No. 7 Hawk Jr. Chassis, which he drove to his third track championship and the Classic victory last year, and the No. 79 Xtreme Chassis, which the team purchased last August. He'll then decide what car he wants to drive opening day at Oswego on May 8.

Indianapolis 500 veteran Davey Hamilton, who drove the Xtreme 79 in the Classic last September, will make the trek to Oswego for the opener and drive the car Sitterly chooses not to run. The race will mark Hamilton's final preparation before he heads to Indianapolis to attempt to qualify for his 10th Indianapolis 500.

Hamilton commented on what will be his fourth season behind the wheel of a Nicotra-owned, Sitterly-prepared supermodified.

“Otto and Johnny have connected and formed a great team and I'm just proud to be a part of it. Johnny's wanted to be involved for a long time and having a guy like Otto to provide quality cars is outstanding. There's no doubt I'd like to pull off a win for not only Johnny, but Otto, as well. It'd mean an awful lot to me.”

As for not knowing which supermodified he'll chauffeur in Oswego's 60th season kickoff, Hamilton says it's his job to be ready no matter what the car. “(Racing) is my life. As I came up through the ranks and became a professional driver, I started driving different cars all the time. It's my job to adapt quickly to whatever equipment I'm given. I don't care which car I'm given; I'm confident with either one. They're both fast, both capable of winning. This is Otto's program, honestly, and it's his choice. I wouldn't expect it any other way.”

Otto is enjoying an off-season that follows the best season of his career, and when the snow melts and the new season begins, Sitterly won't waste any time kicking it into high gear. A day after the open practice at Oswego, Otto plans to head east to Albany-Saratoga Speedway for the ISMA opener on Sunday, May 2. He'll then return to Oswego the following weekend to begin defense of his track championship.

Otto spoke about the upcoming season and the three-car stable, which includes the No. 6 Hawk Jr. Chassis.

“I truly feel all three are winning cars. A lot of people say the 6 isn't the same as the 7, but the truth is we really haven't run it that much. I believe it's just as good as the 7, and of course the Xtreme 79 is an outstanding racecar. We'll go to the (Oswego) practice and test both. Whichever one I feel more comfortable with is the one I'll run. Of course I feel at home with the 7, but I might just take the Xtreme. Right now, I honestly don't know what car I'm going to run.”

Assuming everything goes OK at the Oswego practice, Sitterly and the Nicotra team will load up and head to Albany where Otto drive the 6 with the wing. Albany is a track Sitterly is familiar with; he began his career in stock cars on the dirt at the four-tenths-mile oval.

“We tested there in the fall and ran pretty good, I think. It’s cool because I still know a bunch of the people there, but it doesn’t even seem like the same track with the pavement. Obviously we don’t run with the wing much, but somewhere in me I feel like we have a chance to win. I wouldn’t go if I didn’t feel that. The focus is to win at Oswego, but honestly, I’d really like to be more competitive with the wing. Winning a winged race would mean a great deal to me and the team.”

Sitterly added that the team will make occasional appearances with the wing this season, but that schedule is uncertain at this time.

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