

FIFTH OSWEGO SUPER TITLE PLACES SITTERLY IN ELITE COMPANY

Oswego, N.Y. (August 19, 2012) – There were moments of doubt Saturday night at Championship Night at Oswego Speedway, but when the checkered flag waved on the last regular season 50-lapper of the Novelis Supermodified season, Otto Sitterly was a track champion in the track's premier division for the fifth time in seven years.

An up-and-down 2012 followed a similar season last year, which saw Sitterly finish third in the final super points but finish on a high note with his second Budweiser International Classic 200 triumph.

While the events of this year's version of the Classic will be told in couple weeks, Sitterly and the John Nicotra Racing gang can hang their hats on a return to the top of the Oswego supermodified points pedestal.

The G&I Homes-sponsored team entered the night a slim 11 markers ahead of the ultra-consistent Pat Lavery, who had put together a string of top-five and -10 finishes that would have him in the thick of any points battle.

Lavery, fastest in practice, finished a disappointing fifth in his heat but was relieved when Sitterly had mechanical issues on the front-end of his Hawk Jr. machine, which forced him to retire from his heat race. Otto was credited with an eighth-place result, leaving him only eight points in front of Lavery heading into the main event.

“It was just an unfortunate thing,” Sitterly told reporter Chris Porter after the night's action. “I saw Pat (Lavery) didn't have a real good heat race and I kept telling myself, ‘just make it through the heat race without crashing, that's all.’ And I figured we'd be up on him by some and we could just race him in the feature. But what are you going to do? I've said it for years, you just can't have any type of game plan. It doesn't work. You have to race what's in front of you and take it as it comes.”

An incident involving several cars on the opening laps of the feature advanced Otto and Lavery's positions early in the race, and after starting 20th, the blue Nicotra machine was already up to 12th after only one lap.

Sitterly methodically advanced through the field from there, picking off one car after another to move into seventh by lap 12. With Lavery running fifth, Sitterly needed to pass one more car to put himself in solid position to ride behind Lavery and secure his fifth championship.

He did so on lap 19, when Mike Barnes retired from his fifth-place position to advance Otto to the last slot in the top five.

Sitterly proceeded to run behind Lavery for the remainder of the affair, and while it appeared he had clear opportunities to make the pass for fourth, the veteran was content to ride it out and secure another track championship for the Nicotra team.

When asked by Porter if there was any particular plan heading into the feature, Sitterly responded.

“I knew from the start I had some iron between me and Pat. We have a little bit different of a setup in the car this week and last week, and it seems to be pretty good early. So I knew the car could go to the outside, and I knew early everyone would peel it off and go to the hubrail and I knew our car would go to the outside into (turn) three pretty good. But I knew the (points) spread we had going into the feature, so I knew if I could get to his bumper I’d stay there and not let anyone get past me, if at all possible,” Sitterly commented.

Sitterly’s faithful, driven car owner, John Nicotra, spoke with great pride on his driver’s fifth overall title, and fourth under the Nicotra racing banner.

“I need to thank Otto and his family and all the guys who help out,” Nicotra said. “I’d like to thank my wife for putting up with all this. You know, she’s got some health issues right now that she’s battling and this is for her and I thank her for letting me do everything that she does.”

Next up for Nicotra Racing is the most prestigious supermodified show of the year, the Budweiser International Classic 200 on Sept. 2. Sitterly will be in the market for his second Bud Classic win in a row and third overall, while Davey Hamilton will be back behind the wheel of a Nicotra machine in search of his second Classic win.

It’s yet to be known who, if anyone, will drive a third Nicotra Hawk Jr mount. As Nicotra mentioned in his interview with Porter, Mike Lichty would be the front-runner for the ride if the team chooses to enter a trio of supers for the Classic.

John Nicotra Racing is a supermodified race team based in Canajoharie, N.Y., and Homestead, Fla. Nicotra Racing has accomplished four track championships and two International Classic 200 wins in its six years of existence at its home track, Oswego Speedway in Oswego, N.Y.

Nicotra Racing is sponsored by G&I Homes, Inc., 5 Brothers Produce, Burnac Produce Limited, Provincial Fruit Co., S&L Beans, Florida Vegetable, Flavor First, V.L. Walker Co., Georgia Crate & Basket, Rite-Pak Produce, Quality First Produce, Excel Homes, Ritz-Craft Homes, Beaver River Distribution and N&N Corporation.

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