

Otto comes to life in second half of feature, settles for 2nd

OSWEGO, N.Y. – Otto Sitterly's second-place finish in Saturday night's 45-lap supermodified feature was anything but conventional, but it likely would have been a win if the race were 50 or even 46 laps.

Sitterly started 10th in the seventh non-winged supermodified feature of the season at Oswego. Sitterly spent most of the first half of the affair marred in traffic while running near the tail end of the top 10. Otto raced with Joey Payne and Ray Graham Jr. before clearing the pair at the halfway point of the race.

As the latter two-thirds of the race approached, Otto began passing cars at will. Sitterly wheeled his Nicotra-owned G&I Homes No. 7 past the likes of Jeff Holbrook, Dave McKnight, Joe Gosek and Pat Lavery before setting his sights on second-place running Keith Champine with five laps remaining.

Sitterly cut Champine's near straightaway advantage to a mere car-length in only a handful of laps. Otto made an outside pass on Champine with two laps remaining, and quickly reeled in race-leader Dave Gruel.

Otto looked to shoot to the inside on Gruel going into turn three on the final lap, but thought better of it. He made a run off turn four coming to the checkered, but Gruel had just enough to stay a half car-length ahead of Otto's Hawk Jr. chassis to pick up his first win of his supermodified career and deny Otto of his fifth win of the season.

The time spent dealing with Payne and Graham may have cost Sitterly the race, mainly because only one caution on lap seven slowed the field. The entire latter three-quarters of the affair went green to checkered.

While Gruel picked up the win, the story of the race clearly was Otto's frantic drive to second. Sitterly blitzed the field, leaving fans in awe and reassuring competitors that the blue Nicotra No. 7 is undoubtedly still the car to beat.

Otto and the rest of the Oswego regulars are off this weekend before returning to the lakeside oval for one of the biggest races of the season. Sitterly will be going after the Mr. Supermodified 50-lap feature on July 31, and the \$10,000 reward that goes to the winner. Otto won the race in 2006 when he owned his own No. 79, but he's yet to win the \$10,000 prize while driving for John Nicotra Racing.

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