

“HICKORY MOTOR SPEEDWAY TO RAFFLE OFF 2006 PACE CAR!”

Newton, NC.....Hickory Motor Speedway, in conjunction with Dale Earnhardt Chevrolet, will be sending some lucky fan home with a 2005 Chevrolet Monte Carlo at the conclusion of this year's FALL BRAWL on Sunday afternoon.

The 2005 Chevrolet Monte Carlo is being used as the “Official Pace Car of Hickory Motor Speedway” during all NASCAR Dodge Weekly Series events at the track this year, and is valued at over \$17,000.

The car is a beautiful champagne color, but has been covered with a full vinyl wrap for the 2006 Racing Season. The wrap serves to protect the car's finish and paint, and is easily removable for the winner.

Raffle Tickets for the car will still be sold at The Fall Brawl, and all week at Speedway Offices. Tickets are only \$2 each, with a discount for larger purchases. Winner does not have to be present to win. The Speedway Women's Club is sponsoring the raffle.

A complete schedule of the day's events can be found at www.hickorymotorspeedway.com

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Andy Mercer Turns Up the Heat On a Chilly Night of Racing at Hickory Motor Speedway

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2006 Late Model Division Rookie of the Year candidate, Andy Mercer proved to a field of 31 cars that he was ready to run with the big dogs. Mercer qualified on the front row, took the lead twice in the race and battled some fierce competition all throughout the 50 lap race to bring home the victory on 321 Lawnmower Service Night at the Races.

Chris Chapman qualified the Denver Marine #44 on the pole and led the field to the green flag with the #10 of Mercer on the outside, followed by #29 Andy Loden, #95 Keith Bumgarner and #58 Carl Cormier. A fierce battle started right at the drop of the green for the top 5 cars as Keith Bumgarner literally pushes Andy Mercer coming out of turn 2. Mercer had the car completely sideways but was able to lift off the throttle and gather it up as Bumgarner backed down and settled for 4 th spot as #29 Andy Loden stayed under him to keep 3 rd .



On lap 2, Mercer caught race leader #44 Chris Chapman and went to the outside to battle for the lead. The two ran side by side for a lap until Mercer was able to clear Chapman and take over the race lead. Coming to lap 3, Bumgarner took a look under Loden to take 3 rd place and by lap 4 had moved into 2 nd after passing Chris Chapman on the backstretch. Andy Loden's #29 Monroe Roadways car began to come to him by lap 6 as he takes a look under Chris Chapman coming out of turn 4 and takes over the 3 rd spot.

Chapman continues to slide back on lap 7, with #32 Kevin Leicht taking his 4 th position in turn 1. Meanwhile upfront, by lap 9 Keith Bumgarner has caught race leader Andy Mercer and decides to go to the low side in turn 3. The two run side by side down the front stretch with Bumgarner getting the advantage and taking the lead in turn 1. This side by side racing allows Andy Loden to get within striking distance. The #54 of Brandon Dean moves his machine into the top 5 as he passes Chris Chapman for 5 th on lap 11. Andy Loden decides to make his move for the 2 nd spot on lap 12 as he looks to the outside of Andy Mercer in turn 4. Loden clears Mercer within a lap and takes over 2 nd place. The first caution of the night comes out on lap 14 for the spun car of #71 Scott Young.

Keith Bumgarner brings the field back to the green flag with Andy Loden hot on his heels. Brandon Dean makes a move to get further into the top 5 as he looks to the inside of Kevin Leicht on lap 17 and clears him to take the 4 th spot. Upfront, race leader Keith Bumgarner catches some heavy lap traffic by lap 23 and apparently makes contact with one of the cars, peeling back the sheet metal from is right front fender. Caution comes out again on lap 24 as the #50 of Craig Butts spins in turn 2 just ahead of the leaders. Everyone makes it by okay, but the night is about to turn bad for the leader Keith Bumgarner. NASCAR Dodge Weekly Racing Series Officials black flag Bumgarner forcing him to pit and remove the hanging sheet metal under this caution. This allows Andy Loden to assume the point.



Loden brings the field to the restart with Andy Mercer and Brandon Dean following. Dean gets a good jump and gets along side of Mercer but is unable to complete the pass for 2nd on the backstretch. Brent Raymer moves his #85 machine into the top 5 for the first time of the night on lap 25 as he takes over the spot from #44 Chris Chapman. However, Raymer wouldn't hang on to the spot for long as #21 Brian Connor takes 5 th on lap 29 after starting in the rear of the field. Connor posted the fastest time in qualifying earlier in the evening but his time was disallowed after not meeting weight requirements in post-qualifying tech inspection. Caution is displayed again on lap 33 for debris spotted in turn 3.

Andy Loden remains on the point for the restart with Mercer still pacing in 2 nd spot. Brian Connor looks under Kevin Leicht on lap 34 and takes over the 4 th spot. Caution comes out again on lap 40 as #7 Josh Goble and #2 Matt Leicht spin in turn 1 after apparently making contact.



The green flag comes out again for Loden on lap 40 as Brandon Dean gets a huge jump on 2 nd place running Andy Mercer just as he gets a run on Andy Loden. They come around to turns 3 and 4 making it 3 wide for the lead. All three drivers show some miraculous car control as Mercer slips just a little allowing Dean to take 2 nd place just as caution comes out yet again on lap 42 for the spinning car #35 of Chris Lewis.

On the restart, Brandon Dean looks to get a jump on Loden for the lead but it didn't quite work as well this time. On lap 43, Andy Mercer shows Dean that he isn't ready to settle for what he has as he moves to the low side in turn 4 to take over 2 nd spot again. #71 Scott Young loops his car again in turn 2 bringing out the yellow flag on lap 44.

Loden paces the field back to another restart on lap 44. Dean looks under Mercer to try and take 2 nd but both cars had to do some give and take as race leader, Andy Loden falls off the pace on the front stretch just after taking the green flag. Loden coasts around to the pits and parks for the night with engine trouble keeping him 6 laps away from taking the checkered flag after a very impressive run. Meanwhile a battle for 2 nd place heats up as #21 Brian Connor looks to the inside of Brandon Dean but is unable to complete the pass. This side by side action allows Andy Mercer to get a comfortable lead and come around on lap 50 to take the checkered flag for his first ever Late Model Feature win. Mercer was followed by #54 Brandon Dean, #21 Brian Connor, #32 Kevin Leicht and #85 Brent Raymer.

After doing a victory burnout, a very excited Andy Mercer had this to say in Bojangles Victory Lane:

“These guys kept me up, I was pretty down after that Limited race tonight but now we have won our first ever Late Model race. My brother David is my crew chief this year and he works so hard for this. Thanks to my whole crew, everybody just jumps in there and gets it done.....thanks to my sponsors, Reliable Fire Safety and Mercer Grading.....This is AWESOME!”

In the Limited Late Model Division, 15 year old Marc Davis gave the field a run for the money in his #92 Levi Strauss Chevrolet. Davis, who started 3 rd worked his way towards the front and after taking the white flag got side by side with race leader #10 Andy Mercer. The two went into turn 3 side by side with a lapped car directly in front of them. Not knowing where the lapped car was going to go, neither driver wanted to give as they make contact coming off turn 4. After leading every lap so far, Mercer went spinning to the apron as Davis came around to take the checkered flag. Davis was followed by #44 Matt DiBenedetto, #70 Billy Joe Wilson, #14 Brandon Cox and #15 Nathan Dellinger.



In the Pro-4 Division, Adam Beaver qualified his #4 machine on the pole and led every lap to take his first win of the 2006 season. Beaver was followed by #00 Ricky Crooks, #1 Jacob Lehn, #3 Donnie Harmon and #55 Walter Hoke.

After getting a win last week in a pre-season street stock race, Waylon Flynn showed he also has what it takes to take home the win in the first points race of 2006 as well. Flynn qualified on the pole and led it to the checkered flag followed by #88 Josh Burchette, #32 Gary Ledbetter, #40 David Smith and #42 Terrance Tucker.

The Pro-Challenge Series made their first stop of 2006 at Hickory Motor Speedway Saturday Night with a 50 lap event. Marty Arender took his #5 truck to victory lane holding off #20 John Stancill, #51 Zach Stroupe, #03 Kenny Forbes and #33 Jason Burchard.



Hickory Motor Speedway will be back in action next Saturday April 1 st with a full slate of racing action in Late Models, Limited Late Models, SCARS Dash Series and Hobby Stocks. See you there!

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