

## Brian Connor Dominates Late Model Feature at Hickory Motor Speedway

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Augusta, Georgia's Brian Connor put his #21 LP Gear car on the pole to start the 50 lap feature Saturday night at Hickory Motor Speedway, then dominated the field leaving only 6 cars on the lead lap in the end.

Connor led the field to green with previous feature winner Randy Burnett on the outside pole in the MBI Consultants car #14. On lap 1, #16 Mack Little takes a look to the outside of Chris Bristol in the #92 MBNA machine to take 3 rd . Bristol is really loose on the low line and by lap 2 this allows Keith Bumgarner a chance to put the nose of his #95 Country Chair car under Bristol to try and take 4 th . Bristol and Bumgarner run side by side down the backstretch where the two touch resulting in Bristol spinning in turns 3 and 4 and Bumgarner hanging on to the 4 th spot. Caution flies for the first time and Bristol brings his car to the attention of his crew to make sure his tires were okay after the spin. Bristol resumes at the rear of the field.

On the restart, everyone remains single file until lap 5. Pete Silva puts the nose of his Blossman Gas #01 under #58 Carl Cormier and takes the 5 th spot in turn 2. However, Silva experiences mechanical problems down the backstretch causing Cormier to make contact with his back bumper, but both cars escape without damage and Cormier takes his 5 th place spot back. Silva took his car to the pits and parks for the night. On lap 10, Cormier's 5 th place spot is hunted now by Mark Johnson in the #29 Klingspor car. Johnson takes an inside look in turn 4 as the two touch and he prevails to take the spot sending Cormier to 6 th .

Meanwhile further back in the pack, #92 Chris Bristol has worked his way back into the top 10 after his lap 2 incident with Bumgarner. By lap 24, Bristol is hunting down a top 5 spot as he takes 6 th from Cormier and begins to chase down the #29 of Johnson. By lap 44, Bristol has caught Johnson and the two fight for position until lap 48 when Bristol finally prevails and moves into the top 5.

Up front, Brian Connor all but cruises to his first checkered flag of the 2005 season with almost a full straightaway lead on #14 Randy Burnett. Rounding out the top 5 were #16 Mack Little, #95 Keith Bumgarner and #92 Chris Bristol.

Connor had this to say in Victory Lane:

"You know we are getting a lot of cars here, so when you win, it makes it feel good. I want to thank these two guys here, Larry Pollard and Richard Wright. I really want to thank my Father because he puts up with me seven days a week."

In the Super Trucks, #11 Dustin Coonfield took the lead on the first lap from pole sitter #12 Robin Harris, who is a previous track champion in the Late Model Division at Hickory. However, Coonfield couldn't hang on all night as #69 Trevor Hignutt takes the top spot on lap 18 and never looks back. Hignutt took the checkered flag for his first win of the season followed by #91 Jonathan Doster, #12 Robin Harris, #45 Kenneth Pardue and #77 Mike McIntosh.

Hignutt had this to say in Victory Lane:

"We had been having problems all day, we just kept adjusting and adjusting but I guess it paid off. We didn't qualify too good, but I guess we got the bigger picture. I want to thank Carey's Towing, T-Bird Auto Body, National Sign and Decals and Cook's Pharmacy."



In the Limited Late Models, Andy Mercer claimed his second win of the season in his Reliable Fire and Safety #10 car. It was a hard fought win from the start as he had to hold off a hard charge by Chris Chapman in the #44 Conover Construction and Roofing car. Chapman made several moves to the inside of Mercer with the two making slight contact a couple of times, but he just couldn't pull off the pass. Mercer drove to victory followed by #44 Chris Chapman, #47 Kevin Bumgarner, #51 Colby Whitworth and #90 Chad Call.

Mercer had this to say in Victory Lane:

"First off, I want to thank Chris Chapman for driving a clean race, I always feel comfortable racing around him, he's a good driver. I'd like to thank my sponsors Reliable Fire and Safety, Mercer Grading, Tim Harvell Construction, and thanks to my Dad and brother for giving me this opportunity."

In the Pro-4 division, Matt DiBenedetto continues to be the class of the field as he claimed his 4 th win in a row Saturday night in his #44 machine. He once again finished just ahead of his engine builder Todd Harrington in the #21 Harrington's Machine Shop car. DiBenedetto talked in Victory Lane about how he and his team are currently seeking active sponsorship for the 2005 season so he can continue doing what he loves and hopefully one day drive in the higher ranks of NASCAR racing, something he has dreamed of doing for several years.

DiBenedetto had this to say in Victory Lane:

“The car was good again, like every single week. Mike always makes the car exactly perfect. I'd like to thank Larry Pollard with LP Gear for doing my transmission. Thanks to my Mom and Dad, Todd Harrington for building the engine, Rick's Auto Graphics for doing the numbers and lettering on the car, and thanks to the fans for coming out and supporting us and the race track and allowing us to race at the coolest track ever.”

David Hasson claims another win and continues to dominate the Hobby Stock Division in his #83 car. He did have to fight for the lead this time as #98 Stephen Clippard took the lead from him on lap 4. However, by lap 6 Hasson regained the top spot and pulled away from the field to take his 3 rd win of the 2005 season. Hasson was followed by #98 Stephen Clippard, #-1 Ronald McNeill, #17 Cody Roth and #15 Gary Dellinger.

Hickory Motor Speedway will be taking the week off April 23 rd , but will return to action on April 30 th .

