

Stephen Nasse Wins Easter Bunny 150

PASS Rookie battles Preston Peltier to earn his 1st PASS win

Hickory NC (4/24) The Pro All Stars Series (PASS) South presented by JE Pistons and Roush Yates Performance Products headed to the famed Hickory Motor Speedway (NC) on Saturday, April 23rd, for the prestigious Easter Bunny super late model showdown, the first PASS National event of the 2011 race season. Florida native Stephen Nasse went to victory lane after a rough and tumble battle with defending PASS South Champion Preston Peltier.

44 of the nation's top Super Late Model drivers hit the track to earn their way into the field during qualifying and, it was Preston Peltier claiming the pole with a 14.734-second lap over Justin Wakefield, Bradley McCaskill, Andy Loden and Dean Clattenburg.

With the top-20 drivers locked into the field, the remainder of the racers were split into two last-chance races, where the top-three drivers from each race earned their spot in the starting field.

In the first last-chance race, yellow fever kept the cars bunched up while big names tried to race their way into the Easter Bunny. With Jody Lavender and Cassius Clark firmly in the first-two positions the battle on the track was for the third and final transfer spot Becca Kasten had it until the white-flag lap but contact with Dylan Kwasniewski sent Kasten back to fourth and Kwasniewski went on to make the feature.

The second last-chance race was a bit calmer with only one yellow flag slowing the field. David O'Dell drove his way to the front and the win, taking the first of the three transfer spots. John Batten and Dillon Oliver, who started the second last-chance race on the front row, crossed the line second and third respectively, also earning their way into the big race.

The balance of the field was filled by provisionals to equal a 30-car field.

After the top-10 redraw Jay Fogleman (who qualified eighth) and Steve Legendre (who qualified tenth) started on the front row with Justin Wakefield and Blaney occupying row two. Legendre got a great start, taking the lead with Fogleman dropping in second. A few laps later, Wakefield used his bumper to get second from Fogleman with Blaney working his way to third, Nasse fourth and Fogleman back to fifth.

The first yellow flag flew at lap nine after contact sent Clattenburg and Roger Lee Newton around in turn two, stacking up the field. Most cars were able to drive off, but many including Gray Gaulding, Batten, Jimmy Weller and Kwasniewski had various levels of damage and had to pit for repairs.



Wakefield got a great restart, taking the lead from Legendre. But Nasse was on a mission, moving around Legendre for second and into the lead on lap 12. Legendre moved back up to the second position with Wakefield third, Blaney fourth, and Loden up to fifth.

While Nasse and Legendre distanced themselves from the field, Loden worked his way up to the third position with Blaney running fourth and Wakefield running fifth at lap 50.

PASS fans were treated to side-by-side battles throughout the field as drivers were racing hard for every inch on the track. The hard racing slowed though on lap 68 as the second yellow flew when McCaskill and Colt James got together in turn two. Their contact collected Newton, who had significant damage and had to park it for the night. At the caution, Nasse, Legendre, Blaney, Loden and Peltier rounded out the top five.

Legendre claimed the lead off the restart, sending Nasse back to second at lap 70. The top-five cars, which also included Loden, Peltier and Blaney, all ran nose to tail at the front.

The third yellow flew at lap 78 as Kyle Benjamin and Brandon Lynn went around in turn two. Both were able to drive off without any assistance.

On the restart Legendre almost had Nasse cleared for the lead but on lap 81 Nasse used the high side to take the lead back. Nasse and Legendre distanced themselves from the rest of the pack with the battle on the track for the next 20 laps happening between Loden, Blaney and Peltier for the third position. Just past lap 100 Peltier moved his way to fourth, then to third. At lap 110 he passed Legendre for second, looking to run down Nasse for the lead. Peltier went high while working around lapped traffic, losing a few spots on the track. That put Legendre back to second with Blaney in third and Peltier to fourth. All three cars battled hard for the second spot until they came up on the lapped car of Lynn. Contact between Blaney and Lynn sent Lynn's car around on the front stretch, giving Blaney some body damage and costing him several positions on the track.

On the restart with less than 30 laps to go Peltier worked his way to second and then put the pressure on Nasse for the lead. The pair got together several times with Peltier prevailing for the top spot. Nasse tried to get back to the front but with 20 laps to go Peltier was able to drive away from the field with Nasse, Fogleman, Legendre and Blaney all giving chase.

With just two laps remaining a hard battle behind the leaders brought out the yellow flag as Ben Rowe and Weller made contact in turn four, sending Weller around. At the yellow, Peltier, Nasse, Fogleman, Ben Rowe and Clark were running in the top five.

Nasse had his opportunity on the final restart. Peltier and Nasse banged fenders and bumpers and Nasse got to the checkered flag first to earn his first PASS South Super Late Model win.

“That was crazy,” said Nasse in victory lane. “I didn't think there was going to be another caution in the race. I was planning on coming home second. He (Peltier) drove me clean and I really do appreciate that.”

Many veterans in the PASS series earn their victories with tire management throughout the race, but Nasse went all out every lap of the event.

“I knew with this Crate (motor) car I wasn't going to use up too much of the rear tires, so I kind of let the dog eat and tried to get as far ahead as I could just in case it went all green. It is amazing. I haven't been to the winner's circle in a while. This is a definite pick-me-up. All the crew worked so hard to get this win.”

Peltier did everything he could to win the race, but came up one position short, frustrating the series veteran. “This thing was just a little slow on restarts,” said Peltier. “It took a few laps for it to get going. I

did everything but wreck him. To be honest with you, I am getting tired of finishing second. That is the third one this year. It is time for a win.”

Fogleman, who made the move to the series a few years back and has achieved success in PASS South competition since, crossed the line third. “I am glad everything went good for the fans,” said Fogleman. “I knew as soon as I talked to these guys and what they were doing with this series that I made the right decision (to race PASS), and I just hoped everyone else would get on board. It looks like all the real racers are coming this way.”

Blaney and Ben Rowe rounded out the top five.

PASS South presented by JE Pistons and Roush Yates Performance Products will be back in action at South Boston Speedway (VA) on Saturday, May 7th. The next PASS National event will be Saturday, May 28th, at Motor Mile Speedway (VA).

Unofficial Finish - Easter Bunny 150 - 4/23/11

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|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1) 51n - Stephen Nasse | 16) 23 - Jimmy Weller |
| 2) 26 - Preston Peltier | 17) 71B - Kyle Benjamin |
| 3) 4 - Jay Fogleman | 18) 76 - Jerrick Johnson |
| 4) 10 - Ryan Blaney | 19) 75 - David Odell |
| 5) 4n - Ben Rowe | 20) 2 - Gray Gaulding |
| 6) 29 - Andy Lode | 21) 80 - Dillon Olliver |
| 7) 98 - Justin Wakefield | 22) 18 - Bradley McCaskill |
| 8) 20 - Steven Legendre | 23) 41 - Wes Burton |
| 9) 91 - Heath Hindman | 24) 33 - Roger Lee Newton |
| 10) 6 - David Ragan | 25) 29L - Landon Cling |
| 11) 2L - Kevin Leicht | 26) 3 - Dylan Kwashiewski |
| 12) 8 - Cassius Clark | 27) 115 - Jody Lavender |
| 13) 180 - Dean Clattenburg | 28) 07 - Matt McCall |
| 14) 15 - Colt James | 29) 48 - John Batten |
| 15) 00 - Grant Davidson | 30) 30 - Mike Rowe |