

100 Lapper Brings New Face to Victory Lane at Hickory Motor Speedway

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In only the 5th start of his career at Hickory Motor Speedway, Jay Gerst took his Blue Ridge Harley Davidson #8 Chevrolet to victory lane Saturday night in the second 100 lapper of the 2005 season. It was a hard fought win for Gerst as he had to battle some of the best in the business including Scott Kilby and Pete Silva. Gerst was not declared the winner until 12:00 a.m. Sunday Morning after track officials performed an extensive post-race tech inspection on the top 3 finishing cars.

Pete Silva brought the field to the green flag in his #01 Blossman Gas Machine, with the Price Racing #28 of Scott Kilby on the outside pole. Kilby looks to take advantage of the high side on the start and challenges Silva hard for the spot, but Silva is able to get enough momentum off the bottom line to keep the top spot. On lap 2, #32 Kevin Leicht looks to challenge Kilby for 2nd but Kilby keeps his momentum on the high groove and keeps the spot. Carl Cormier looks to move into the top 5 as he pressures #16 Mack Little for the 5th spot on lap 3. Cormier looks underneath and the two battle side by

side until lap 6 when Cormier clears and takes the 5th spot. Things remained relatively calm until lap 23 when the first caution of the night comes out as #4 James Edwards spins coming out of turn 4. Edwards comes to a stop as #92 Chris Bristol is unable to avoid him, literally climbing the hood of the #4 car. Both cars were towed to their pits and able to continue several laps down later in the race.

On the restart, everyone remains single file until lap 26 when Leicht tries once again to take the 2nd spot from Kilby. Leicht puts the heat on and even looks inside, but he is still unable to complete the pass. On lap 35, #8 Jay Gerst rockets into the top 5 after taking 5th spot from Carl Cormier. Cormier apparently had handling issues in this stage of the race as he drifts all the way back to 12th spot. To the surprise of many, Jay Gerst has lit a rocket underneath his Harley Davidson machine and by lap 45, he takes the 4th spot from Brian Connor in his #21 LP Gear machine. On lap 55, #32 Kevin Leicht is feeling the pressure from Gerst as he slips in turn 2 allowing Gerst to move into the 3rd spot. Gerst continues to battle towards the front on lap 59 when he looks to the inside of Scott Kilby. The two run side by side for 2 laps when Gerst clears the car of Kilby to take the 2nd spot. Previous feature winner, Keith Bumgarner moves his #95 Country Chair Ford into the 5th spot as he takes it from Connor. Bumgarner started deeper in the field than normal and appeared to be saving what he had for the final 40 laps of the race. Gerst is ready to show what he really has by lap 63, when he moves under race leader Pete Silva to take the top spot. On lap 66, #32 Kevin Leicht, gets under #28 Scott Kilby to try for 3rd. As the two are battling, they make it 3 wide with the lapped car #15 of David Mercer in turn 2. Leicht apparently has to pinch the car down too much as he spins exiting turn 2, bringing out the second caution of the night.



On the restart, Jay Gerst brings the field down for a slow restart which allows Silva to take a peek to the inside for the lead. Gerst is able to hang on to the spot. By lap 68, Silva is being pressured by Kilby for 2nd.

Kilby tries to the outside and battles Silva for 2 laps, but this time the low line worked best for Silva and he keeps the 2nd spot. Caution comes out again on lap 71 as the #77 Kodak car of Joe Henderson III spins on the front stretch. #99 Tommy Lane tries to avoid the spinning car of Henderson but is unable to as he spins and makes contact with the wall just past the flag stand. After work by their crews, both cars are able to continue.

On the restart, Pete Silva gets a great run to the inside of Gerst battling him until lap 74 when Silva prevails and takes the lead. Tommy Lane's RacingOne.com #99 brings out the caution on lap 80 as he stalls in turn 1.

On this restart, Pete Silva wasn't so lucky. Gerst looked to the inside of him on lap 82 and takes the lead as the black flag is being displayed to Silva. Track officials determined that Silva started before the restart line, costing him a great finish in the 100 lapper. Keith Bumgarner looks to take 2nd place from Kilby on lap 83 and the two fight for the spot until lap 90 when Bumgarner prevails. In the final 10 laps, Bumgarner started to close in on race leader Jay Gerst, but time wasn't on his side. Jay Gerst went on to take the checkered flag for his first win ever at Hickory Motor Speedway followed by #95 Keith

Bumgarner, #28 Scott Kilby, #59 Coleman Pressley and #21 Brian Connor. Scott Kilby was disqualified from the event after failing to pass post-race tech inspection, relegating his 3rd place spot to Coleman Pressley.

Jay Gerst had this to say in Victory Lane:

"We weren't very good the past couple of weeks, but we knew we had a good foundation. We came to a new track and these guys are tough as heck. We had a little bit of learning to do, but these guys never gave up on me and we put it together and had a pretty good run. We would like to thank all the fans for coming out, especially Blue Ridge Harley Davidson, our sponsor this year.....I got one for ya, thanks for sticking with me. This track is very tough. It's some of the best people that run here, so it's an honor to actually win here."

In the Limited Late Model Division, Andy Mercer was able to hang on to his top spot after qualifying on the pole claiming another win for his team. Mercer was followed by #38 Chris Taylor, #44 Chris Chapman, #00 Lucas Ransone and #2 Matt Leicht.

Mercer had this to say in Victory Lane:

“We've been off the past few weeks with the handling but we went back to our basic setup and it worked. I don't know what was going on there in the middle of the race, I thought I had a tire going down or something, it really started getting loose. I wasn't sure I was going to be able to hang on to it, I just drove the car and hit my marks. I did the best I could without losing it. I'd like to thank my sponsors, Mercer Grading, Reliable Fire Safety, Tim Harvell Construction, most of all I'd like to thank my Dad, my brother and my whole crew, they have really worked hard on this thing.”



Matt DiBenedetto didn't get the start he was looking for after a bad qualifying lap in the Pro-4 division, but he did get the finish as he claimed his 11 th straight win of the season. DiBenedetto was followed by #4 Adam Beaver, #21 Todd Harrington, #55 Jason Bustle and #19 Willie Everham.

DiBenedetto had this to say in Victory Lane:

“This car was really loose in qualifying so we snugged it up for the feature but it just wasn't enough. I had to drive this car so hard. First of all I'd like to thank Todd Harrington and Adam Beaver for racing me so clean, they never even bumped me or nothing. Thanks to Todd for building my engines. We plan to go Limited racing the next week, so that is going to be so much fun.”

In the Street Stock division, Kevin Eby looked like he had his act together to claim his 2 nd win in a row but in post-race tech inspection, he was disqualified for a track width infraction. This gave the win to #64 Marshall Sutton followed by #16 Jonathan Smith, #40 David Smith, #43 Jesse LeFeveres and #5 Blaine Huffman

In his first race at Hickory Motor Speedway, V.L. Richardson put his #2 car in victory lane in the Hobby Stock Division. Richardson was followed by #98 Stephen Clippard, #83 David Hasson, #10 Wayne Reece and #12 Tim Reese.



Daniel Sossoman claimed his 2 nd win in a row at Hickory Motor Speedway in the Legends Division. Sossoman was followed by #10 Dusty Genenbacher, #29 Paddy Rodenbach, #33 Patrick McVay and #32 Michael Hayes.

Hickory Motor Speedway will be closed the weekend of July 2 nd in recognition of Independence Day. Racing action will resume Saturday July 9 th as Hickory welcomes the USAR Hooter's Pro-Cup Series presented by Tucson for the “Aaron's 250”! Advance tickets are on sale now at Hickory Motor Speedway for \$15 or you can purchase them for \$20 at the gate.