

Mercer Strikes Again!

By: Jill Frischmann, Hickory Motor Speedway
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Photos by: Legacy Video & Photography



(Newton, NC) You never know what you're going to get at Hickory Motor Speedway on a Saturday night, but one thing is certain... there will always be exciting, fast paced racing action. The 18 th round of the NASCAR Whelen All-American Series was another exceptional night of high speed racing as the Bojangles Late Models, the Jewelry Exchange Limited Late Models, the Advance Auto Parts Super Trucks, the Hickory Pro 4's and the Hickory Street Stocks took to the track for "Sig's Tire Center Night & USG Night at the Races".

The #10 of WynnCom Pole Sitter Andy Mercer may have become the dominator of the Bojangles Late Models, but the #00 of Lucas Ransone certainly shook things up during the night's 50 lap feature. During the first five laps of the event, Ransone worked on the #29 of Andy "High Side" Loden to take over the second place position, grabbing the spot on lap six. Once Ransone settled into second place, he began to reel in Mercer, working towards the lead.

On lap 17, the #33 of James Goff put the pressure on the #89 of David Latour Jr., as Goff rode the bumper of Latour Jr. he worked to take over the fourth place position. Lapped traffic allowed Latour Jr. to build a lead over Goff, but the lead didn't last long as Goff worked his way back to Latour Jr.'s bumper. On lap 32, Goff dived under Latour Jr. as the two headed into turn three, but Latour Jr. inched ahead. On lap 35,

Goff tried the move again, this time with success.

The first caution of the event flew on lap 38 when the #42 of Todd Goble hit the inside wall on the back stretch with such force that his car propelled into the back stretch inside safety fence. The red flag waved as the safety crew quickly worked to repair the fence and the clean up debris of Goble's wrecked ride. From the restart, Ransone began to work on Mercer for the lead. On lap 41, the #28 of Mark Johnson spun out in turn two bringing out caution number two. During the restart the #70 of Britt Andersen blew a motor in turn four and spun into the front stretch causing the third and final caution along with bringing out another red flag.

After an extensive clean up, the field was back to green flag racing and Ransone began to charge Mercer for the lead once again. On the final lap, Ransone shot under Mercer in turn one, and the two would race side by side inching ahead of one another as they came out of turn four, with Mercer crossing the finish line only inches ahead of Ransone. "Man that was a lot of fun there at the end," Mercer exclaimed from Victory Lane. Loden, Goff and the #57 of Grant Wimbish completed the top five.



The Jewelry Exchange Limited Late Model 35 lap event was filled with excitement on lap one as the #7 of Waylon Flynn connected with a fellow driver, cutting a tire and sending his car for a spin down the front stretch. 12 laps into the event, the #5 of Chris Chapman used the inside line to slide past the #3 of Dexter Canipe Jr. in turns three and four to capture the lead. Canipe Jr. remained on the back bumper of Chapman looking for his chance to take back the lead. It looked as though Canipe Jr. would be able to move back into the lead when the two hit lapped traffic, but Chapman was dialed in for the win.

The first caution of the event fell on lap 28 when the #05 Jordan McGregor went for a spin between turns one and two. On lap 29, the #32 of Jeremy Harrell found himself heading hard into the outside wall of turn two, bringing out the second caution and the red flag as the safety crew worked to clean the track of debris from the wreck. The third caution flew on lap 30 due to debris on the track. The fourth and final caution was soon to follow as the #77 of Mark Goin got tied up with the #07 of Tyler Church and the #75 of Eric Evans, sending Goin spinning hard into the front stretch inside wall.



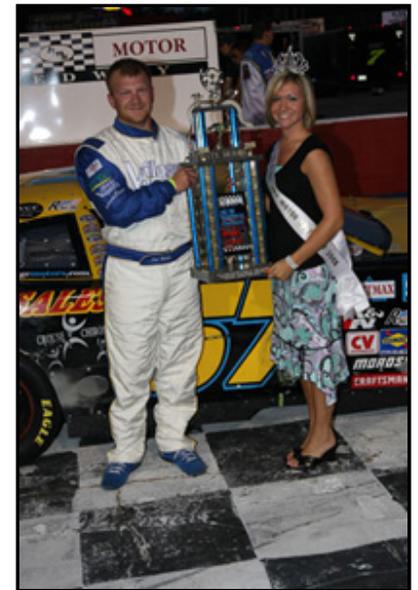
It was an action packed final lap as the #25 of Nick Proffit and the #17 of Kyle Mansch battled for third, Proffit wiggled coming off of turn four, losing momentum and allowing Mansch to come home third leaving Proffit to settle for fourth.

The #31 of Keith Bumgarner went home with the fifth place finishing.

It took a bit to get the Advance Auto Part Super Trucks off and running as track officials called for a caution due to an unsatisfactory start at the beginning of the 35 lap event. After the restart, the #97 of Keith Bumgarner jumped to the front taking over the lead from WynnCom Pole Sitter #69 Trevor Hignutt. On lap six, the second caution flew as the #54 of Jenn Crossman spun coming off of turn four. Eight laps into the race the #59 of Rock Harris began to put pressure on Hignutt for the second place position. Lap 10 saw caution number three as the #7 of Joseph Boyer spun out in turn two.

From the restart Harris began to battle Hignutt again, and Harris was able to move into the second place position on lap 15, leaving Hignutt to settle for third. Harris pressed in pursuit of Bumgarner in hopes of taking over the lead, but time ran out as Harris continued to gain on Bumgarner. "Got to congratulate Bumgarner, he had a good run... we got to step it up and then try to catch Bumgarner," Harris stated during his post race interview. The #09 of Scott Whitaker and the #6 of Dexter Canipe Jr. rounded out the top five.

When the Hickory Pro 4's took to the track for their 25 lap event it seemed clear who would be the first to cross the finish line, the WynnCom Pole Sitter of the #21 Todd Harrington, as he moved into a commanding lead the moment the green flag waved. On lap three, #9 Randy Canipe jumped ahead of the #57 of Josh Wimbish to take over the second place position. On lap five, the #66 of Scott Wallace experienced car troubles causing him to pull off the track and leaving him unable to finish the race. Eight laps in Wimbish had moved back into second place and was on the bumper of Harrington. Late in the race Wimbish looked for his chance to make a move on Harrington for the lead. Coming off turn four, Wimbish coasted past Harrington taking over the lead, pulling away from the field leaving Harrington, Canipe, the #99 of Matt Elledge and the #07 of Matt Laws to complete the top five.



Exciting doesn't even begin to describe the Hickory Street Stock race as the WynnCom Pole Sitter of Taylor Stricklin opted to take the inversion and start from the back of the pack for the 30 lap event. Stricklin's move left the #64 of Marshall Sutton to start in the pole position. Stricklin may have started in the back of the pack, but it didn't take long to see him up front as he had worked his way into third place by lap 10. Stricklin was in position to take over second place from the #03 of Kevin Eby. Eby wasn't going to go down without a fight, but Stricklin ducked under Eby as the two came off of turn four and completed the pass for second on lap 16.

With seven laps remaining Stricklin set his sights on Sutton and the lead. On the last lap, the first and only caution of the event flew as the #5 of Mike Newton and the #20 of David Webb made contact heading into turn three and found themselves in the outside wall in turn three. The caution and a green-white-checker finish were the last things Sutton wanted to see, as Stricklin was dominating the field. The restart was a shoot out between Sutton and Stricklin for the win. Stricklin gave it all he had, but wiggled coming off of turn four on the final lap allowing Sutton to take home the checkers. The #71 of Robert DiVanna and the #83 of Jeff Jenson finished fourth and fifth respectively.

The NASCAR Whelen All-American Series will be taking the next two Saturdays off. Be sure to join us for the 32nd Annual Bobby Isaac Memorial 200 presented by Dale Earnhardt Chevrolet on Labor Day Monday, September 1st. The day will feature a 200 lap feature for Late Model Stocks and a 50 lap event for the Hickory Street Stocks. Grandstands for this special



event open at 1 PM, with the first race taking place at 3 PM and the main feature beginning at 5 PM. Tickets for the event are only \$15 for adults, \$10 for teens and seniors, \$5 for kids 7-12 and kids 6 and under are free. For more information please visit our website at www.hickorymotorspeedway.com or by phone at 828-464-3655. We can't wait to see you at the races!

Hickory Motor Speedway is a .363 mile asphalt track. The track held its first event in June of 1951 posting Gwyn Staley as the event winner. Hickory Motor Speedway has supported series such as the now Sprint Cup and Nationwide Series. Currently the Speedway is sanctioned by NASCAR featuring the NASCAR Whelen All-American Series. The Speedway also hosts a wide variety of touring series that travel throughout the country.



Hickory Motor Speedway runs Saturday nights, mid-March through October. Grandstands open at 5 PM with racing beginning at 7 PM. For more information visit our website at www.hickorymotorspeedway.com.

Official Results:

Bojangles Late Model 50

1. (10) Andy Mercer
2. (00) Lucas Ransone
3. (29) Andy Loden
4. (33) James Goff
5. (57) Grant Wimbish
6. (89) David Latour Jr.
7. (28) Mark Johnson
8. (13) Don Paige
9. (92) Candice Muzny
10. (95) Michael Buckner
11. (70) Britt Andersen
12. (42) Todd Goble
13. (29x) Tyler Church

Jewelry Exchange Limited Late Models 35

1. (5) Chris Chapman
2. (3) Dexter Canipe Jr.
3. (17) Kyle Mansch
4. (25) Nick Proffit
5. (31) Keith Bumgarner
6. (07) Tyler Church
7. (75) Eric Evans
8. (94) Josh Wright
9. (37) Tracy Sigmon
10. (05) Jordan McGregor
11. (77) Mark Goins
12. (2) Travis McIntyre
13. (32) Jeremy Harrell
14. (7) Waylon Flynn

Advance Auto Parts Super Trucks 35

1. (97) Keith Bumgarner
2. (59) Rock Harris
3. (69) Trevor Hignutt
4. (09) Scott Whittaker
5. (6) Dexter Canipe Jr.
6. (29) Ricky Dennie
7. (7) Joseph Boyer
8. (94) Ben Ebeling
9. (17) Tyler Taft
10. (54) Jen Crossman
11. (92) Jay Norville

Hickory Pro 4's 25

1. (57) Josh Wimbish
2. (21) Todd Harrington
3. (9) Randy Canipe
4. (99) Matt Elledge
5. (07) Matt Laws
6. (17) Curtis Pardue
7. (66) Scott Wallace

Hickory Street Stocks 30

1. (64) Marshall Sutton
2. (1) Taylor Stricklin
3. (03) Kevin Eby
4. (71) Robert DiVanna
5. (83) Jeff Jenson
6. (20) David Webb
7. (73) George Lauster
8. (5) Mike Newton
9. (98) Brian Hayberger
10. (54) J. R. Kessler
11. (7) Jeff Sparks

WynnCom Pole Award

Bojangles Late Models:(10) Andy Mercer

Jewelry Exchange Limited Late Model: (3) Dexter Canipe Jr.

Advance Auto Parts Super Trucks: (69) Trevor Hignutt

Hickory Pro 4's: (21) Todd Harrington

Hickory Street Stocks: (1) Taylor Stricklin

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