

Connor and Bumgarner Victorious in Twin 50's at Hickory Motor Speedway

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After a rain soaked track forced officials to cancel Hickory's program a few weeks ago, HMS track promoter, Sherry Clifton decided to add a twin 50 race to the schedule this week. Fans were treated to two action packed races in which Brian Connor and Keith Bumgarner each took a checkered flag.

In the first race, Scott Kilby paced the field to the green flag with Carl Cormier starting on the outside. As soon as the green flag waved, 3 rd place starting Brian Connor lit the fuse on his #21 LP Gear machine as he looked under Cormier to take the 2 nd spot. Rather than riding there for a while, Connor decided it was time to go as he moved under #28 Scott Kilby to challenge for the lead off of turn 2. By the time they made it to turn 4 on lap 2, Connor cleared Kilby and took the top spot.



Keith Bumgarner put his #95 Country Chair Ford in 3 rd place as he went around #58 Carl Cormier for the spot on lap 2. The first caution of the night comes out on lap 9 after #16 Mack Little was fighting for 6 th and was literally pinballed back to 12 th spot as he was hung out to dry, trying to gather his car up. Little was 3 wide in the pack when he almost spun in turn 3 making slight contact with a few cars, littering turn 3 with sheet metal. Chris Bristol brought his #92 MBNA Chevrolet in for his crew to checkout after they experienced engine trouble in earlier practice. The crew elected to change the engine and start in the rear for the feature.

Connor continued to lead as he brought the field down for the restart. On lap 10, #14 Randy Burnett looks to try and take 4 th spot from Carl Cormier, but after battling for 2 laps Cormier is able to hang on and keep his position. Caution is displayed again as #32 Kevin Leicht, #4 James Edwards and the #99 All State Insurance Dodge #99 of Tommy Lane spin after a 3 wide battle in the pack. No serious damage was done to either of the cars.

After the restart, #15 David Mercer looks to move his Reliable Fire Safety car into the top 5 as he looks low on #14 Randy Burnett. The two battle side by side for several laps until Mercer finally assumes the position on lap 19. Caution comes out again on lap 22 for the spinning car #7 of Chris Everette. #17 Corey Brookshire locks it up coming to the caution flag and just bumps the front of Everette's car. Neither car sustained serious damage.

Brian Connor brought the field to the green for the restart as most everyone remained in single file for time being. Caution is displayed again on lap 23 when #29 Mark Johnson brushed the wall in his Klingspor car, rebounding off and making contact with #92 Chris Bristol. Bristol went hard into the turn 3 wall, but was uninjured. However, his car sustained heavy front end damage taking him out of the race and costing him his ride for the 2 nd 50 lap feature. .



After the restart, things remained relatively calm until lap 43 when caution was brought out once again for the spinning car of #59 Coleman Pressley after making contact with #29 Mark Johnson. After this restart, Brian Connor never looked back as he went on to take the checkered flag with a dominating performance. Connor was followed by #28 Scott Kilby, #95 Keith Bumgarner, #58 Carl Cormier and #15 David Mercer.

Connor had this to say in Victory Lane:

"I can't believe I won and still scratched up the side of my racecar. We have been really struggling lately, tearing up racecars and starting in the back.....it's tough

to come from the back. We owe this partially to good luck, you definitely got to have luck on your side. We are usually pretty good for qualifying and we adjust ourselves out of it for the race, but tonight we hit it just right. Scott Kilby is always tough to get by, he will race you hard to the last lap, but tonight he gave me a little room. I guess our strategy for the 2 nd race is run like heck.”



In the second race, Scott Kilby paced the field to the green flag once again. On lap 1, Keith Bumgarner looks to pass Brian Connor for 4 th as Connor gets bottle necked by #15 David Mercer. Bumgarner takes advantage of the situation to pass both cars and put his Country Chair Ford in 3 rd place. On lap 2, #70 Nick Tucker puts his car in the top 5 after passing David Mercer. Brian Connor proves that he isn't so quick to give up his position as he bumps Keith Bumgarner going into turn 3 and passes him on the inside to reclaim his 3 rd spot. Connor makes his move to take 2 nd from #58 Carl Cormier on lap 6 and clears him by the next lap. On lap 8, Bumgarner takes a look on the inside of Cormier and clears him to take 3 rd . The field remains calm for several laps and by lap 25, Brian Connor has caught race leader Scott Kilby and lets him know that he is ready to try for both feature wins. Connor puts the bumper to Kilby on

lap 26 but he didn't loosen him enough to make the pass. Connor takes another look to the inside on lap 29 as they battle side by side for 5 laps as Kilby hangs on to his top spot.

All of this side by side racing among the top 2 allows Keith Bumgarner to close in and prowl precariously in their shadows, waiting for the chance to make his move. On lap 40, Connor slips just enough off turn 2 to allow Bumgarner to make a run on the inside and take 2 nd spot. Bumgarner sets his sights on #28 Kilby to try and take the top spot. Kilby's car has obviously tightened up as he is running the high line on the track, leaving the low line wide open for Bumgarner if he can stick it down there. Bumgarner makes several attempts to capture the lead on the low side but coming off the turn the two end up battling side by side. Fans jump to their feet as the two are neck and neck taking the white flag. Coming out of turn 4 to the checkered flag, Kilby and Bumgarner touch as Bumgarner takes the checkered flag and Kilby goes spinning down the front stretch after brushing the outside wall. Bumgarner and Kilby were followed by #21 Brian Connor, #58 Carl Cormier and #70 Nick Tucker.



Bumgarner had this to say in Victory Lane:

“I am tickled to death. We had some bad tires from last week and had to run them in that first race so that kind of messed us up. But we kind of worked with it and made a guess to try and make it better. I can't thank all of these guys enough that help me with this car. This is awesome. I wasn't really sure what I had out there, but they kept fighting hard up front allowing me to ease up on them. I appreciate those boys running me clean, I tried to stay off Kilby and give him room but I still ran him hard. I also want to thank my Dad, Mike Bumgarner for being with me tonight.”



In the Limited Late Model Division, Chris Chapman took his #44 Conover Construction and Roofing car to victory lane again after a dominating performance and leading every lap. Chapman was followed by #00 Lucas Ransone, #10 Andy Mercer, #5 Dexter Canipe Jr. and #47 Kevin Bumgarner.

Matt DiBenedetto added to his long list of victories in the Pro-4 Division as he picked up yet another win. DiBenedetto was followed by #00 Ricky Crooks, #29 Ricky Dennie, #98 Rob Lewis and #4 Jacob Lehn

In the Street Stock Division, Jonathan Smith took his #16 to victory lane followed by #64 Marshall Sutton, #03 Kevin Eby, #1 David Manis and #40 David Smith.

David Hasson continues to dominate the Hobby Stock Division after he started shotgun on the field and blasted to the front in 2 laps. Hasson took the win followed by #2 V.L. Richardson, #98 Stephen Clippard, #12 Tim Reese and #11 Jimmy Whisnant.



The Aaron's Pro Challenge Touring Series made a stop at Hickory Motor Speedway Saturday Night. #71 Terry Mathis grabbed the pole and dominated the 50 lap feature. Mathis was followed by #18 Mark Dyer, #11 Jonathan Chandler and #13 Trent Mayo.

Join us Saturday August 13 th at Hickory Motor Speedway for Sierra Mist Night at the Races! Racing action will include a 100 lap feature for the Late Models along with Limited Late Models, Pro-4's, Legends and Super Trucks. See you there!

