

Pressley is King of the 32 nd Annual Bobby Isaac Memorial

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



(Newton, NC) It was a perfect Labor Day for racing in North Carolina as some of the finest Late Model Stocks in the Southeast took to the World's Most Famous Short Track, Hickory Motor Speedway. Fans were out in abundance for the 32 nd Annual Bobby Isaac Memorial Race presented by Dale Earnhardt Chevrolet. This spectacular event kept fans on the edge of their seats as two third-generation drivers, Coleman Pressley and Taylor Stricklin, both had amazing runs that ended in Victory Lane. It was top notch racing as the Late

Models made their way onto the track for the "32 nd Annual Bobby Isaac Memorial" 200 lap feature. The feature event was split into two 100 lap segments that were separated by a 10 minute break, where drivers were able to add two new tires and make adjustments to their cars.

It was no surprise for Hickory fans to see the #10 of Andy Mercer sitting on the pole, as he continued his reign of dominance during the initial laps of the first 100 lap segment. The #59 of Coleman Pressley didn't waste much time as he began to put the pressure on Mercer for the lead. Pressley's efforts began on lap nine and he was able to overtake Mercer by lap 10. The racing action continued to heat up as the #23 of Matt McCall got into the back end of the #44 of Matt DiBenedetto as the two were heading out of turn four. DiBenedetto wiggled as the two came out of the turn, losing momentum and

allowing McCall to slide past him grabbing the fourth place position. McCall continued on his path, grabbing the third spot from the #17 of Rob Fuller.

Trouble began to strike drivers on lap 30 when the #8 of Jamie Yelton pulled in with mechanical issues, and the #43 of Jesse LeFevers pulled in on lap 31 also experiencing mechanical troubles. Both talented drivers would be out of the race and out of the chase for the checkers. By the mid-point of the first segment, Pressley had obtained a sizable lead over the field as he came upon lap traffic, which gave the drivers behind Pressley the opportunity to catch up. Just then, on lap 51, Fuller went for a spin on the back stretch after contact with another car, bring out the first caution of the feature . The caution was just what Pressley needed as McCall was closing in fast, diminishing Pressley's lead over the field.

From the restart, Pressley and McCall battled side by side. DiBenedetto held on tight to the back bumper of Pressley as he took on McCall, the push from DiBenedetto allowing him and Pressley to slide past McCall on lap 56. On lap 60, the #29 of Andy Loden used a very uncommon low line to move past Mercer, grabbing the fifth place position. Once Loden had completed the pass, he moved back to running his signature high line and began to make a move to the front of the pack. A second caution waved on lap 74 as the #51 of Chris Lawson got into the back of the #92 of Candace Muzny as the two came out of turn two, sending Lawson for a spin down the back stretch.

On lap 78, Loden found himself in the back end of the #00 of Lucas Ransone as the two came out of turn four and headed towards the front stretch. The contact caused Ransone to get loose coming off the corner, allowing Loden to sail by him on the front stretch and take over the fourth place position. With ten laps remaining in the first segment, Pressley and McCall were running side by side for the lead. Pressley was able to use lap traffic as a pick to gain a slight lead over McCall. Two laps remained when McCall turned the tables on Pressley as he went three wide with lap traffic and moved into the top position. Pressley, DiBenedetto, Loden, and Grissom rounded out the top five at the end of the first 100 lap segment.

As the Late Model drivers took a ten minute competition break to tune their cars for the second segment, the future stars of Hickory Motor Speedway took to the track for a power wheel race. Four youngsters participated in the one lap mini-event, competing with their battery operated rides. Winner, Nick Loden, powered into the lead and dominated over the field as he took the checkers in his high powered "Loden Racing" truck. "It's post tech legal," proud papa, Late Model driver Andy Loden, stated at the end of the race.

Once the kids made their way off the track, the big boys headed back onto the track for a second 100 lap segment. On lap 102, Loden made a brave move on Pressley, by ducking down on the low line to move into third. The low line didn't agree

with Loden as he fell back into the fourth place spot. By lap 113, Fuller had charged his way back to the front of the pack after his spin earlier in the race. Fuller then put the pressure on Loden and Ransone, taking the fifth place position by lap 115.

20 laps into the second segment, Pressley began to try McCall, looking to make a move to regain the lead. Pressley's strategy was simple, sit back saving his tires until it was time to strike and move back into the lead. On lap 137, DiBenedetto fell off the pace of the field and came to a stop in turn four, bringing out the only caution of the second segment. DiBenedetto would make it back onto the track by lap 140, after mechanical repairs pretty much put paid to his attempt to win. With 50 laps to go during the second segment, Pressley finally made his move on McCall, jumped back into the lead and pulled away from the field.

On lap 173, Loden makes a move on Ransone, using an unfriendly inside line to try and grab fourth. Loden struggled on the inside and settled back into fifth place. 20 laps remained when Loden finally made it to the outside of Ransone, sailing past him and capturing the fourth place position. Meanwhile Pressley continued to increase his lead over the field; he had worked up a full straight-a-way lead over McCall by the time he came to the checkers. "It was very competitive...there were a lot of great drivers here today," Pressley stated about his competition. Fuller, Loden, and Ransone completed the top five respectively.

The Hickory Street Stocks were the first to take to the track during the Labor Day show for a special 50 lap feature. The race was filled with side by side action from the first green flag. The #17 of Waylon Flynn jumped to the lead on the first lap stealing the position from pole sitter, the #1 of Taylor Stricklin. Behind Stricklin on the track the #03 of Kevin Eby, the #7 of Jeff Sparks, and the #64 of Marshall Sutton battled nose to tail for the third place position. On lap six, Flynn wobbled heading into turn two causing him to run up the track, allowing Stricklin to move back into the lead.

The first caution of the feature flew on lap 15 when Sparks blew up heading down the front stretch. During the caution the #99 of Jonathon Smith pulled in with mechanical issues but would be back out on the track to take the green for the restart. The second and final caution came out on lap 16 for debris on the track. The safety crew was on top of things, as they got the track back into tip top condition to go back green flag racing. The restart put Sutton in prime position to make his way to the front. Sutton had moved into second place by lap 18 and looked as though he would be able to challenge Stricklin for the lead. Stricklin proved too much for Sutton and the rest of the field as he began to pull away.

20 laps in, it was a battle for fifth as the #32 of Jeremy Harrell took on the #66 of Scott Wallace. Harrell moved into the top five on lap 23, but Wallace would continue to battle Harrell to regain his position and complete the event with a top five finish. With 20 laps remaining, Flynn decided he was no longer going to settle for running in third as he started to put pressure on Sutton for second. The two would battle side by side for the remainder of the race. With seven laps to go, Flynn was tight on the bumper of Sutton. Coming off of turn four Flynn had inched ahead of Sutton, but Sutton pulled back into the position on the front stretch.



There were two laps left in the feature when Stricklin made contact with the outside wall on the back stretch. The force from scrapping the wall sent him down the track and into the #71 of Robert DiVanna, causing minor damage to the left front quarter panel of Stricklin's ride. "That was my fault for trying to run so hard at the end," Stricklin stated from Victory Lane. With Stricklin's commanding lead and driving skills he was able to hold onto the car and wheel it into Victory Lane. Sutton and Flynn were side by side as they came to the checkers, but Sutton managed to inch his way ahead grabbing second, leaving Flynn to finish with a solid third place position, and leaving the crowd cheering. "It was close. I was going to let Waylon under me and just race him till the end," Sutton declared during his post race interview. Eby and Harrell rounded out the top five.

The NASCAR Whelen All-American Series will be back this Saturday, September 6, for "AT&T Real Yellow Pages Night at the Races". The night will feature races by the Bojangles Late Models, Jewelry Exchange Limited Late Models, Red Baron Race Parts Hobby Stocks, the Hickory Street Stocks and the Hickory Pro 4's. Grandstands open at 5 PM, with qualifying immediately

following, an On Track Autograph Session featuring the Red Baron Race Parts Hobby Stocks will begin at 6 PM, with racing action beginning at 7 PM. Tickets for the event are only \$10 for adults, \$8 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:

Hickory Street Stocks 50

1. (1) Taylor Stricklin
2. (64) Marshall Sutton
3. (17) Waylon Flynn
4. (03) Kevin Eby
5. (32) Jeremy Harrell
6. (66) Scott Wallace
7. (71) Robert DiVanna
8. (20) David Webb
9. (73) George Lauster
10. (43) Heather Bell
11. (99) Jonathon Smith
12. (61) Bill Harvey
13. (7) Jeff Sparks

Bojangles Late Model 200

1. (59) Coleman Pressley
2. (23) Matt McCall
3. (17) Rob Fuller
4. (29) Andy Loden
5. (00) Lucas Ransone
6. (32) Kyle Grissom
7. (57) Grant Wimbish
8. (36) Anthony Anders
9. (33) James Goff
10. (18) David Roberts
11. (7) Jarit Johnson
12. (42) Todd Goble
13. (77) Ryan Fischer
14. (47) Patrick Molesworth
15. (44) Matt DiBenedetto
16. (20) Tyler Green
17. (95) Michael Buckner
18. (92) Candace Muzny
19. (10) Andy Mercer
20. (11) Chase Austin
21. (51) Chris Lawson
22. (43) Jesse LeFevers
23. (8) Jamie Yelton