

Keith Dempster Claims Northern Summer Nationals Opener at South Buxton

By Rich Vleck

MERLIN, Ontario (June 25, 2011) – When Keith Dempster got out of his car after what he thought was a hard-fought second place showing, he stated that it felt like a win; in the end it will officially go down as one.

Dempster, of Alton, Ontario, was declared the winner of the opening leg of the Jones-Brown Insurance Northern Summer Nationals at South Buxton Raceway Saturday Night after apparent winner Dustin Daggett was disqualified for a technical infraction found during post-race inspection.

“I really don’t like to win it this way, but we’ll take it,” stated Dempster, a two-time Southern Ontario Sprints Champion upon learning of his first win in over a year. “We had a good car and it helped starting up front tonight but we finally got the motor running right and had the car real good all night long.”

Dempster was given the pole position for the \$2,000-to-win 25-lap A-Main by Dain Naida in the “Outlaw Style Redraw” and did not let his partial teammate down as he outdueled outside polesitter Tim Kelly through the first set of tricky corners at South Buxton. The pilot of the Ohsweken Speedway/ Rochester Knighthawks No. 5 would consistently stretch out his advantage over the pack through the first half of the race but Dustin Daggett was running his way up through the pack.

Daggett, of Grand Ledge, MI, who was given the seventh starting spot for the feature, moved into second with an impressive move on lap 11 as he drove around the outside of

Dempster's car owner Glenn Styres in turns three and four. Daggett was in the process of taking the lead on lap 15 after executing a similar maneuver when a caution flew for a multi-car incident in the back of the pack, reverting the field to the last lap completed and giving Dempster another chance to retain the lead.

Dempster would utilize his second chance and move his line up the narrow speedway to keep Daggett in second, but on as the lead duo moved into turn one on lap 17, Daggett powered his Miles Petroleum No. 2M around the outside and proceeded to check out from the pack and cruise to what he thought was his fifth win at the D-shaped 1/3-mile.

After the race, it became apparent that Daggett's top wing, which is legal under ASCS Sprints on Dirt rules, did not meet Northern Summer Nationals specifications. It was an obvious letdown for the SOD point leader, who by all indications made an honest oversight.

It was not known at the time, but the battle for second on the track for the final 10 laps would determine the winner. A lap after Daggett took the lead, Bryan Howland, who started 10th, drove underneath Glenn Styres for third and began to apply pressure on Dempster for second. Just after completing lap 21, the pair quickly ran down a lapped machine in turn one and when Howland went to go around the outside he got into the loose dirt on the top of the track and slid over the banking, fell back to fifth, and effectively put him out of contention for the win.

In the exchange for spots, Jared Zimbardi would drive underneath both Howland and Styres to take third, which would result in a second place showing in the final rundown for the Patriot Sprint Tour point leader. In his first trip to the southern-most track in Canada, Zimbardi was admittedly not great but "survived" to earn the most Patriot points.

Glenn Styres would hold off Howland down the stretch to claim third, by far his best finish in 2011 after a disappointing start. First and third place for the Styres Racing entries was just what that team needed to get back on form.

Bryan Howland's fourth place showing was disappointing for the four-time Patriot Champion after being up as far as third, but in his first trip to South Buxton he was perhaps the second quickest car all night long.

Warren Mahoney, who scored the win in Heat Two, would drive up to round out the top-five. The former SOS Champion had a solid car all night long for his third-straight fifth place showing at South Buxton.

Local favorite and Corr/Pak Sprints at Ohsweken Point Leader Kyle Patrick and form ASCS SOD Champion Ken Mackey were both way off in their respective heat races, but charged up to through pack to finish sixth and seventh, respectively.

In his first trip to the track, Eastern Ontario shoe Lee Ladouceur would end up eighth to unofficially take the SOS point lead. Jamie Collard was involved in three incidents on the night but would still salvage a ninth place effort. Michigander Robert Huisken completed the top-10.

A total of 25 cars would file in to the pits for the first of three Northern Summer Nationals events in 2011. Despite heavy rains in the area all week and overcast skies, a near-capacity crowd filled the stands for perhaps the largest sprint race in the track's history.

All 25 entries started the feature; however minor incidents would relegate many to the pits before the race's completion. Don Adamczyk, who started fourth but was pressuring Keith Dempster for the lead as the field completed the opening circuit, got crossed up when the field slowed for a caution and suffered terminal damage after fellow PST competitor Tim Kelly made contact. The incident would also hamper Kelly's No.

12 the rest of the night.

Dain Naida was in third early in the event and was fighting hard to hold off Dustin Daggett at the completion of lap seven when the pair of Michigan drivers reeled in Glenn Styres and left Naida nowhere to go. Naida would spin out the No. 07x and collect Travis Cunningham, who was running sixth at the time.

Local Adam West struggled with engine issues all night long and retired early while veteran Dick Mahoney was forced to head to the pits on lap eight with brake issues after he had come from 16th up to eighth.

The final two events of the Northern Summer Nationals will take place on August 19 and 20, when the series point fund, along with a guaranteed starting spot in the seventh annual Arrow Express Canadian Sprint Car Nationals will be awarded. For more information, log onto www.OhswekenSpeedway.com.

Northern Summer Nationals Results: 6/25/11, South Buxton Raceway, Merlin, Ontario.

Jones-Brown Insurance A-Main (25 Laps)- 1. Keith Dempster (5), 2. Jared Zimbardi (35), 3. Glenn Styres (0), 4. Bryan Howland (51), 5. Warren Mahoney (25), 6. Kyle Patrick (33k), 7. Ken Mackey (25M), 8. Lee Ladouceur (51L), 9. Jamie Collard (7x), 10. Robert Huisken (46), 11. Bob Crawford (10c), 12. Dain Naida (07x), 13. Jim Munsie (9), 14. Mitch Brown (10), 15. Jim Lingar (70), 16. Chris Durand (67), 17. Adam West (30), 18. Tim Kelly (12), 19. Dick Mahoney (79), 20. Travis Cunningham (71), 21. John Burbridge (31), 22. Frank Baranowski (66), 23. Don Adamczyk (21), 24. Brad Lodge (2), 25. Dustin Daggett (2M).

Lap Leaders- Dempster 1-16, Daggett 17-25.

Heats (10 Laps Each)-

Race 1: 1. Styres, 2. Howland, 3. Kelly, 4. Cunningham, 5. Brown, 6. Lodge, 7. Munsie, 8. Lingar, 9. Baranowski.

Race 2: 1. W. Mahoney, 2. Daggett, 3. Burbridge, 4. D. Mahoney, 5. Ladouceur, 6. Collard, 7. Huisken, 8. West.

Race 3: 1. Naida, 2. Dempster, 3. Adamczyk, 4. Zimbardi, 5. Crawford, 6. Patrick, 7. Durand, 8. Mackey.

Engine Pro ASCS Sprints on Dirt presented by ARP Points (Top Ten): 1. Dustin Daggett 820, 2. Ryan Grubaugh 642, 3. Robert Huisken 613, 4. Jared Horstman 510, 5. Brett Mann 494, 6. Joe Bares 489, 7. Gregg Dalman 460, 8. Davey Brown 447, 9. Jim Lingar 436, 10. Matt Lumbert 428.