

2016 MAHLE/Clevite Beyond Limits Challenge Recap



ERIE, MI (September 23, 2016) – The Engine Pro Sprints on Dirt presented by ARP MAHLE/Clevite Beyond Limits Challenge, formerly the MAHLE/Clevite Short Track Challenge, had a very different look for 2016.

The five-race BLC mini-series typically wrapped up around mid-season and gave SOD competitors an opportunity to compete for a separate point fund within the full SOD season series. As the former name indicates, the challenge took place at five different small tracks. The name was changed to draw attention to the new, exciting Sprints On Dirt unlimited format. It was intended to be the only significant change, but Mother Nature had other ideas.

The first 2016 race at Crystal Motor Speedway was rained out on April 30, then again on May 14. The challenge then moved on to Merritt Speedway and put on a great show that was won by Brian Smith. I-96 Speedway was next on the challenge schedule, but it became the third rain out. On Saturday, July 9, the challenge rolled into Thunderbird Raceway and Brian Smith was victorious again, building up a big lead in BLC points.

With only two races completed by late July, it was apparent that a mid-season finish was not going to happen.

MAHLE/Clevite BLC moved on to Crystal Motor Speedway on July 30, and guess what? The show was rained out. On August 19, in spite of some threatening weather, the I-96 Speedway challenge race was completed with Ohio visitor Mad Max Stambaugh leading the entire feature from his front row starting position.

With only three dates left on the 2016 Engine Pro Sprints on Dirt presented by ARP schedule, and a race already held at Merritt, there was no choice other than including the last two races at Hartford Speedway on September 2 and Crystal Motor Speedway on September 3.

It was a do-or-die weekend, and the Labor Day dates were blessed with great weather. A huge crowd was on hand to see Litchfield, Michigan's Chad Blonde run off with the win in Sean Robinson's 5B.

The September 3 Crystal race was the championship race of the MAHLE/Clevite Beyond Limits Challenge mini-series sponsored by MAHLE/Clevite and final race of the Sprints On Dirt season. It was also the Engine Pro Sprints On Dirt presented by ARP Nitro Black Mike Olrich Memorial Race in support of RacingAwareness.com, the most prestigious event of the entire season. Ryan Ruhl dominated the 30 lap feature to duplicate his win in the 2015 Mike Olrich Memorial.

Engine Pro Sprints On Dirt presented by ARP 2016 Champion Brian Smith used his early season wins to build up a lead that he protected through consistent finishes to also win the MAHLE/Clevite Beyond Limits Challenge Championship.

Tom Schinderle and Dan McCarron looked like series championship contenders as a result of strong finishes in their 305 cubic inch cars, however, neither driver entered later challenge races and dropped out of contention. After a disappointing 8th place finish in the first BLC event, Steve Irwin came on strong to finish 2nd, 3rd, 3rd, and 3rd in the

remaining races, and closed in to finish only fourteen points behind Smith.

The final standings for the 2016 MAHLE/Clevite Beyond Limits Challenge Championship are:

| | Car Number | Driver | Total | Amount |
|----------|-------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1 | 2+ | Brian Smith | 677 | \$ 1,000.00 |
| 2 | 0 | Steve Irwin | 663 | \$ 600.00 |
| 3 | 1A | Mark Aldrich | 601 | \$ 400.00 |
| 4 | 81 | John Gall | 539 | \$ 300.00 |
| 5 | 10S | Jay Steinebach | 509 | \$ 200.00 |
| 6 | 1 | Eric Smith | 496 | \$ 150.00 |
| 7 | 8 | Justin Ward | 494 | \$ 100.00 |

For more information about MAHLE/Clevite, click [here](#). For more information about Engine Pro, click [here](#). For more information about ARP, click [here](#). The full 2016 Sprints on Dirt schedule, rules, current news, and other information are available at www.sprintsondirt.com.

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