

Hornaday Comes Home to TRP!

Weather? What can I say? This is Tucson in the Spring and upper 80's were what we got. Hundreds of hard core NASCAR fans came early to the Meet N Greet to meet their favorite driver and get a chance for an autograph and picture with TRP Legend and now Craftsman Truck Series Champion, Ron Hornaday Jr.

Hot lapping and qualifying followed the Meet N Greet and to no one's surprise, Hereford's Joe Paladenic was again on top of the chart followed by Mike Egurola and Scott Rueschenberg. The NASCAR Lucas Oil Late Model Dash was just the start of a furious night of action packed racing and after six laps of door handle to door handle, bumper to bumper action Tucson's Matt Levin had won with a three wide finish over Egurola and Hornaday! WOW!

The TRP Bomber Lite heat race was won by the familiar Karl Griggs over John Cowser and Kyle Milburg. The TRP Bomber heat race was won by Bob Davis with a last lap pass of Brad Kleifgen and Shawn Perrin. The NASCAR Sport Compact heat was again all Josh Davis over Cindy Martinez and Sierra Vista's David Bosley. The NASCAR Factory Stock heat race was some of the same racing TRP fans have come accustomed to with Tom Mikla AKA "Lightning McQueen" winning over "Cowboy" Ken Hunt and Loren "Shef" Sheffield. The TRP Modified field was again slim but full with excitement with Pat Bush beating P.J. Megna and newcomer John Daley.

With point's leader Rueschenberg in NASCAR Late Model heat one, Hornaday Jr. in heat two and both starting from the rear, the heats were sure to be worth the price of admission. Heat one was all Rick "The Butler" Butler leading flag to flag over Egurola and Dustin Jones as Rueschenberg could do no better than fourth. Heat two racing action put all the fans on their feet as Hornaday showed why he has won three Truck Championships by charging up from last starting position to take the lead by lap three and taking the Win over Duane Hunt Jr. and Victor Pfluger.

After a brief intermission, the TRP Bomber Lites took to the track. Jason Davis would take the lead on lap one and lead until the finish over hard charging John Cowser and Kyle Milburg. The TRP Bombers were next up and 2007 Champion Shawn Perrin would lead through lap seven when "The Butler" doing double duty again tonight would seize the lead and wave to the crowd while driving one handed around the Raceway. At the end of ten, it was Butler, Perrin and Kleifgen.

The NASCAR Sport Compact field was missing last year's Rookie of the Year, Karen Heyse and Josh Davis was again in a class by himself taking the easy win over Jon and Cindy Martinez.

The NASCAR Factory Stock feature event was again a Mikla romp as he started last and took the lead by lap two and put it into cruise control for yet another win over "Shef" and Rookie, Joel Johnson having his best finish yet.

During the Victory Lane presentations of the NASCAR classes and the driver introductions for the NASCAR Lucas Oil Late Models, yours truly swept the high and low side of the Raceway to ensure Hornaday and Rueschenberg an extra wide racing surface to play on. At the drop of the green, Paladenic set sail out front due to the 10 car invert as last starting Hornaday thrilled the crowd and the other racers with his daring three wide late breaking moves up through the field. By lap ten, Hornaday was up to seventh behind seventh starting Victor Pfluger and with twenty laps in the books, Paladenic was stretching his lead over Mat Williams as Pfluger, Hornaday and Rueschenberg raced side by side. A lap twenty two caution would bunch the field and within five laps Hornaday had charged up to the leader, Paladenic with Pfluger and Rueschenberg in tow. At the cross flags there were two distinct races going on with Paladenic, Hornaday, Pfluger and Rueschenberg out front and half a straightaway back a second pack of hungry drivers lead by Mat Williams. On lap forty five, the picture would freeze as second running Hornaday would make contact with a lapper causing third running Pfluger to spin and Cassie Gannis to finish her night with a fire under the hood of the Blue Media Monte Carlo bringing out the red. During the short red flag delay, TRP official timing and scoring decided that both the crowd favorite, Hornaday and Rookie sensation Pfluger would retain their pre red flag positions as they were unfortunate victims of lapped traffic and after all, many of the thousands in attendance came to see Hornaday Win! With Paladenic out front, Hornaday in second and Pfluger in third racing resumed. By lap fifty five, it was obvious Paladenic had no rear tires left as was also the case with Hornaday. On lap sixty one, Pfluger would seize the lead with Rueschenberg in tow while the second group of Hunt Jr., Egurola and Brian Harrington Jr., were coming on strong. With five to go, Hunt was up to third. With two to go while Pfluger and Rueschenberg were battling side by side and Hunt would get by Rueschenberg for second and with one to go, Harrington would get by Hornaday for fourth. Pfluger would win the biggest race of his career at Tucson Raceway Park where Racers are made and Legends are Born!

Thank you Ron! You are a True Champion!