

Post Race Report - June 12, 2011

If ever there was a perennial favourite at Auto Clearing Motor Speedway, few would dispute the Super Late Model cars and Super Trucks top that list. Both took to the track Saturday night, joined by the Western Sportsman division for a Super Slick Saturday night of racing.

Getting the season underway in the first of five Dakota Dunes Western Canada Super Late Model Series events, 26 cars from across the west hit Saskatoon for the WSSL Auto Parts 150. Leduc's Trevor Emond was eager to defend his 2010 series championship, along with well-known racers Chris Skelton, Gary Lister, Aarron Dowler, Tony Lambert and others. All 12 Saskatoon SLM teams participated, looking to take an early series lead.

The Alberta based JB Water and Vacuum Service Super Truck Racing Series is in what they describe as a recharging year. Several drivers have opted to take the year, or at least some races off, leaving 13 trucks vying for the Bobcat of Saskatoon championship title. Not in Saskatoon this weekend were Terry Kovacs, Larry Kramer, Dan Saunders, Larry Skinner, Conner and Grant Mills, Darin Guillard and Sheldon Bain. 2010 runner-up Larry Kramer, who destroyed his truck in the final Saskatoon race last year, says he plans to take in one race this year... probably their July 23rd race in Vernon.

The winner of the Bobcat of Saskatoon series the last two years, Jamie McClennon was doing double duty as he piloted both the number 84 super truck and his new number 33 super late model. Not to be outdone, Doug Fischer was also running double duty as he is running twin (glow in the dark) paint jobs on his number 99 super truck and super late model.

The Western Sportsman group also is trying to define themselves and establish what should be a very competitive and entertaining racing group. Scott Kessler took the first Sportsman division feature race two weeks ago and came into the night with a slim two point lead over Travis Deforest. Unfortunately Travis was a no-show on Saturday and Nick Allen was previously committed to the drag races taking place across town, leaving the Sportsman division with a disappointing car count of five.

The day got off to an early start with the pits opening and haulers unloading starting at 8:00 a.m. Tech inspections started at 8:30, with the first practice to hit the track starting at 10:00. Amazingly, 3-1/2 hours of practice went incident free without any accidents or mechanical failures. Everyone who made the trip would be able to strut their stuff under green flag action.

Action got underway promptly on schedule at 3:45 with the Super Trucks qualifying in with time trials. Doug Fischer topped the list at 15.114 seconds in his #99 Chevy Silverado. Jamie McClennon brought the #84 Silverado around in 15.228 seconds and Dean Braham rounded out the top three in his #44 bright red Silverado. 1.031 seconds separated the top from the bottom truck (#07 Dean Cunningham) in time trials.

Things continued with the Dakota Dunes Western Canada Super Late Model Championship Series cars timing in for heat race seeding and qualifying position.

Rookie late model driver Mel Weeks out of Medicine Hat got things under way turning a time of 14.931 seconds. This would eventually place him mid-pack in 13th spot.

2010 Dakota Dunes champion Trevor Emond took top spot in qualifying driving his new 2011 Impala SS with the GM 604 crate engine turning a time of 14.534 seconds (BTW, Emond's car was sold just prior to the race). Calgary's Chris Skelton picked up second place points with a time of 14.543 seconds in his #6 Impala and Gary Lister out of Okotoks Alberta rounded out the top three with a time of 14.584 seconds in his #55X Monte Carlo. Top Saskatoon qualifier was Trent Seidel at sixth, in his #70 crate engine 2011 Impala SS and a time of 14.678 seconds.

1.605 seconds separated top (Emond) from bottom (#28 Devin Kopeck) qualifier.

The JB Water and Vacuum Service super trucks got the night underway welcoming flagman Rick Elliot back for his first race night of 2011. #48 Keray Myer took the first checkered flag of the night in the super trucks heat race 1A, with #84 Jamie McClennon and #20 Jamie Fitzgerald chasing him across the line. In super truck heat race 1B, Dave Saunders driving the #74 Silverado picked up his first win, followed closely by #18 Ron Elder Jr and #13 Gary Sarnecki.

There may have only been five of them but the Western Sportsman cars showed they still know how to but on a show even when their numbers are down. Scott Kessler and Ben Busch put on the first of three battles of the night, with Calgary's #53 Scott Kessler beating Prince Albert's #49 Ben Busch over the line in a photo finish by only 0.019 seconds. Moose Jaw's Tim Kammer brought the #04 over in third.

It's on to Dakota Dunes late model action, with the top 16 cars from qualifying making the heat races. The cars are split odd/even with the odd qualifying cars (1st, 3rd, 5th) running in heat A and the even cars (2nd, 4th, 6th) in heat B. The qualifying order is inverted so 15th place gets the pole in heat A and 16th gets the pole in heat B. Heat A determines the inside row for the feature, while Heat B sets the outside row. Starting positions 16 to 26 are determined from the B Main race.

This split put Saskatoon drivers Jim Gaunt and PJ Kondra in Heat A, while Jim Barnsley, Dave Bone, Jason Gervais, Glen Hertzke, Jeff Reimer and Trent Seidel would be up against only two out of town cars.

Wheeler Boys of Boys will be Boys racing (Nationwide and Camping World Trucks) led the pack onto the track for the first Dakota Dunes heat race of 2011. Boys managed to fend off PJ Kondra while Trevor Emond worked his way through the pack. After leading across the line for the eighth time Boys found Emond in his review mirror, then his side view mirror as Emond made easy work of leading the group across the line in the 9th lap. Boys faded fast as both Kondra and Gaunt got by him. Gaunt looked like he was on rails as he sailed by Kondra, but with only one lap to go didn't have enough for Emond.



Trevor Emond took the first heat flag in his 2011 #17 Impala, followed by Jim Gaunt in his #55 2011 Sky Financial Impala and PJ Kondra in his #69 Dodge Charger.

In the second heat race for the Dakota Dunes late models, #88 Jason Gervais had the pole position, but it was outside pole sitter Dave Bone who took advantage and jumped to an early lead. Trent Seidel made quick work though moving from sixth starting spot to take over the lead after only three laps. Seidel cruised on to the checkered flag in his 2011 Propane Plus Impala SS.

The battle was on behind him though as Dave Bone and Jeff Reimer challenged for position for several laps, before Reimer finally settled his #5 2011 Wolfecroft Signs Toyota Camry into second, leaving Dave Bone's #38 Proline Motorsports Ford Fusion in third.

Back to the JB Water and Vacuum Service Super Trucks for Heats 2A and 2B.

Doug Fischer must have worked the right tweaks into his truck as he took over the lead from Kevin McLean in lap eight. Jamie McClennon and Keray Myer got by McLean in lap 11, setting up the Fischer, McClennon, Myer finish in Heat 2A.

Brian Sparks took up the early lead in Heat 2B, but Dave Saunders had other ideas as he worked his way from the back row to knocking on Sparks' back door in nine laps. Saunders took over the lead in lap 11, showing Sparks the way to the finish line. Gary Sarnecki took third.

The Western Sportsman took to the track for their qualifier, with another close battle between Scott Kessler and Ben Busch. Kessler came out on top again, this time by 0.4 seconds over Busch. Nicholas Jewel from The Pas, MB brought the #51 Twin Motors Dodge Avenger over for third.

One more race before intermission, that being the Dakota Dunes 25 lap B Main, the race that determines start positions 16 to 26. Saskatoon driver Howard Crossman started in pole position. Besides six out of town cars, he is up against Saskatoon drivers Trevor Hannay, Ken Campbell and Doug Bienia.

Doug Fischer got the jump and led the first lap, but Crossman put an end to that pretty quick, taking over in lap two and leading the group all the way through the 25 caution free laps. Trevor Hannay followed Howard around Fischer and stuck with him to the finish for second. Fischer too stayed put to take third.

There was a little bit of administrative work to take care of during the intermission as race officials got ready for the Dakota Dunes Western Canada Super Late Model Championship Series running of the WSSL Auto Parts Plus 150. First, top qualifiers Trevor Emond and Chris Skelton were called to the front and issued a challenge. Give up your starting position, which has not yet been determined, start from the back of the field and pick up an extra \$500.00 if you win the WSSL Auto Parts Plus 150.

Both looked to the crowd for help. The crowd cheered loudly as both Skelton and Emond accepted the challenge and would start from the 25th and 26th positions respectively.

That out of the way, SSCRA Competition Director Cliff Pompu led a fan through the next step, which is determining the inversion to the line up to determine the final starting order. Two giant dice were rolled (one is all sixes) to come up with a number between seven and 12. The second dice landed on six as well, meaning the first twelve spots would be inverted. Rookie Mel Weeks from Calgary was just handed the pole position in the first feature of the Dakota Dunes series.

First up after the intermission was the JB Water and Vacuum Service Super Trucks to run the first feature of the Bobcat of Saskatoon series, tonight the Kubota 100. #20, Neil Fitzgerald from Wainwright had earned the pole starting position, with Edmonton's Keray Myer outside.

Myer got off to an early jump leading the first seven laps, but Fitzgerald wasn't far behind. The #41 of Len Zimmer from Red Deer was battling electrical issues all night with his truck and retired from the 100 lap feature after only one lap. #13 Gary Sarnecki of Calmar Alberta brought out the first caution in lap seven after he backed his truck into the front wall under the flagmen, suffering heavy damage and ending his night. Doug Fischer in the #99 and #00 Kevin McLean also took some damage in the incident.

After a bit of clean up, the race got back under way with Myer still in the lead, with Fitzgerald and Jamie McClennon following. The second caution came out in lap 18 as Doug Fischer had his lower radiator hose come off on the back straight spraying water onto the track and into corner three.

Action got back underway with Myer still leading the group, but McClennon was now hunting him down. By lap 28 Dave Saunders moved into third and was looking to take over McClennon's spot. That did in fact happen 10 laps later as Saunders worked his way around McClennon, as did Fitzgerald about three laps later. McClennon's truck looked to be fading.

Caution was back in lap 45 as #2 of Brian Sparks and #79 of Gary Miller tangled. Myer and Saunders came out the loser here as they lost several positions, handing the lead back to Fitzgerald when the green flag flew again.

Saunders' night ended in lap 79 bringing out the caution for the fourth time. Neil Fitzgerald was hanging onto the lead back to green, followed by McClennon and the #44 of Dean Braham.

That would be how the Kubota of Saskatoon 100 ended, with #20 Neil Fitzgerald of Wainwright taking the checkered, #84 Jamie McClennon from Wainwright was second, #44 Dean Braham from Lloydminster was third. #00 Kevin McLean and #48 Keray Myer rounded out the top five.

In the Western Sportsman feature, Calgary's Scott Kessler made it a perfect night as he and P.A.'s Ben Busch slid across the line side by side to take the 25 lap feature. Kessler was ahead at the line by .051 seconds. Nicholas Jewel from The Pas was third in the #51.

The main event of the night, the WSSL Auto Parts 150 got underway ahead of schedule, right around 8:00 p.m. 26 cars, thousands of horsepower and over a million dollars in value lined the front track for introductions. Flagman Rick Elliot greeted each driver with a wave of the checkered flag. I'm not sure, but local driver Trent Seidel seemed to get the loudest cheer, or maybe it was jeers.

The 2011 Dodge Ram pace truck from Auto Clearing Chrysler Superstore lead the pack around the track to clean and warm up their ten inch slick tires. Flagman Elliot signals one more warm up lap and the Ron Just ducks the Dodge Ram into the pits.

Engines roar and tires squeal as the cars come charging out of corner four when the green flag waves. The start of the race is always toughest on the nerves as the tightly packed group sticks together like glue down the front stretch and into corner one, then two, then three and finally four. Miracle of all miracles, the first lap of the Dakota Dunes Western Canada Super Late Model Championship Series is in caution free and the WSSL Auto Parts Plus 150 is underway.

Saskatoon driver Jason Gervais takes an early lead and runs like he is scared with Jamie McClennon close on his tail. Saskatoon driver Doug Bienia retires the #22 after only one lap. He too had been plagued with problems through the night.

Gervais is still in the lead when the first caution flies in lap eight. The #00 of Red Deer's Tony Lambert started smoking coming into corner four and was into the front grass by corner one after dropping a little gear oil on the track.

When the green flag flies again McClennon made quick work of getting around Gervais. Wheeler Boys followed a few laps later, taking over second. Glen Hertzke was running third and Gary Lister fourth.

Further back though Trent Seidel and Jim Gaunt were working their way up the pack and were up to fifth and sixth place by lap 18. Glen Hertzke worked his way into second in lap 21 while Wheeler Boys now led the race.

Trent Seidel got caught in slow traffic through corner two causing him to scrape the wall and drop back. Jim Gaunt took advantage and jumped up to second behind Hertzke. Gaunt got around Hertzke in lap 28 but caution flew and the Hertzke was put back in front.

Gaunt wasn't fazed and took the lead back over within two laps of the green flag and quickly moved out to a sizeable lead. It didn't look like anyone was going to be able to touch him. The next eight laps were Gaunt, Hertzke, Seidel. But you could see Hertzke's car fading and Seidel moved around him, then Gary Lister took Hertzke's spot about five laps later.

Gaunt had taken a huge lead and had two lapped cars between him and Seidel for about a dozen laps. Seidel moved up one, but continued to trail Gaunt with a car in between and Gary Lister on his tail. We're now at lap 68 and Trevor Emond has caught up to Lister with 14 year old #24 Cameron Hayley right behind him and Chris Skelton next.

Gaunt continues to lead into a lap 75 caution when PJ Kondra loses it coming out of corner four and slams hard into the front wall, ending his night and hopes of taking home the first trophy.

Taking the green Gary Lister drops back and it's Jim Gaunt followed by Trent Seidel, Trevor Emond, Cameron Hayley and Chris Skelton.

Gaunt continues to lead, lap 88, 89, 90. The order of the next four hasn't changed as it's Seidel, Emond, Hayley and Skelton. Disaster hits Gaunt in lap 98 as he picks the wrong line and gets caught in slow traffic. Seidel capitalizes as he jumps into the lead followed by Emond, Hayley and Skelton. Jim Gaunt has gone from first to fifth spot in about 100 feet.

Seidel continues to sail around while Emond and Hayley battle behind them. His experience knows they are wearing their cars down, as does Chris Skelton who follows behind watching and waiting for an opening.

Cameron Hayley gets around Emond in lap 110 and he now has Seidel in his sights. Cameron may be young and this may be only his third time to Auto Clearing Motor Speedway, but he and Seidel already know each other well from their battles on the track last year. Both know neither will back down and neither are afraid to trade a little paint.

Trent manages to work through lapped traffic occasionally putting a car or two between his and Hayley's, but Hayley doesn't let Seidel get too far ahead and strikes in lap 122 as Trent again picks the wrong line and Hayley slips by to take the lead. Like Gaunt, Seidel loses ground and Chris Skelton also slips by, now running second.

You can see Skelton peaking inside and outside of Hayley for the next four laps, but Skelton does get by in lap 128. Skelton and Hayley race hard, side by side each pushing ahead a few inches. Skelton leads where it counts at the line. Skelton has it by a few inches in lap 137. It's Hayley by a few inches in lap 138. Back to Skelton in 139.

Finally Skelton has the lead and starts to pull away, Taking the checkered flag to with the WSSL Auto Parts 150 by 0.852 seconds over Cameron Hayley. Trent Seidel hung on for third, Trevor Emond fourth and Jim Gaunt fifth. Jamie McClennon was the last lead lap car in sixth.

Race Stats:

26 cars started

Caution came out three times in laps 7, 29 and 76. Nine caution laps were counted. There were 20 laps not counted under caution.

Six cars finished on the lead lap, four cars one lap down, two cars two laps down. The remainder were three or more laps down. Seven cars were counted as 'not running' at the end of the race.

The race took 56 minutes and 58 seconds to run.

Full Results:

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Western Sportsman:

Heat Race:

1. #53 Scott Kessler
2. #49 Ben Busch
3. #04 Tim Kammer
4. #26 John Rees
5. #51 Nicholas Jewel

Qualifier Race:

1. #53 Scott Kessler
2. #49 Ben Busch
3. #51 Nicholas Jewel
4. #26 John Rees
5. #04 Tim Kammer

Feature Race:

1. #53 Scott Kessler
2. #49 Ben Busch
3. #51 Nicholas Jewel
4. #04 Tim Kammer
5. #26 John Rees

JB Water and Vacuum Service Super Trucks

Time Trials:

1. #99 Doug Fischer - 15.114s
2. #84 Jamie McClennon - 15.228s
3. #44 Dean Braham - 15.287s
4. #20 Neil Fitzgerald - 15.341s
5. #79 Gary Miller - 15.355s
6. #00 Kevin McLean - 15.142s
7. #48 Keray Myer - 15.479s
8. #41 Len Zimmer - 15.664s
9. #2 Brian Sparks - 15.703s
10. #13 Gary Sarnecki - 15.716s
11. #74 Dave Saunders - 15.738s
12. #18 Ron Elder Jr - 15.819s
13. #07 Dean Cunningham - 16.145s

Heat 1A:

1. #48 Keray Myer
2. #84 Jamie McClennon
3. #20 Neil Fitzgerald
4. #99 Doug Fischer
5. #79 Gary Miller
6. #44 Dean Braham
7. #00 Kevin McLean

Heat 1B:

1. #74 Dave Saunders
2. #18 Ron Elder Jr.
3. #13 Gary Sarnecki
4. #2 Brian Sparks
5. #07 Dean Cunningham
6. #41 Len Zimmer

Heat 2A:

1. #99 Doug Fischer
2. #84 Jamie McClennon
3. #48 Keray Myer
4. #00 Kevin McLean
5. #20 Neil Fitzgerald
6. #44 Dean Braham
7. #79 Gary Miller

Heat 2B:

1. #74 Dave Saunders
2. #2 Brian Sparks
3. #13 Gary Sarnecki
4. #07 Dean Cunningham
5. #18 Ron Elder Jr.
6. #41 Len Zimmer

Kubota of Saskatoon 100 Feature Race:

1. #20 Neil Fitzgerald
2. #84 Jamie McClennon
3. #44 Dean Braham
4. #00 Kevin McLean
5. #48 Keray Myer
6. #18 Ron Elder Jr.

7. #07 Dean Cunningham
8. #74 Dave Saunders
9. #79 Gary Miller
10. #99 Dough Fischer
11. #2 Brian Sparks
12. #13 Gary Sarnecki
13. #41 Len Zimmer

Dakota Dunes Super Late Model Championship Series

Time Trials:

1. #17 Trevor Emond – 14.534s
2. #6 Chris Skelton – 14.543s
3. #55X Gary Lister – 14.584s
4. #33 Jamie McClennon – 14.630s
5. #24 Cameron Hayley – 14.635s
6. #70 Trent Seidel – 14.678s
7. #55 Jim Gaunt – 14.693s
8. #14 Glen Hertzke – 14.758s
9. #69 PJ Kondra – 14.861s
10. #5 Jeff Reimer – 14.864s
11. #4 Aarron Dowler – 14.916s
12. #77 Jim Barnsley – 14.927s
13. #25 Mel Weeks – 14.931s
14. #38 Dave Bone – 15.010s
15. #2 Wheeler Boys – 15.045s
16. #88 Jason Gervais – 15.072s
17. #56 Howard Crossman – 15.098s
18. #99 Doug Fischer – 15.134s
19. #44 Trevor Hannay – 15.146s
20. #47 Chris Campbell – 15.183s
21. #00 Tony Lambert – 15.288s
22. #20 Ken Campbell – 15.353s
23. #41 Kevin McMillan – 15.419s
24. #67 Tim Johnson – 15.800s
25. #28 Devin Kopeck – 16.139
26. #22 Doug Bienia – 16.915

Heat 1:

1. #17 Trevor Emond
2. #55 Jim Gaunt
3. #69 PJ Kondra
4. #55X Gary Lister
5. #24 Cameron Hayley
6. #2 Wheeler Boys
7. #25 Mel Weeks
8. #4 Aarron Dowler

Heat 2:

1. #70 Trent Seidel
2. #5 Jeff Reimer
3. #38 Dave Bone
4. #14 Glen Hertzke
5. #33 Jamie McClennon
6. #88 Jason Gervais
7. #77 Jim Barnsley
8. #6 Chris Skelton

B Main:

1. #56 Howard Crossman
2. #44 Trevor Hannay
3. #99 Doug Fischer
4. #00 Tony Lambert
5. #20 Ken Campbell
6. #41 Kevin McMillan
7. #47 Chris Campbell
8. #67 Tim Johnson
9. #28 Devin Kopeck
10. #22 Doug Bienia

WSSL Auto Parts Plus 150 lap main feature:

1. #6 Chris Skelton
2. #24 Cameron Hayley
3. #70 Trent Seidel
4. #17 Trevor Emond
5. #55 Jim Gaunt
6. #33 Jamie McClennon
7. #38 Dave Bone
8. #77 Jim Barnsley
9. #55X Gary Lister
10. #4 Aarron Dowler



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12. #41 Kevin McMillan
13. #2 Wheeler Boys
14. #47 Chris Campbell
15. #25 Mel Weeks
16. #20 Ken Campbell
17. #44 Trevor Hannay
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