

The stock car racing season in Saskatoon wrapped up Saturday night at Auto Clearing Motor Speedway, with 2009 championships being decided in the Cooper Tire thunder stock and WSSL Auto Parts super late model divisions and the Siemens Transportation Group Western Elite Stock Car Tour. The evening started with Barry Stefaniuk, Glen Hertzke and Dan Shirley leading in points and the night ended with these three being declared champions.

The last race meet of the year for the Siemens WEST would prove to be an interesting one. Raichelle Wagner was back, having only run one previous meet this year. Brother Nathaniel suffered engine problems earlier in the afternoon, so Raichelle opted to run the #89 on her car.

James Van Domselaar was also in for his first ever run in the Siemens WEST, as was Brian Pyllpiuk. Van Domselaar has only run one race this year, the NASCAR Canadian Tire Series race in Edmonton, just before their stop in Saskatoon.

Mid West Combustion was the race night sponsor for the 125 and their team came prepared to win. Nathan Weenk qualified second behind Dan Shirley and only by about 1/10th of a second. Nick Allen was third in qualifying and Ben Busch was fourth.

In the Heat A race, Dan Shirley hung onto the top spot right from the pole, picking up the first WEST checkered flag of the night. Nathan Weenk did the same, going from pole to checker in the Heat B race.

The large crowd on hand was in for a bit of a treat during the intermission, as the Mid West Combustion team not only had their two WEST cars at the track, but brought their new #48 Monte Carlo, which made its debut in the NASCAR Canadian Tire Series race in Saskatoon on July 29. The team explained some of the differences between the cars, along with their goals. Everyone then got to hear and feel the difference in these cars, as they fired up the NASCAR spec. engine for a trip around the track.

Team owner Kevin Kozack explains the engine is the exact same as those used in the NASCAR Camping World truck series. Starting the engine is actually about a 30 minute process as the oil has to go through a pre-heating process and the engine pre-lubed. The cars run on Sunaco racing fuel, costing about \$20.00 per gallon. Each team went through about 60 gallons of Sunaco fuel at the race in July.

With Dan Shirley and Nathan Weenk on the inside and outside poles for the start of the first half of the Mid West Combustion 125, Dan Shirley got off to an early lead and led the first 45 laps of the 60 lap race. Nathan Weenk got by Dan for a couple of laps, before Dan regained the lead. Nathan wasn't done yet though and it was lap after lap of hardcore side by side racing between the two teams. One slip by either and they could both be done for the night. At the finish line, Dan Shirley won the race by a nose cone, with Nathan Weenk hitting the line less than 1/100th of a second behind Dan.

A quick check of the cars and they are lined up in reverse order of their finish. The #3 of Linsey Weenk and #44 of Brian Pylypiuk opt to start at the back, giving the pole to Jason Hankewich and Jeff Reimer on the outside. On the start, Scott Kessler slid into Ben Busch at the line, causing a huge bottleneck behind them and cars skidding in every direction. Somehow the cars came out unscathed and the cars were lined back up to start over.

This time Jason Hankewich, who has also been having an excellent year, got away from the pack and led the first 54 laps before Nathan Weenk got by him. Dan Shirley followed by a lap later and the Nathan Weenk, Dan Shirley showdown was on again.

Coming up on the white flag (one lap to go), Nathan was ahead by a hair, but not giving an inch of room. They were door to door coming out of corner four for the checker. At the line though, it was Nathan Weenk by two one-thousandths of a second.

Jason Hankewich was hanging on for third, with Shannon Harding close behind. Coming out of corner four, Harding ran into the back of Hankewich, spinning him out and the #11 being the third car across the line. That move in corner four though, cost the #11 a black flag and the car was disqualified. Ben Busch

was moved up to third.

Dan Shirley had secured his third championship of the Siemens Transportation Group Western Elite StockCar Tour. The skilful driving of Nathan Weenk this week propelled him from fifth to second spot in the points standings. Nick Allen dropped from second place going into the evening to third.

Dan Shirley's celebration was delayed though. As he brought his car into tech, he and crew chief Rob Howlett were informed a protest had been filed and the car was being impounded. The protest asked for a top end inspection of the engine.

After some discussion, Dan's team set to work taking off the carburetor and intake manifold under the supervision of club officials. Once apart, officials set about a number of inspections and measurements of the head, manifold and block. When all was said and done, officials reported they could find nothing that wasn't in compliance with the rules and the engine was declared legal. The protest was denied.

Complete results will be available at http://speednetdirect.com/results.php?track_id=8311
Individual lap times are posted at <http://members.shaw.ca/acma>

Siemens Transportation Group Western Elite StockCar Tour

Qualifying Time Trials:

1) #46 Dan Shirley, 15.329, 2) #88 Nathan Weenk, 15.440, 3) #21 Nick Allen, 15.499, 4) #49 Ben Busch, 15.570, 5) #94 Jason Hankewich, 15.641, 6) #14 James Van Domselaar, 15.666, 7) #11 Shannon Harding, 15.674, 8) #3 Linsey Weenk, 15.758, 9) #41 Travis Deforest, 15.786, 10) #53 Scott Kessler, 15.814, 11) #13 Shawn Hill, 15.854, 12) #1 Jeff Reimer, 15.925, 13) #26 John Rees, 15.957, 14) #44 Brian Pylypiuk, 16.139, 15) #89 Raichelle Wagner, 16.325

Heat A:

1) #46 Dan Shirley, 2) #94 Jason Hankewich, 3) #11 Shannon Harding, 4) #41 Travis Deforest, 5) #21 Nick Allen, 6) #13 Shawn Hill, 7) #89 Raichelle Wagner, 8) #26 John Rees

Heat B:

1) #88 Nathan Weenk, 2) #14 James Van Domselaar, 3) #49 Ben Busch, 4) #3 Linsey Weenk, 5) #53 Scott Kessler, 6) #1 Jeff Reimer, 7) #44 Brian Pylypiuk

Mid West Combustion 125 – Feature A (60 Laps):

1) #46 Dan Shirley, 2) #88 Nathan Weenk, 3) #14 James Van Domselaar, 4) #41 Travis Deforest, 5) #11 Shannon Harding, 6) #53 Scott Kessler, 7) #49 Ben Busch, 8) #21 Nick Allen, 9) #26 John Rees, 10) #13 Shawn Hill, 11) #1 Jeff Reimer, 12) #94 Jason Hankewich, 13) #44 Brian Pylypiuk, 14) #3 Linsey Weenk

Mid West Combustion 125 – Feature B (65 Laps):

1) #88 Nathan Weenk, 2) #46 Dan Shirley, 3) #49 Ben Busch, 4) #53 Scott Kessler, 5) #94 Jason Hankewich, 6) #21 Nick Allen, 7) #41 Travis Deforest, 8) #26 John Rees, 9) #14 James Van Domselaar, 10) #13 Shawn Hill, 11) #44 Brian Pylypiuk, 12) #1 Jeff Reimer, 13) #11 Shannon Harding (DQ).

Top Five Points Standings – Siemens WEST:

1) #46 Dan Shirley, 2) #88 Nathan Weenk, 3) #21 Nick Allen, 4) #49 Ben Busch, 5) #1 Les Harding.

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