



Lebanon I-44 Speedway Opening Night Recap

Race Recap

The 2018 Lebanon I-44 Speedway racing season kicked off with a bang last Saturday night. Tier parking was packed, and the racing was exciting! Each and every race brought fans to their feet as the drivers battled it out until the very last lap.

To kick off the recap of opening night we will start with the Charger division. From the drop of the green flag Dennis Williams, driver of the No. 21 Charger, and Crystal Blake, driver of the No. 7 Charger, battled it out like seasoned veterans. Some of you may not know, but last weekend was both Crystal and Dennis's very first start here on the High Banks. After a hard battle for the lead Crystal Blake took home the victory barely edging out the No. 21 of Williams.

Moving onto the Street Stock division. The always exciting Street Stocks did not fail to bring the crowd to their feet. After the heat races were over it looked as if everyone would be chasing the No. 24 of Trevor Icenhower. Icenhower faced severe motor problems and was sidelined for the majority of the feature. Sportsland Pick-up Bed Covers put up added money for this division on Saturday night for the driver who passed the most cars throughout the feature. The driver that took home this added money also took home the win, that driver is none other than Jordan Nisbett in the No. 33 machine. Jordan came from deep in the field to pick up his first win of the 2018 season, but he did face some challenges from the other drivers, such as 2nd place finisher Shawn Schmidt, on his way to the front. We will see how this division plays out as the season rolls on!

Next up was the new Big 10 Late Model division and it sure was a great show! The top 5 cars in the heat race were almost inseparable as they slid around the 3/8 mile short track. The action continued on in the 25-lap feature event. Dylan Bates, a 2018 Rookie, and Kennie Dickinson, a seasoned veteran, led the field to the green flag. Dickinson took early control of the race with Jimmy Fohn riding in the number two spot while Bates kept



Your Pro Late Model Feature winner, Kennie Dickinson, celebrates his win in Victory Lane.
Photo by Jamie Martin

both drivers in sight. Fohn grabbed the lead from Dickinson near the halfway point while Bates attempted to follow Fohn passed Dickinson, but he couldn't make it stick. When it was all set and done the Lebanon native, Jimmy Fohn, collected the first Big 10 Late Model win with the rest of the top 3 nose to tail behind him. Justin Blake and JC Newell rounded out the top 5 after battling brake and motor issues.

Then, the ground-pounding Modifieds took to the track. It was business as usual for last year's Modified Champion, Ricky Icenhower. Ricky diced his way through the pack early, but last year's street stock Champion, Michael Juergensen, put up a fight for the lead. Icenhower made the passed and tried to build his lead while the rest of the field continued to battle for the remaining positions. Icenhower took home the \$500 payday with Juergensen in 2nd, and Chris Johnson rounding out your top 3.

Finally, we will recap the action-packed Pro Late Model special event! The Pro Late Models went to battle for 50 high-speed laps and the race came down to the wire with two veterans bumping and banging to the finish, but first let's talk about how they got there. Your fast qualifier, Jake Piel, started in the No. 3 spot and rode there throughout the early stages of the race until an altercation with another driver sent him tailback. Sportsland Pickup Covers also put up added money for the Pro Late Model Class for the "Biggest Mover" and that driver was none other than Jimmy Vanzandt, driver of the No. 67 car. Vanzandt came from deep in the field to score a solid 4th place finish after problems in his heat race. As the race went on, Kennie Dickinson controlled the race, but as the laps dwindled down we started to see the No. 14 of Tim Swearengin inch towards the leader. The white flag was displayed, and Swearengin knew it was go time. Swearengin gave Dickinson a shot to the rear bumper entering the final turn, but Dickinson held on to take the win by half of a car length to take home the \$1,000 paycheck!

By Dylan Bates