

## **June 29, 2024 FIRECRACKER 500 PRESENTED BY BETTS GARAGE AND B&G AUTO BODY Race Results**

Bealer, Gross, and Gray Are Firecracker 500 Winners at Airport

By Kasey Kreider

The 2024 edition of Airport Speedway's Firecracker 500 presented by B&G Auto Body and Betts Garage saw plenty of fireworks and enthralling on-track action throughout the course of the evening. With \$550 going to the winner of each class and several other local tracks canceling their Saturday action due to forecasted rain, a series of invaders matched up with the stars of the Airport Speedway bullring in the chase for victory. Pat Bealer followed up his Sportsman Showdown win at the beginning of the month with another triumph at the end of June. Connor Gross picked up his first Airport win since last November's Battle at the Bullring. And Billy Gray claimed his second Airport victory of the month in the 270 class.

Even though Pat Bealer was forced to start the 250 Sportsman A-Main from fourth as a result of the invert, "The Icon" from Lehighton, PA wasted little time in bringing the Chuck Palmucci-owned No. 16c to the front of the field.

Tyler Grau led the early laps from the outside pole, but on an early-race restart, Bealer was able to rocket into the top spot. The veteran pulled away from the competition as the race ran green and the leaders made their way through lapped traffic.

Although the win seemed to be a near-certainty, Bealer would still have to sweat it out in the end, as a caution on the final lap led to a green- white -checkered finish. However, the restart proved to be no problem for Bealer, as he kept the rest of the competition at bay over the final two circuits while the fight for second and the rest of the positions further back continued.

Andrew Locuson made a late pass on Grau to finish second, forcing Grau to settle for a third-place result. Alan Durham finished in fourth, and Daniel Visalli rounded out the top five.

In 600 Wingless competition, Connor Gross used a last-to-first drive in his heat race to put himself in position to start on the pole following the four-car invert. The Middleton, MA-born driver seemed smooth and in control throughout the feature, and was largely unchallenged en route to putting his CPG Motorsports No. 14c in the winner's circle at Airport for the first time since last year's 100-lapper.

Tyler Tank turned in a thrilling performance, coming from 20th to finish in the runner-up spot. Early-race hard charger Cameron Bellinger finished in third, while Drew Richmond and Angelo Kouroupis rounded out the top five.

In 270 Open competition, it was a back-and-forth battle for the win between Billy Gray and Tyler Puterbaugh, with the Deptford, NJ driver coming out on top in the end. Gray was the race's pole sitter, but Puterbaugh bolted to the front from the outside on a lap 3 restart.

The No. 4T's time out in front was short-lived, though, as Gray took the lead right back on another restart just a few laps later and kept the nose of his No. 23 clean racing through lapped traffic to hold on for the victory.

Mike Miller got past Puterbaugh in the closing laps to claim a runner-up result, while Puterbaugh came across the line in third. Brett Estep finished fourth, and Chase Roberts completed the top five.

Unfortunately, the night fell just short of reaching its completion, as the rains finally came just after the start of the 125 feature. That feature event will be made up at a later date that is to be announced.

The Airport Speedway is off for the 4th of July holiday on Saturday, July 6. The facility roars back to life, however, with two races in the span of three days. Saturday, July 13 will showcase the four weekly divisions for points-paying action, as well as the fourth appearance of the year for the All Star and Junior Slingshots.

Then, on Monday, July 15, Hyper Racing 600 Speedweek presented by Performance Electronics makes its return for the second consecutive year. Defending Airport winner and Speedweek champion Zack Bealer will lead a field of the best 600 Micro Sprint drivers from the northeast – and all around the country – into the bullring, as they take center stage with the Junior Sprints also joining them on the racing card.

### **250cc Sportsman Class Feature Finish**

**1. Pat Bealer**, 2. Andrew Locuson, 3. Tyler Grau, 4. Alan Durham, 5. Daniel Visalli, 6. Clinton Hauser, 7. Austin Miller, 8. Matt Andrews, 9. Chase Bouchelle, DNS Dominic Pomponi, Dylan Pennypacker, Austin Mieczkowski, Mike Miller

### **600cc Wingless Class Feature Finish**

**1. Connor Gross**, 2. Tyler Tank, 3. Cameron Bellinger, 4. Drew Richmond, 5. Angelo Kouroupis, 6. JT Bierman, 7. Mason Peters, 8. Weston Doklan, 9. Michael Nolf, 10. Kris McKeown, 11. Eddie Mort, 12. Amanda Onimus, 13. Dan Lane, 14. Cody Rose, 15. Hank Steller, 16. Robert Pierce, 17. Josh Conover, 18. Kyle Giselson, 19. Wayne Scott, 20. Rich Keller, 21. Jordan Tittle, 22. Ethan Irons, 23. Steven Miller, DNS Chris Recchione DNQ Jake Walker, Lukas Kostic, Jasper Zeigefuse, Wayne Scott III, Haelee Nardelli, Haylee Papp, Ricky Gergasko, Aiden Svanda, Shelby McLaughlin, Kimber Tyson, Chris Broadaway, Devon Dvorak, Trenton Rivera, Randy Nolf, Rebecca LaMothe, PJ Reid, Ryan Rochelle, Quinn Llewellyn, Brian Hughes, Trevor Stover, Nate Freed, Eric Valdesere, Brock Puterbaugh

### **270cc Open Class Feature Finish**

**1. Billy Gray**, 2. Mike Miller, 3. Tyler Puterbaugh, 4. Brett Estep, 5. Chase Roberts, 6. Chason Hauck, 7. Rob Swavery, 8. Pat Bealer, 9. Michael Petock, 10. Chase Bouchelle, 11. James Miller, 12. James Cabbage, 13. Dustin Roberts, 14. Tyler Grau, 15. Ken Andreas, 16. JT Ferry, 17. Dominic Pomponi, 18. Pari Hewes, DNS Austin Mieczkowski