

July 20, 2023 Hyper Racing 600 Speedweek Show

RACE RECAP (7/20/2023):

Bealer Bests Creed and Cline for Inaugural Hyper Racing 600 Speedweek Win at Airport Speedway.

By Kasey Kreider

88 cars signed in for one of the most anticipated events in recent years at the Airport Speedway. For the first time ever, Hyper Racing 600 Speedweek presented by Performance Electronics ventured to the bullring in New Castle, DE. TW Metals Night No. 4 of Speedweek provided no shortage of action and intensity on the tight confines of the track. Early on it looked as if NASCAR star Sheldon Creed was going to walk away from his final race of the week with a Speedweek win. But it was Leighton, PA's Zack Bealer who set up Creed for a move on a late restart and held on over the final sprint to the finish to claim his first Speedweek win.

Time trials kicked off the night of racing, and Lewisberry, PA's Alex Ruppert continued his great start to the week with the Groff Trucking Quick Time Award, going fastest overall between Flights A and B. Ruppert set the fast lap of the first session, while former Battle at the Bullring champion Tyler Lindsay was quickest in Flight B.

The heat races saw several tight battles and a healthy amount of home track drivers taking the checkers first. Chris Fenimore, Corey Anderson, and Tyler Tank all won heat races, while Zach Jurcik also triumphed and Scott Krutter put in a run from seventh to first to also score a heat race win. Heat races among Flight B cars were won by Matt Smith, Zack Bealer, Keith McIntyre, Brenden Hires, and Zack Weisenfluh.

But after laying down the second-quickest lap in Flight A time trials and going sixth to second in his heat race, the pole for 35-lap A-Main would belong to "The Showstopper" Sheldon Creed. The NASCAR XFINITY Series star would line up alongside Trevor Cline – one of the best around Millbridge Speedway in North Carolina – to make up an all-invader front row.

Four stacked B-Mains followed heat races to set the remainder of the feature lineup for those who were not in the top 18 in passing points. Briggs Danner and Lindsay transferred out of the first B-Main. Garyt Smith and J. T. Bierman took spots out of B-Main No. 2. B-Main No. 3 saw Airport's own Tyler Tank grab the win to advance with Easton Lebo joining him. Meanwhile, Speedweek points leader Tommy Kunsman had to settle for third, one spot out of the transfer. Moving on from the final B-Main were Keith McIntyre and Maddie Boyd.

So the stage was set for a 26-car, 35-lap showdown in the First State. Creed jumped away to the lead as Warren Alston gave the field the green flag to kick off the event. After a few quick cautions, the race settled into a 15-lap green flag run which saw the No. 74 pull away from second-place running Cline before the leaders caught lapped traffic. Bradley Brown's stopped vehicle in turn 1 brought out the caution flag with 17 laps completed.

The restart set the stage for Bealer, who was running in fourth, to begin gradually climbing closer to the front. Bealer battled side-by-side with Colin White, as he eked out the No. 6 to the start-finish line before the caution flew once again.

On the next restart, Creed faced his fiercest challenge yet from Cline, who ran wheel-to-wheel with the Alpine, CA native all the way through turns 3 and 4, where Creed ran Cline just a little high to keep the advantage off of the corner.

Creed continued to lead before a pivotal restart with 13 to go, where both drivers on the front row made contact coming off of turn 4, forcing Cline to burp the throttle and allowing Bealer an opportunity to muscle past the No. 55 into turn 1. The caution waving with 11 laps remaining meant that Creed would have a different challenger on his outside for the first time all race.

And Bealer seized the opportunity, as he got a run through the middle of turns 1 and 2 before angling Gary and Donna Spotts' No. 2s toward the bottom of turn 3. Creed couldn't cover the move in time, and Bealer was able to get past for the lead before a six-car pileup brought out the yellow once again.

One final quick caution set up what turned out to be the race's final restart with eight laps remaining. Bealer got a monster start, nearly allowing Cline to follow him past Creed on the inside line. Creed tucked back into the runner-up spot and stalked Bealer's machine, closing on corner entry each time but not quite getting close enough to make anything happen.

Creed got close with three laps to go but couldn't make a move stick. The pilot of the No. 74 regrouped for one final charge, but could only get to within half a car length through the final set of corners, as Bealer held on to grab a hard-fought and well-earned first Speedweek victory.

"My car was really good on rotating the bottom, the biggest thing was just trying to drive it deep enough," Bealer said. "He was running it really far deep and kinda setting it in [to the corner]... he actually taught me that. When I got to second, I actually started reeling him in a little bit... I just had to protect the bottom and kind of run his line."

Bealer claimed the win over Creed, who had to settle for second after leading laps in the A-Main for the second time this week. Cline came home in the third spot, while Delaware's own P. J. Williams put together an impressive fourth-place showing with White rounding out the top five.

Hyper Racing 600 Speedweek presented by Performance Electronics continues Friday, July 21st at Linda's, before concluding with the \$10,000-to-win finale at Lanco on Saturday, July 22nd.

Airport Speedway will be back in action on Saturday, July 22nd, with a points-paying race for 125, 250 Sportsman, and 270 competitors, while 600s will also compete in a non-points event.

A-Main Results (35 Laps):

1. 2-Zack Bealer, 2. 74-Sheldon Creed, 3. 55-Trevor Cline, 4. 29-P. J. Williams, 5. 6-Colin White, 6. 99-Briggs Danner, 7. 33M-Matt Smith, 8. z71-Michael Nolf, 9. 15N-Neal Allison, 10.24W-Zack Weisenfluh, 11. 46-Tyler Lindsay, 12. 15-Alex Ruppert, 13. 15T-Maddie Boyd, 14. 9C-Hayden Wise, 15. 23P-Preston Lattomus, 16. 101E-Easton Lebo, 17. 2s-Garyt Smith, 18. 88B-Billy Calvert, 19. 49K-Scott Kreutter, 20. 9-Keith McIntyre, 21. R7-Kyle Spence, 22. 76-J.T. Bierman, 23. 5-Christian Bruno, 24. 11-Tyler Tank, 25. 23B-Bradley Brown, 26. 3-Jesse Maurer