

BREAKING NEWS!

Matt Bowers brings Home a Top 5 in the Red Eye 125

January 3 produced another great night of racing over at New Smyrna Speedway in the season opener FASCAR Red Eye 125 Super Late Model event. As we noted before “our car” didn’t run in the event, but “our driver” was on-hand under Dick Anderson’s leadership to take on the great names of central Florida’s racing circuit. Add to that the likes of NASCAR’s Mike Skinner and Pro All Star Series South standout Preston Peltier, and you have the makings of a strong field for this major event. Of course, constant favorites Tim Russell and Wayne Anderson added to the challenge for Matt Bowers, and once again, he proved up to it. The article that follows is scheduled to run in next week’s edition of the Sumter Express and summarizes the night of racing, but I’ll add some additional editorial commentary here...Matt finished fifth, but when you weigh in the combined experience of the four who finished ahead of him—Russell, Anderson, Skinner, and David Rogers (winner of the August Lakeland event we attended)—it is clear that this was a great result for the Dick Anderson protégé. Further, when you take into consideration that young Bowers needed to recover from two on-track incidents (neither of which were his doing), his ability to retain composure and poise in the face of this intense competition is more than commendable.

(Sumter Express article)

What Off-Season?

Super Late Model Racing Resumes at New Smyrna Speedway

Sumter County was well represented at the January 3 running of the “Red Eye 125” Super Late Model Event at New Smyrna Speedway, with the Anderson family of Wildwood grabbing three of the top 15 finishing positions in the 2009 season’s opening race at this famed Volusia County half mile track. A strong field of 30 cars was on hand for this kick-off event, including perennial favorite Tim Russell of Longwood, FL; Pro All Star Series standout Preston Peltier of Concord, NC; and Port Orange resident Mike Skinner of NASCAR fame.

Despite the depth of experience and talent, those who follow local racing here in central Florida knew it would come down to a dual between Russell and one of the Anderson entries. Wayne Anderson, winner of the November Governor’s Cup 200 event at New Smyrna, was favored by many to re-visit the winner’s circle, while his dad, Florida racing legend Dick Anderson, promised a challenge with his protégé driver Matt Bowers of Mr. Dora, FL. Rounding out the family affair was Wayne’s son Randy Anderson, another promising young competitor.

The starting grid for the Red Eye shaped up pretty much as expected, with Mike Skinner on the pole, Matt Bowers inside row three, Wayne Anderson inside row five, and Randy Anderson

outside row nine. Skinner quickly built a solid lead, battling with Wayne Anderson, David Rogers, Mark Martin Performance developmental driver Jeremy Colangelo, and others before Anderson powered by for the lead. On a late restart, Russell was able to make a strong run against Anderson, taking the lead with roughly 30 laps to go. Russell and Anderson ran 1-2 for the remaining laps, with Skinner in third unable to close. Veteran David Rogers took fourth, with Matt Bowers finishing a strong fifth. Randy Anderson got caught up in a late-race incident, but managed to come home in 15th position.

The race was slowed by five separate cautions, two of which involved Matt Bowers being the victim of spins. Bowers, an eleven-year racing veteran despite his young age of 17, maintained his composure through the incidents and recovered to mount a strong charge during the closing laps, putting on a spirited display of racing with Colangelo over the closing laps.

In addition to marking the start of the 2009 racing season, the Red Eye 125 is the first leg of FASCAR's Triple Crown series, which will include the July 2nd annual Clyde Hart Memorial and the November 21st 44th annual Florida's Governor Cup 200.

This event was a learning experience for Bowers, who teamed with Dick Anderson in mid-2008 in a move designed to help build his future career. Under Anderson's guidance, the Bowers family looks to build a solid foundation for Matt's eventual move to the big leagues of NASCAR. In the meantime, racing fans in central Florida will have the pleasure of watching this young star continue to learn from one of the sport's true masters.

Photo Highlights



Three generations of the Anderson racing family
(from left) Randy, Dick, and Wayne



Matt learning from the legend himself, while
Mary looks on



Glen chats with NASCAR's Mike Skinner (and, yes, Mike's now on our newsletter distribution list!)



Matt, getting ready to hit the asphalt



Hall of Famer Mary Anderson attending to her timing duties in preparation for qualifying



Brandy Anderson relaxing before the race. (Actually, that's how she watches the entire race!)