

Riggen Wins Three at Gateway

Gateway International Raceway hosted the season opener for the Midwest FFR racers. Lyle Riggen and Brian Sanders traveled to Southwest Illinois to run the "roval." Cool temperatures but plenty of sun was on order for the weekend. This combination was perfect with the cars sucking cool air and the track providing plenty of traction. All three races would find the two drivers running nearly every lap nose to tail waiting for the other to make a mistake.

In qualifying, Sanders was able to grab the pole by two tenths on his last lap. Right from the start of the race, traffic was going to be a problem. Somehow Sanders was able to hold onto the lead for the first couple laps. But as he was held up, Riggen was able to get a good run and complete a textbook pass. On the next lap, the race was stopped due to a Legends cars unfortunate collision with the infield wall. When the race resumed, Riggen and Sanders ran nose to tail until another Legends car decided its oil would be better on the track than in the car. Unfortunately, Sanders found that oil and lost a lot of time gathering things up and getting back on course. At this point there was simply not enough time to catch up and Riggen went on to the race victory.

Sunday qualifying was punctuated as both Riggen and Sanders ran times better than the track record. However, it was Sanders, again, stealing the pole on his last lap. Sunday had two races scheduled. Qualifying set the grid for the first race while race 1 finishing position would set the second race grid. At the drop of the green flag, Riggen got the jump and took the lead into turn one with Sanders close behind waiting for his turn to lead. That time came on lap six. Sanders would maintain the lead until three laps from the end when Sanders entered the NASCAR oval only to find he had little power. This gave Riggen an easy pass and his second victory. The lack of power was due to low fuel level and the fact that the scheduled 25 minute race actually ran 30 minutes! In checking the race results, it was found that Sanders had set a new track record 1:12.618.

In race 2, Sanders thought he had one more chance to earn victory. He assumed the lead on the start and kept it until lap 8 when a slower car checked up and Sanders spun. This provided Riggen with the opportunity he was waiting for. By the time Sanders got back under way, there was no way to catch up in the time remaining. So Sanders figured the best thing to do was to try and break his new track record in the time remaining. Good idea but once again the racing gods had other ideas. A rookie, who had just completed competition school that weekend in a Panoz, decided he could make "the pass that no one can" and hit Sanders in the rear taking them both out.

The next race for the Midwest FFR's will be at Putnam Park on May15-16.

C'ya at the track!

-Brian Sanders

