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SPORTS

Collins has standout night at LCS

By Nick Herman
Sports Editor

Kenny Collins made his trip to Laurens County Speedway for the 38th Annual Laurens County Shrine Race Tuesday night one to remember.

Collins set a Carolina Clash record for qualifying at LCS to win the pole position, then survived a 16-car field to win the 35-lap main event of the annual fundraiser for Shriners' Hospital for Children. It was his first LCS Shrine Race victory. Zack Mitchell finished second, with Jeff Smith in third, Brett Hamm fourth and Dennis Franklin fifth.

Collins started off the night right by winning the pole in qualifying, posting a time of 14.405 seconds. Franklin came close to taking the pole from Collins, finishing in 14.473 seconds, but settled for the other spot on the front row. When the race started, Collins started on the outside of Row 1, with Franklin taking the inside spot. The first attempt at opening the race was negated due to an illegal start, but on the next start Franklin and Collins quickly duelled for the top spot before Collins edged ahead of Franklin for the lead.

After a caution flag on Lap 2, Collins used his starting spot alone on Row 1 and maintained his advantage. Smith managed to get to second on the restart, but Collins was already building his lead to more than 1.5 seconds through four laps. The lead continued to grow and grow for Collins as he made the race look too easy, going up by two seconds through the ninth lap, near a three-second lead two laps later, and by the end of the 16th lap, he had already established a whopping 4.159 seconds. It appeared the race was well in hand, and the only debate would be over how much Collins would win by.

However, a caution on Lap 20 for debris changed all of that, bunching up the field again and giving the rest of the field, led by Smith, a chance to take over the top spot. That chance didn't last very long, as Collins again used a good restart and re-established a safe lead. Mitchell, meanwhile, had come through the field and managed to get by Smith for second place and set himself up as a potential challenger to Collins over the final 15 laps. The lead held at less than a second with 10 laps to go as Mitchell was able to stay close, but it appeared the effort would be for naught as Collins tried to pull away through lap traffic.

Mitchell got one final chance at the lead when the race was stopped due to a caution with four laps to go as the field was restarted in a single-file formation. Collins punched the gas once the race resumed and pulled away

from Mitchell, whose best efforts proved futile at the end.

Field results: 1. Kenny Collins; 2. Zack Mitchell; 3. Jeff Smith; 4. Brett Hamm; 5. Dennis Franklin; 6. Will Harris; 7. Anthony Sanders; 8. David Yandle; 9. Travis Pennington; 10. Adam Yarbrough.

11. Kale Green; 12. Frank Coates; 13. Bryson Harper; 14. Larry Grube; 15. Kevin Godwin; 16. Mike Kernells.

Thunder Bombers: Scott Pulley took home the victory in the first main event of the night in the Thunder Bombers Division, with Dylan Chappell second and Rod Tucker third.

Tucker and Pulley started the main event on the front row, but from the start they knew the pressure was on with a second row consisting of Chappell and Dan Lawson waiting in the wings in case either of the two front cars messed up. Tucker managed to shoot away from the field for the lead, but Pulley and Chappell were right with the leader through the first lap. Lawson, too, managed to get into the mix and set up for a strong battle for the lead in the 20-lap main event. The race was stopped due to a caution on the fifth lap, and during the time Chappell had some work done on his right front side, while Lawson also had work done to his car, but both were able to continue on. Tucker, meanwhile, kept at it in first with Pulley following behind in second. Lawson's hopes of getting into a further battle for positioning was short-circuited when he had a right front flat tire on the seventh lap, and had to go in under caution to have it replaced. Lawson eventually took sixth.

The rest of the race went off caution-free, with Tucker doing all he could to pull away from the field. Pulley managed to stay close to the lead and never let him breathe easy, Tucker doing all he could to block the path of Pulley with four laps to go. Chappell got himself into the mix as well and turned the duel for the lead into a triple threat. Pulley finally got along the side of Tucker with three laps to go, and by the time he got to the line Pulley managed to put himself up by .13 seconds on Tucker. Tucker's luck, as it turned out, ran out after he was passed for the lead as Chappell soon sped on and took over second place, but Pulley's pass proved to be the winning move as he went on to take the race victory.

602 Crate: Billy Rushton won an early battle with Dale Timms in the 20-lap main event, then ended up with the checkered flag as he took home first place in the 602 Crate Division. Austin Mintz was second and Colt Smith was third.

Rushton and Timms started own the front row, and the two veterans quickly set out to battle for the entire race. Timms held the early lead on Rushton through two laps, with Rushton eventually trying to go low for a pass but unable to get by early on. The two still duelled until both were involved in an accident in turn 3, with Timms going around. Four other cars spun to avoid a major crash, and all did get through safely.

Under the caution, however, Timms appeared to let the emotion of the race get to him as he came up on Rushton and hit his car. Rushton did not take the bait to retaliate against Timms and stayed in the race, but Timms was disqualified.

That move left Rushton in first place, while Mintz and Smith moved up to take on the challenger's roles. Rushton held a slim lead on Mintz through seven laps, just less than a quarter of a second, but Rushton managed to stay just far enough ahead through a pair of later cautions. Mintz had one final charge at the end in hopes of stealing the victory, but Rushton was able to turn back the challenge and sealed the victory.

4-Cylinder: Phillip Wilson won the 20-lap main event in the 4-Cylinder Division, with Rod Tucker finishing second in his second main event on the night. Scott Nelson was third.

Tucker and Larry Teal started the main event on the front row, with Wilson on the inside of Row 2. The first attempt at starting the race was negated due to caution, but on the second start Tucker managed to hold the lead with Teal and Wilson chasing close behind. Teal went to the inside through the first two turns and managed to take first for a split second, only to see Tucker come



Submitted Photo

ON TOP OF THE FIELD – Kenny Collins had 3,500 reasons to smile after winning the Carolina Clash main event Tuesday night at LCS, part of the annual Shrine Race.

back and hold the spot again. Teal, however, lost his momentum and quickly fell down to fifth place, then spun out to bring out a caution soon after.

Once the race started again on Lap 2, Tucker remained in front with Wilson and Nelson chasing behind. Tucker held a lead of .803 seconds after the restart, and as he did Wilson moved into position to directly challenge for the lead. Once the race reached the halfway mark Wilson took advantage of a little wiggle from Tucker's car that allowed Smith to get in front. Tucker tried to get the spot back by going to a high line, but by doing so he actually lost ground. Wilson quickly built a lead of more than a second on Tucker and eventually pulled away to a victory of 2.299 seconds.

FWD: As the clock moved past the Witching Hour of midnight and Tuesday turned into Wednesday

morning, Travis Jamieson proved the top driver in the Front-Wheel Drive Division as he took home the victory in the main event. Danny Anthony was second and Spud Ammons was third.

At the start of the race it appeared the duel for victory would be between Joel Cabe and Mason Mack, who started on the front row. The two did, in fact, start out strong, with Cabe going under Mack to try and make a pass. The move proved unsuccessful, though, as Mack was sent into the turn 3 wall and even rode the top of the wall for a moment, bringing out the caution. Cabe was disqualified for his actions in the crash, while Mack was able to drive on.


Jamieson and Anthony moved into the front row on the restart, and when the race resumed Jamieson was able to move out in front. Anthony tried to see if he could get by for the lead but was

unable to do so. The race quickly entered a stop-and-start mode as three more cautions came out in the next four laps. Jamieson managed to hold onto the top spot through each stoppage, and Anthony remained in second, with Scott Hendricks following in third, Ammons fourth and Jason Bishop in fifth. Jamieson again had a good start when the green flag flew again, while Anthony had to fight off Hendricks for second place. When the race reached the halfway mark in the 20-lap battle, the lead for Jamieson reached 3.633 seconds. The advantage crawled closer to five seconds by the time there were four laps to go, but a caution flag wiped out the lead and gave the field a final chance to steal victory from Jamieson's hands. Jamieson had to battle hard against a charge from Anthony, but within two laps Jamieson's lead was secure again.



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