

8-07-21 Clyde Martin Memorial Speedway

The final day of the USAC Eastern Midget Week was my only new track of the week, Clyde Martin Memorial Speedway. I checked out of my Airbnb and drove about two hours to the track, getting there a little after 2pm. The drive to the track took me through mostly small towns and farm areas, plus a wildlife preserve. It was pretty far away from major cities and felt like it was rather out in the woods. The track itself was also set up on a hill, with a big retaining wall right at the backstretch catch fence so they clearly just barely had enough room to even build it there.

They had an unusual setup where you can buy advanced general admission tickets from the pit window between 12 and 3 which let you in an hour early, at 4pm as opposed to the normal general admission at 5pm. I got my tickets and had intended to leave for a few hours and check out the town, but I happened to notice that people were lining up their chairs by the GA gates and I realized that it was going to be packed. I decided to stay and just hang out in the parking lot, placing my bag in line probably 50th or so, this being almost 2 hours before the gates even opened.



It was at least a very nice day, almost perfect weather to be outside in. I set up a lawn chair and read a nice book until it was time to get physically in line. They opened the early GA gates about 15 minutes early at 3:45 and I got just about the last top row seat. At least, the last top row seat that was functionally top row, since many of them in the turn 4 side of the track have lawn chair decks above so you can't actually stand up, defeating the purpose of top row.

I was in turn 1, right at the end of the grandstands. They pretty much all filled up but I imagine the sightlines would actually be pretty good in most places, the only factor being if other people's heads would be in your way. Where I was at, standing offered a great view of everything except a little bit of the exit of turn 4 that the fencing obscured.



The track seemed pretty well prepped by the time I got inside and they didn't need to do a lot of work on it. It was neat seeing them setting up the infield tires, two track workers actually went around with a tape measure to determine where to position the tires in relation to the outer wall. There was a lot of banking in the turns and actually around the whole track, it really is a bowl.

I got a "cowboy burger" for dinner which was a cheeseburger with onion rings and barbecue sauce on it and it was pretty solid and all the food was very reasonably priced. It's a grab as you walk through and pay at the end of the line setup and moved along pretty efficiently.

Hot laps started around 6:15, making it possibly the longest I've waited at a race track before racing started but it wasn't unpleasant, due to the nice weather and anticipating the exciting new track. There were 22 USAC national midgets and 39 600cc micros. I was hoping for a few more midgets (there were 27 last night in Bloomsburg) but it was a full field, and the micros had great car counts.

Midget hot laps were more eventful than usual. T-Mez pulled a huge wheelstand down the backstretch, wheelieing over half the length of the straight with the tail tank on the ground. At least three cars spun in turn 2. Most of them were running right along the wall around the whole track, and it seemed the fastest way around was as close to the wall as you could get. Tracks like that are so fun to watch, it's such a narrow margin for error and it makes it very exciting, and I assume the driver can make more of an impact regardless of equipment. They were turning right down the straightaways going into the turns, having to

hang the left rear way out in order to set the car for the next turn down the really short straight. It was a lot of fun to watch.



They also kicked up giant clods of dirt. It wasn't particularly dusty throughout the night, but when the midgets turned into turn 1 they sent chunks of dirt at me, to the point that it was actually kind of painful. I got hit in the neck and stomach with chunks big enough to hurt a bit, and one actually cut my leg. I put on goggles to make sure I didn't take any in the eye. But, even with that, it didn't detract from the experience at all.

For qualifying they staged the midgets in the infield since the entrance and exit of the track were gates that couldn't be opened and closed for each car. They did it in a few groups, pushing the cars to the infield and pushing them off one at a time to take their laps. The speed was clearly at the top and Daison Pursley set a new track record with the only sub-10 second lap of the night. That makes it 5 for 5 on new track records this week. To be fair, Bloomsburg and Bridgeport were brand new and Action Track has more banking, but Grandview and here were fully legitimate and regardless it's fun seeing a track record laid down.

The Micros kicked off the racing with four heat races. Their restart zone is actually fully on the backstretch before even entering turn 3, the furthest back of any track I've been to. On the initial start of heat 1, one of them got turned into the infield tire, climbed over it, and caught the right sides and rolled over once before he even got to the start finish line. I believe he continued on after landing back on the wheels. In heat 4, a similar thing happened where one jumped a wheel in turn 4 and rolled onto the roof. There were multiple cars that got into the outside wall and climbed it before coming back on the wheels. The line was clearly

around the top but the track was open for sliders. All four heats ended with multiple cars in contention for the win.

The midgets then ran three heats that were quite entertaining. It was very competitive, lots of sliders, and it's neat watching the cars getting sideways exiting the corners and down the straights.

The micro B main was uneventful except for one car that brought out 4 cautions. He might have had help on one of them, but spun completely by himself for the other three. Lanco must be very lenient towards that, most tracks have a two spins and your out rule. They did kick him off after the fourth spin.



The midgets ran 40 laps for their feature and were the first feature event of the night. The racing was excellent and had cars all over the track, slide jobs back and forth, and action everywhere you look. Cannon McIntosh jumped a wheel coming down the front stretch, tumbling violently end over end and into the turn 1 catch fence, bending several poles, before coming to rest on all fours in turn 1.



There were lots of spins and it took a while to get the momentum going after that, but the racing was good for the half a lap they were able to go after several attempts. The top line was dominant throughout but the track was wide and open to sliders, it was really good racing.

Someone dropped a bunch of oil in turns 1 and 2 and they had to bring out the second red flag of the race to clean that up. They started by trying to shovel dirt over the top of it but there was so much they brought out the tractor and turned over the top part of the surface. I was expecting a long delay while they rolled the track back in so I went to get a burger at the concession stand, but they barely did anything at all beyond and I was able to sprint back to my seat and get there with about 30 seconds to spare before they retook the green.

Two more cars flipped down the front stretch, I didn't see what started it. That was the third red flag. Daison Pursley was running well after setting quick time but got into the wall at some point, bringing out the caution and having to work his way from the back of the pack. He was taking an extremely aggressive line, diamonding off both ends of the turn, basically sliding up to the cushion in the center and turning on a dime and driving back off, it was impressive to watch. He definitely had a fast car but couldn't get back to the front to content with Justin Grant, who was able to hold off Buddy Kofoid for his first midget win of the season. The feature was fantastic, and I think Lanco might be my favorite track I've seen midgets racing at.

They didn't do any track work whatsoever until after the midget main, where they went out with the tractor and the push trucks and spent about 20 minutes working in the track before the micro feature. They started 26 cars and the racing was great, with cars three wide throughout the turns and somehow not getting into each other on the exit of the turns where it really narrowed down. I was surprised they didn't crash a lot more given the tight racing, it stayed rather clean. There was one very high velocity flip into the fence in turn 3, but other than that there weren't too many crashes.



Overall the racing was amazing. I love the facility with the high banked bowl and it put on a fantastic show. Definitely the highlight of the week, and well worth coming back to in the future. It's one of the best events I've seen in all of Pennsylvania actually.