

6-19-21: Path Valley Speedway Park

I was originally intending to go to Port Royal for the Eastern Storm show this evening but while I was sitting in the parking lot waiting for it to stop raining they made the decision to cancel the show. Not wanting the evening to go to waste, I set out for Path Valley since it was only 45 minutes away and hoped they'd be able to get the show in.

It was a very pretty drive between the two tracks and there were a lot of landscapes I would have wanted to stop and take pictures of if I wasn't in a hurry. I got to the track and pulled up to the window to get tickets. It's set up where you buy tickets from your car as you drive into the parking lot. They were only \$10 and they apparently weren't delayed by the rain at all since they were in the middle of heat racing when I arrive a little after 6:30.

I really liked the setup of the track. It was built at the bottom of a hill so the grandstands followed the hill up to a parking lot above it and a lot of people just sat in lawnchairs at different points around the track. The grandstands themselves were of the variety that allowed sitting in lawnchairs or just sitting on the steps themselves. It seemed like pretty much everywhere would offer a great view of the track. The track itself was basically a bowl with banked turns and straights. It looked a lot smaller than other quarter mile tracks I've been to. I measured it on Google Maps and it's barely a quarter mile around the outside walls, so definitely a small track. It just had a really nice feel to it overall.





They were running 600cc and 270cc micro sprints, legends cars, 4 cylinders, and 358 late models. I think I'd heard them referred to as "limited late models" at points but they're definitely much more powerful than the limited late models I'm used to from the northeast that make about as much horsepower as a street stock.

The racing was entertaining throughout. The car counts weren't stellar but were adequate, with a dozen or so of each of the mini sprint classes and 4 cylinders, 21 legends, and only 5 late models, though I bet there would have been a bunch more if they weren't running at Lincoln tonight. The racing was competitive though, and in the case of the late models it was just fun watching the big cars fly around the tiny track. The only real incident was a scary 4 cylinder wreck in which the leader seemed to break something and went straight into the turn 2 wall, leaving the ground completely in the impact. It took 15 minutes for him to get out of the car but he ultimately walked away.

The one thing I didn't like was that they used the cone on every restart in all divisions, making them go single file. I've never been a fan of single file cone restarts in general, and though I expect it for sprint cars now, there's no reason to do it for full body cars. That was my only real complaint though. Everything else was great. The concessions were really cheap and I enjoyed the cheeseburger. The most impressive part of the whole night was how efficiently it was run. I'm pretty sure I've never been to any track that ran a more efficient show than Path Valley did. No extraneous pace laps, no waiting for cars to change a tire, no victory lane interviews. It was literally about 2 or 3 minutes from checkered flag on one feature to

green flag on the next. I arrived at 6:30 in the middle of heat racing and the entire show was over by 8:10, including a lengthy cleanup for the 4 cylinder wreck. It was wild how quickly they ran a full show.

Because of that efficiency, they finished early enough that I was able to drive to Lincoln Speedway in time for their feature races. While I'm sad that Port Royal rained out since I love the USAC sprint cars, Path Valley is a real hidden gem that I'm glad I got to experience and I definitely want to come back to again. 410 sprint cars there would be worth the trip to Pennsylvania to watch.