

## 10-02-21: Talladega Short Track

In preparation for my Talladega weekend I spent a while researching other tracks in the area for Friday and Saturday night. The only one I found running on either day within any reasonable distance was Senoia Speedway with the World of Outlaws Late Models, so I had originally planned to drive the two hours over there and try to catch the features. But, when driving into the Superspeedway this morning, I went right by the Talladega Short Track and saw signs advertising "Full racing program Friday and Saturday", and sure enough they had run last night and were racing again tonight. I don't know if this event was last minute or not on their website until a week before or if I just completely missed it, but I'm pretty sure I didn't see any mention when doing my research. In any case, it was much nicer to to half a mile than two hours on Saturday evening.

As soon as the Xfinity race ended I drove straight over and got there about 6:45. The track is only about half a mile from the grandstands of the Superspeedway, basically right on the property. As I was walking in, the first thing I noticed was the lack of catch fence or wall on the turns. It didn't look too hard for a car to go over the wall and into the parked cars.



They were starting with hot laps when I arrived. There were some people there but not a ton, not nearly as many as I had expected for being so close to the big track. The free Dustin Lynch concert may have had something to do with that.

As I was walking in they started interviewing Donnie Allison who was in attendance in the grandstands, one of the original Alabama Gang. It was a Red Farmer tribute race and Farmer himself was racing, running a 604 late model at 88 years old.

The grandstands were set up with lawn chair seating for the lower part with concrete blocks denoting the different rows. Above that was regular bleachers. The visibility was pretty good overall except that the top

half of the bleachers on the turn four side had part of turn one blocked by the tower. The turn one side bleachers were the place to be. I also got a pulled pork sandwich for dinner and the concessions were very cheap, \$3.50 for a burger which is probably the cheapest I've ever seen. The food seemed pretty solid.

It started misting a little bit, not really raining but putting a bit of moisture down. They continued hot lapping much further than I had expected even when the track was clearly very slick. They were forced to delay a little bit at some point, but it didn't rain much and it was maybe 15 minutes before they could start running in the track again. To do so, they made a call in the pit area for anyone with an ATV or UTV to take laps around the track to get some of the moisture worked in. It worked surprisingly effectively, in so much as they were able to get back to hot laps after 20 minutes or so. One of the UTVs did manage to roll over somehow, I'm not sure exactly what happened but I saw him upside down in turn 3.

They restarted hot laps for all 6 classes. The announcer said there were 160 cars in the pits, way more than I was expecting, headlined by 39 604 late models. Also in attendance were 24 602 late models, 21 limited late models, 25 sportsman modifieds, 21 factory stocks, and 26 hotshots (4 cylinders).

The track took on a surprising amount of rubber very early on. It was clearly wet with all the rain but even during hot laps it visibly changed with the rubber and slicked off quite a bit.

One of the hotshots dropped an entire tank of fuel on the track going into turn 1. Apparently the easiest way to clean that up is to light it on fire, which they did. It took about 10 minutes for it to burn off.



By the time hot laps finished it was close to 8:30, then they started with qualifying. Limited late models and 604 late models both did time trials, with 2 cars on the track at a time. It took a while and I didn't really feel the need for them to do it, but they did keep it moving pretty effectively. The limiteds set the feature with the time trials but the 604s also ran heats.

They started heat racing at 9:15 with the modifieds. The cars entered in turn 4 and didn't run any pace laps, taking the green the next time around. They kept things moving and the heats had few cautions, except for the one car that spun by himself twice before even completing a lap. They did have a two spins and you're done rule in effect.

The modifieds were split into 4 heats of 6 for 24 cars, an interesting choice. They tended toward more heats of fewer cars. The heats ran smoothly for the most part, outside of a couple wrecks and some cars going over the turn 1 banking.

It was 11:15 when the B mains ran, then the first feature lined up at 11:30. With the 7:30 start and the rain it really isn't that bad, they kept the show moving there was just a lot of show to get in. I appreciated that they lined up the next race while the victory lane celebrations were happening and they only interviewed the winner.

The racing was really enjoyable throughout. The track stayed a strong multi-groove with little dust. There was a lot of passing in each of the divisions I watched and it put on a good show. The track definitely slicked off quite a bit but there was enough cushion on the top to allow it to be competitive. Several cars jumped the cushion and went over the banking in turns one and two and it looked pretty steep when you do that. I'm kind of surprised a couple of them didn't flip.





The 604 feature was the main event and they ran 60 laps. There was a wreck involving several cars going into turn 1 and one of the cars went and rammed another one under caution, backing up and ramming multiple times before going to the pits. Unsurprisingly, he was parked for the night.



I left after the feature because it was so late and I was really tired from the travel, otherwise I would have stayed because it was good racing and great car counts. They put on a great show and I'm really glad that they ran during the race weekend. I would definitely plan to come back next time I'm in town.