

### 3-18-22: Hickory Motor Speedway and Carolina Speedway

I embarked at 4am this morning with the ultimate destination of Atlanta Motor Speedway for the first NASCAR race on the new configuration. I had a decision to make beforehand as to which route I was going to take. It's about equidistant to go through the Charlotte area or to hug the coast. My ideal option was to go to both Hickory and Carolina Speedway, but the other option was to go to Halifax County Speedway along the coast. The forecast said no rain at all for Halifax County, and a good chance of rain at Hickory and Carolina. I decided to risk it and go for the double.

13 hours later when I arrived at Hickory the forecast was luckily in my favor. I got in and there weren't a ton of people there, I had pretty much my pick of seats. The top row in turn 4 allowed good visibility except for the infield haulers, which blocked the bottom lane or so of the far turns.



They had canceled heat racing and went straight to features, and within 10 minutes of getting in the gates I saw the start of the Pro All-Star Series 150 lap feature for the Super Late Models. There were over 30 of them including some of the names I recognized from the northeast.



The racing was pretty good and stayed two wide for multiple laps, until it went single file at the front. There was a huge hit into the turn 1 wall, one car went nose first and got two wheels off the ground, very violent. He dropped a bunch of fluid on the track so I took that opportunity to leave. I had only intended on staying for 45 minutes or so anyway, I'm really more of a dirt racing fan at the moment and I wanted to make sure I could count the second track. I was glad to finally see some racing here though, there's so much history and so many Nascar stars made their start here.

I then drove the hour or so to Carolina Speedway. With the rain in the area they were delayed about half an hour, so they started heat racing within 5 minutes of me getting into the track. The timing today worked out amazingly well, and in addition NASCA canceled the scheduled practice sessions for today at Atlanta which means I'll be able to see every single lap on the new configuration.





Carolina Speedway was very much a small town track. The grandstands were pretty empty and seemed mostly to be friends and family of the drivers. The track was a 4/10 mile clay oval and the car counts were pretty small, but I didn't really expect them to be great. 17 thunder bombers headlined and every other class was right about 8 cars.



They ran two heats for every class except for the 5 super sportsman and the 6 hornets than ran dual mains. There was some good racing at a couple points, such as the thunder sportsmans heat 2 where second was on the bumper of the leader for the entire race, bumping him and not being able to get by. He finally slid him into one on the final lap, then a crossover, and an exciting drag race to the line.

There was pretty decent racing in the super sportsman main as well, and the late models. The top two late models got together at one point and I thought the second place car was going to go over when he got up on two wheels but was able to not only save it but keep going and finished second.

Overall the show was pretty efficiently run, which was pleasantly surprising since most tracks of the small town nature like that that I've been to haven't been. The track didn't even think of having any dust. Whenever I come down south I love how tacky the clay is and how well it stays down, it's such a contrast to the northeast.

I ultimately left with a couple features remaining only because I had a 4.5 hour drive left and it was 10:30pm. With the help of some Monster Energy I got into my Atlanta hotel around 3am, happy to have counted two new tracks on the drive I would have made anyway.