

9-10-21 Huset's Speedway:

Today was the first of three days at Huset's Speedway right outside of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. When the inaugural USAC Nationals were announced at Huset's, with a sprint and midget triple double-header for \$20,000 to win I knew I wanted to check it out. It was a nice bonus that I have relatives living in Nebraska less than two and a half hours away and it would be easy to stay with them and drive to the track and back each day.

I was coming from Idaho so my dad and I made the 13 hour drive to Nebraska on Thursday, getting in around 9pm, and left for the track mid afternoon the following day. It's a track where you can tell it's a beautiful facility before even pulling into the parking lot. The highway runs right along the back of the grandstands and the track is far below, with the stands built down the hill and the pits and parking lot down the hill behind the track. It wasn't initially clear how to actually get into the parking lots but we figured it out pretty quickly.



The grandstands were large with most of it being reserved seating. All the reserved areas had backrests on the seats. They are set a decent bit back from the track so I think the sightlines from even the low GA sections would be pretty solid. From up in the back row where I sat they were great and I could see everything. There was not one or two, but three large video boards showing both live video of the action and running orders. It was hard to read from the top row but I was just able to make it out.



The track itself is a large quarter mile. The website calls it a  $\frac{3}{8}$  mile, but I measured on Google Maps and I get .24 on the inside and .31 on the outside, so quarter mile it is in my mind. There's a good amount of banking and deep black clay that's capable of building a nice cushion. The only issue is that the pit entrance and exit is a single gate that has to be opened and closed between each race, but they did a good job of getting the cars in and out quickly and it never felt like it slowed down the show. They used the infield as a staging area instead of having it be actual pit stalls.

I was surprised how few people there were. It is a very big facility, probably close to a 10,000 person capacity, but it didn't feel like there were many spectators in attendance. It seemed like way too few people to be paying out over a quarter million dollars in purse, but it's just Friday.

The event followed a standard USAC procedure, with qualifying, heats, consis, and features. The midgets started out with hot laps immediately followed by qualifying, then the sprint cars did the same. There were 29 midgets and 28 sprint cars, a little lower than I was hoping for being such a large purse but nothing to complain about. Both classes set a track record in qualifying. Unsurprising, since it had been many years since they had raced here (over 20 in the case of the midgets), but it's always fun to see track records being broken. I realized that this was the 6th straight USAC midget race that I attended where there was a new track record (PA midget week being the 5 previous shows).





The midgets started the racing with three heats. Justin Grant had a wild ride down the backstretch when he got forced into the outside wall, breaking off the left front wheel on the contact then the right front upon hitting the wall, ending up cartwheeling forward into a violent roll. It was pretty wild seeing him fly through the air without both front wheels. He ended up using a provisional and a backup car to start the feature.



The sprint heats had a bit of a rough time getting going in the first heat, with two false starts, a pileup in turn 3 on the first lap, a caution for a slow car, and a caution for a 360 spin even though he was able to keep the car rolling. When they actually managed to keep it green though, all three heats had really good racing. Heat 3 in particular had some excellent racing and sliders for the lead back and forth between three cars.

The midgets ran a consi that saw one car overrun the cushion into turn 3 and back into the wall, barrel rolling violently 5 times into turn four.

The first feature of the night was 30 laps for the midgets. There was an excellent battle for the lead between KTJ, Windom, and T-Mez for much of the race. KTJ pulled out a bit of a lead eventually but then got into the wall and cut a tire (I'm not sure in which order) while he was leading, handing the lead back to Windom. Windom had a solid lead at the white flag and coming to the checkered, but as he was on the front stretch but before he crossed the line the caution came out for a wreck in turn 1. Windom took the bottom on the restart, letting T-Mez rip the top and get a big run, ultimately taking the win in night 1.

They watered the bottom of the track after the feature and turned over the dirt a bit with the skid steers, but it was very minimal track prep and the only track prep of the night. That's what I like to see.

The sprint cars ran 25 laps to round out the night. Tanner Thorson put on a strong run to take the win in an entertaining race. It was a great night of racing overall in a very nice facility, and I'm excited for the next two nights.