

7-08-21: KRA Speedway

Day 1 of a four day, four race trip to Iowa and Minnesota started with a venture down to KRA Speedway. I was in town primarily for the NASCAR truck race at Knoxville and I was happy to discover that KRA runs weekly on Thursday nights. Finding weekday races is the hardest part of planning trips and it was well worth flying out half a day earlier than I'd originally intended to see this new track.



The track itself is located at the fairgrounds on a peninsula surrounded by lakes (we are in the land of 10,000 lakes after all). It was \$11 to get in and you pay before driving into the grounds. There wasn't a ticket window or anything, just a couple people standing there taking money. The parking lot is just on the grass in the main fair grounds right behind the grandstands.



The grandstands themselves are covered and pretty shallow, but span the length of the front stretch. It's a rare track where I think the front row would actually provide quite a decent view, the only issue being the two chainlink fences in the way. I ended up sitting at the top row of the bleachers behind the last row of the main grandstands, sitting on the walkway. A worker came around at one point and opened the windows that had been latched shut behind these bleachers, leaving no back support and the possibility to fall backward out the window if you're not careful. It did let in a nice breeze though.



I was never able to find a schedule for the event anywhere, either on the website or Facebook, so I ended up arriving a little after 5 for a 7pm start time and being one of the first people there. I even beat the concession people, who when I went to order a burger and some mini corn dogs said they hadn't even started grilling yet. When I eventually got them the corn dogs were great.

With some time to kill I wandered the facilities. The pit area seemed fairly small so they had a number of haulers parked up in the main section, right next to the spectator cars. The racecars just drove into and out of the pit area into the track when they needed to race. The rest of the grounds have all the classic fair buildings and a nice view of the lake surrounding.



Right at 7 they did the national anthem and brought the first heat out onto the track. There were no hot laps at any point. I can't remember any other track with no hot laps or practice at all. I appreciated the prompt start though. It was 16 Wisconsin street stocks divided into two heats to start with. They had to spend 15 minutes trying to detach two cars that had somehow become entangled. 14 midwest modifieds followed, then 12 super stocks that looked very much like late models, complete with late model body work. I'm not sure what differentiates them from a limited late model like I'm used to at Bear Ridge for example. They put on some of the best racing of the night, with one heat going back and forth multiple times between three cars for the lead.

It was a pure stock special with over \$1,000 on the line for the winner and they had 23 of them show up. Rounding out the show were 6 mod 4s, 8 modifieds, and 11 hornets. Not amazing car counts, but enough to make it enjoyable. The track was very smooth and there was virtually no dust the entire night.

They took a bit of an intermission then ran the features. The street stocks ran 20 laps and put on a good show, the track widened out nicely for them and there were multiple grooves of racing. The super stocks again had three wide battles for the lead, definitely the best of the night, though they only ran for 16 laps. There was one sizeable wreck where one of the front runners got turned in 1 and two others piled into him, resulting in one car well on top of another and the second delay due to detangling cars.



The pure stocks ran 20 laps for their big race. They had a bit more trouble staying out of trouble with a good number of cautions for spins. The biggest wreck of the night was in the modified main. One car either lost the brakes or stuck a throttle going into turn 1, slamming the back end into the wall which whipping the front end around to also slam the wall. It was a very hard hit but the driver was alright.

I'm pretty sure that the feature lengths were proportional to car counts. 16 street stocks ran 20 laps, 14 midwest modifieds ran 18 laps, 12 super stocks ran 16 laps, and so forth down to 6 mod 4s running 10 laps. I see the logic in it but I don't think I've seen a track before that strictly goes by car counts for lap determination.

After the modified race everyone got up and started to leave. I stayed put because the hornets hadn't raced yet, but after 10 minutes and literally everyone else leaving I realized they weren't going to run and I left as well, rather confused. I put it together after stopping at a gas station on the way back to get some snacks when I overheard someone mention the 11pm curfew. I guess that includes the commentators since they didn't announce anything about curfew rules.

I was satisfied with the event overall, especially as a bonus weeknight race I didn't expect to be able to go to when I planned this trip. The facility had a lot of character and I always appreciate that.