

7-25-22: Circle City Raceway

Day 2 of Indiana Sprint Week for me (and sort of day 2 for everyone else too, as Saturday was a complete rain-out and Sunday rained out the feature) was Circle City Raceway. I have an Airbnb for the week in Indianapolis so it was only 20 minutes to get there this afternoon. I arrived 10 minutes before gates were scheduled to open and they were already letting people in. I asked the guy at the gate and he said they opened early because there was a long line. I suppose it effectively amounts to me getting about the same seat I otherwise would have (unless people from the pits put their blankets down, but that didn't seem to be much of an issue). It just annoys me on principle. I did appreciate the physical ticket and the fact that they handed me a schedule of events when I entered.

I got a perfectly good seat though, so it worked out fine. I sat a few rows down from the top in the tall section on the turn 1 side. It seemed like an addition above where the grandstands were originally, and Google Maps confirmed this as there it shows all the stands being at the same height. The sightlines seemed to be pretty good overall kind of no matter where you sit, there's almost nothing to obstruct the view other than the press box and the video stand at the top of the original height of the stands at the start/finish line. Even with people on all sides of me my view was just fine.



43 USAC National Sprint Cars signed in plus 19 UMP modifieds. They did engine heat in an unusual way, pushing off the cars outside the track, between the concrete wall and the catch fence, and having them drive around the outside of 1 and 2. They continued to work the track during engine heat, putting down a

good deal of water while I was sitting there and having a 3-wheel crop sprayer packing alongside a tractor.



They had to scrape the outside walls for visibility after each set of hot laps since so much dirt was being caked on the walls each time. The entrance of turn 3 developed a sizable rut, eating through the wet and into the dry dirt beneath that kicked up every time someone went through it. I was wondering if they were going to take out the road grader but they left it, going straight into qualifying. The track seemed really tricky, multiple cars biked and most had trouble at some point. The cushion was very tall in both ends but especially in the entrance of four. Mitchell Moles set quick time, his third in a row to open Sprint Week.



They did bring out the grader to knock down the cushion after qualifying and modified heats but that's a perfectly reasonable thing to do given how it was developing. They reworked most of the track in the process.

The sprint heats started out pretty bottom dominant but opened up by the third heat or so. Justin Grant had some struggles through three and four and had contact with one car then with another, who went flipping multiple times at the start/finish line. By the fourth heat it was a pretty even split top and bottom. The modified heats had an excessive number of pace laps but were generally uneventful.

By the C main and for pretty much the rest of the night, the cushion was very thin on both ends of the track. It's always impressive watching the drivers sliding into the turns and catching the cushion perfectly. It's something I love about non-wing racing, how far they have to slide the cars into the turns. They were almost 90 degrees sideways in front of me entering turn 1.

The sprint car feature ended up being pretty exciting. Briggs Danner led several laps in the beginning and I always like seeing the Pennsylvania guys do well since PA is for me the closest 410 sprint car racing to home. Brady Bacon got past him eventually and looked like he was going to take the win but CJ Leary and Justin Grant ran him down. Bacon stuck to the bottom to the end and the top came in with about two to go and Leary got past him to take the win.



Most people left without staying for the modified main. I stayed, but it wasn't anything particularly interesting. They couldn't seem to figure out how to keep the cars straight so there was a lot of cautions and a lot of unnecessary pacing but I was still out of there by about 10:30. Overall a fun track, good sightlines, and solid racing. It's nice being so close into the city and that they're bringing dirt track racing right back into the city.