

9-29-23: Unity Raceway

Unity is another of those racetracks that's been on my radar for a while but I've never had a reason to really get out there. I decided to head out today because the Sprint Cars of New England were scheduled to make their first ever appearance at the track and in the state of Maine in general, and the originally intended 2 or 3 car exhibition turned into a full non-points special event with at least 10 cars expected. I figured that was the best impetus I was going to get to check out the track, and it was raining in Boston anyway but looked beautiful up there.

It was about three and a half hours with traffic, a pretty nice drive throughout. The track is right on the highway about 20 miles off of I-95, right in the small town of Unity. The parking lot had a lot of cars in it, more than I was expecting there to be. Walking into the track I saw the nice Unity Raceway sign on top of the covered grandstands, clearly old but with some work that's been put into it recently. There was a trailer with a number of various Nascar and racing memorabilia for purchase.



Tickets were \$10 and I found a top row seat in the open stands toward the turn four end, but it was one of the last top row seats available. There was a good crowd in the stands, and the covered grandstands in particular were almost completely full. They looked to be quite steep but had good sized poles obstructing the views.



The open stands I was in offered great views, nothing in the way and I could see everything almost perfectly without even standing up. The corners are quite flat, almost no visible banking in them. They were decently wide on the third mile track. On the outside of the turns was a big dirt berm, bigger in three and four. One and two was right up next to the highway and had a chain link fence and some trees with the smaller berm.



Promptly at 7pm they started, but with an on-track autograph session instead of heat racing. I did take the chance to walk on the track since that's always fun. The pace car I noticed had a Maine license plate reading "I WON". I spent my time paying attention to the grippiness of the dirt (which was decently tacky but rather wet and muddy at points too) and looking at the sprint cars, it was cool seeing how similar their suspensions are to the one on my micro sprint. Really other than the drive train and engine placement, they're basically the same, just bigger. I ended up talking to another driver in the Granite State Mini Sprints where I race.



I went to the concession stand since they were advertising some interesting items, such as a chicken bacon ranch sandwich, pulled pork mac and cheese, and strawberry cheesecake parfaits. The line was very long though, and I couldn't get through it before racing started.

They did a heat for the 3 late models then two heats for the 11 sprint cars. I didn't expect great car counts in the weekly classes, but I was glad the SCoNE showed up with all the cars they had promised since that was really the draw for me.

The track looked slick and pretty bumpy, they were bouncing up and down entering the turns, in three in particular. The fast cars were keeping the car pretty straight through the turns. There was actually a pretty good battle for the lead in heat 2, one running down the leader from a good way back.

They went right in to feature racing, with every division running 20 laps regardless of car count. There were 6 ladies four cylinders, 4 street stocks, 8 of some other form of stock cars that included three pickup trucks, 13 V6/V8 stocks, 3 teen four cylinders, and 26 enduro cars.

The ladies feature saw one car about lapping the field, getting right to the back of the last two cars and seemingly not caring about passing them.

The late model feature was very strung out quickly but about halfway through the second place car got high into three, I'm not sure if he just missed the corner or the car broke, but he got hard into the outer berm with the right front fender and got up on it sideways, nearly going up on the side. Immediately afterward, the third place car also went off the track and into the berm right

behind, backing into it pretty hard. I wonder if there was fluid on the track that they both got into or something. In any case, neither could continue so, with only one car remaining in the race, they gave him three laps and called the race early.



They brought out the road grader for some reason, the track seemed pretty good to me, at least as far as a flat slick track could be, but that wasted about 20 minutes. They ran the sprint cars next, a 20 lap feature that was the first sprint car race here in I think they said 15 years.

It's apparently a Unity tradition to do a backwards wave-off lap, so they turned the car around on the backstretch and had the drivers wave to the fans going backwards down the frontstretch.



The SCoNE feature was pretty good. The track widened out decently and there were cars running high and low. They pretty much all went down to the bottom immediately after a caution around halfway, but there was a race for second in the closing laps that was good.

The V6/V8 feature featured two VW bugs and had the closest racing thus far on the night with a decent bit of contact. The teen race was next and was uneventful. For whatever reason they did the National Anthem at 10:30pm before the teen race, the second to last race of the night.

Having gone down to the concession stand between almost every race, standing in line, and not making it to the front before the next race started, I finally got something to eat. They were out of most things, but the cheese and bacon tots were solid and I really enjoyed the strawberry cheesecake parfait, a bargain for \$3.

The last event was the “enduro” that wasn’t actually an enduro since they ran it with regular rules, including caution flags and lining up all the cars in running order and doing organized restarts. The 26 cars were fun to see since they had by far the best car counts of the night. The leader got turned off the track going down the backstretch at one point and the guy who spun him was penalized. Later, someone just parked their car on the frontstretch, climbed out, flipped

off the official, and walked back to the pits, just abandoning his car there, apparently over some scoring dispute in the restart lineup.

I left around 11:15pm.