

2-11-23: Hobe Sound Speedway and Hendry County Motorsports Park

When my original plan to go to All-Tech got rained out I decided to head to southern Florida and do another double, starting with South Florida Karting. They race at a small paved track a bit north of West Palm Beach. Given my past experience with karting, I arrived an hour after features were scheduled to begin, since no kart race I've ever been to has started on time. It's always a question as to how many classes there are going to be and what order they're going to be running in so I was hoping to not have to sit for a bunch of hours before watching something countable. Luckily, this was an exception to a lot of the rules as they were already running features when I got there, there were only 7 classes, and they had a clearly posted running order that they stuck to.

I arrived and drove right up to the track, no gates or pit pass or anything that I could see. They seemed to average about 5 karts per class.



I walked around a bit and found a posted schedule for the features which they actually followed. The racing wasn't particularly interesting but I spent most of the time sitting in my car with the air conditioning watching when cars were on track and reading a book otherwise. I could actually see most of the track from inside my car.



The champ karts took to the track and there were around 10 of them. I watched up until there was a crash exiting four where one kart went hard into the tire barrier after contact with another kart. Karts don't tend to have full containment seats or good head neck restraints so it was a pretty scary looking crash, and there was no ambulance on site. Luckily I saw him moving and getting out of the kart as I was leaving.

I decided to leave at that point and I headed down to Hendry County Motorsports Park. It was a nice drive down there, I really remember how much of Florida is just random swampland with nothing really there.

Hendry County advertised itself with a car up on a left by the side of the highway. It claims to be the southernmost dirt track in the country which I have no reason to dispute. There weren't a ton of people there when I showed up about an hour before hot laps were scheduled to begin. I wandered around the various grandstands to figure out what was optimal. The sightlines aren't significantly different between the frontstretch, turn 1, and turn 4 stands, but with the wind blowing mostly into the frontstretch with a slight slant toward turn 4 I decided to sit in turn 1, especially since it appeared to be a very sandy track that I was worried about being quite dusty.





They were working the track as I got in with various equipment. They had track concessions as well as a few other food stalls. I got a decent pulled pork sandwich with baked beans and coleslaw.



They started pretty on time with hot laps. Unfortunately, someone decided that it would be a good idea to two car qualify all 57 mod lites, starting at 7pm. It took over 45 minutes to get through them all, which was frustrating particularly because it would have cost them nothing to do three or four at a time instead of two.

The car counts weren't great, aside from the mod lites which were running a special event. There were 10 360 winged sprint cars, 10 4.6 Fords, and 4 V8 warriors. The sprint cars started the show with their heat races. There was a pileup on the initial start with one spinning in front of the field and I'm really surprised everyone stayed on all four wheels.

For the track being so seemingly dry and dusty, I was surprised with how well it raced. There wasn't much dust and there was some area to move around for the cars.

The mod lites ran 8 heat races. They were decently competitive, and had a couple cars hit the wall and one get upside down in about the slowest rollover I've seen.

The 4.6 Fords were some form of street or pure stock and were very competitive. They seemed very hard to drive, various cars were having trouble keeping it straight even in the straights, spinning on their own, and seeming pretty out of control. There was a good fight for the lead as well.



In the mod lite B main, on the initial start one car seemed to go too hard into the corner, over-rotating and digging in the right rear and barrel rolled 4 times through turn one. It was a violent wreck and the safety crew brought the driver out on a backboard. The commentator said that he was alert and moving but was complaining of neck pain. The crazy thing to me is that they didn't have an ambulance on premise. They had to wait over 20 minutes for an ambulance to show up while the driver laid on a backboard on the dirt. It seems so unsafe and like such negligence to not have an ambulance there while racing.

I realized at some point that I was actually sitting in the pit grandstands. There was no one checking wristbands when I walked in the first couple times, but at some point someone showed up there so I stayed there as long as I could but at some point had to leave and I ended up back at the frontstretch stands. It was distinctly dustier there with the wind whereas I had almost none in turns one and two.

At 10:30 they were still running B mains, and weren't even to LCQs or the scheduled intermission yet. I decided to head out since I had a 2.5 hour drive home and hadn't gotten particularly much sleep all week. The racing was pretty good and I enjoyed the track, but that 45 minutes of time trials really set everything back and it just got too late at some point. I enjoyed the racing overall and I was glad to find that the extremely dusty looking track wasn't actually too bad.