

2-16-23: Bubba Raceway Park

The second stop of the day was Bubba Raceway Park for the USAC National Sprints points opener. We got there right when the gates opened at 5pm after moving from our original parking space after I realized that the track didn't have a catch fence and a car could theoretically clear the track and tumble down into the original parking spot. We moved across the field to a bit further away.

Even though we were there when gates were supposed to open, they already appeared to be open and pretty much the entire top row was taken in the main grandstands, so they must have either opened early or the pit passes were allowed in to claim spots before GA availability. Fortunately, the turn four grandstands seemed like a better option anyway so we set up there and had our pick of seats. I did feel the need to be somewhat further into the turn since the catch fence is pretty low and doesn't even start until too close to the grandstands.



The views were quite good in the turn 4 stands, except for a bit down the front stretch. This was mostly mitigated when the sun went down and wasn't glaring off the catch fence. The biggest issue was that the speakers in the section weren't hooked up so we couldn't really hear any of Chet Christner's commentary which was a bit unfortunate.



There were trucks packing the track, starting surprisingly late from what I'd expect from other tracks. They packed the top but let the sprint cars do the entirety of the bottom during wheel pack.

There were 28 USAC sprint cars on hand, plus 12 winged micro sprints that appeared to be 270 micros. The sprint cars started with hot laps and qualifying. It was really cool watching them throw the car so sideways into turn three right in front of us, that particular perspective was really neat. It's one of the things I love about non-wing racing, they're so much more sideways and it's just fun to watch.



Qualifying immediately followed. One ended up cutting way too low into turn 3 on the first lap, flipping twice before landing back on the wheels. It ended up being the only flip of the night. They were running fairly high in one and two and not particularly high in three and four, with the exception of the entrance where they all were right on the wall as it narrows into three.

The heat racing was enjoyable. The track was fairly single groove but the racing was enjoyable and it was possible at least in parts of the track to pass. A couple cars caught the right rear into the wall entering three but kept it going, just light grazing the wall. One did a full 360 down over the berm in turn one and was able to keep going.

The micros ran their heats. There was a huge disparity in speeds between different cars and nothing particularly interesting happened throughout. But I can't say I'm surprised because they're pretty underpowered for a very large track and running winged at that.

They kept the show moving pretty well throughout the night, no long stretches without on-track activity. The wind was in the right direction, at our backs, but there was no dust at all which is always appreciated.

The USAC B main saw Chase Stockon flying up through the field, starting in the back and driving up into third position which was fun to watch. There was a pileup exiting four where four cars got together but mostly ended up alright, with no one upside down.



The A pushed off at a very reasonable hour and was a good race. Brady Bacon spun in front of the field, he might have had some help it's hard to say, and several cars piled in. Robert Ballou had a decent charge from the back. Even though the track didn't open up to a gigantic amount, there was still quite a bit of passing and action and it's so much fun watching the cars slinging it so sideways into the turns. It definitely proved to be worth skipping the Daytona Duels to come here.