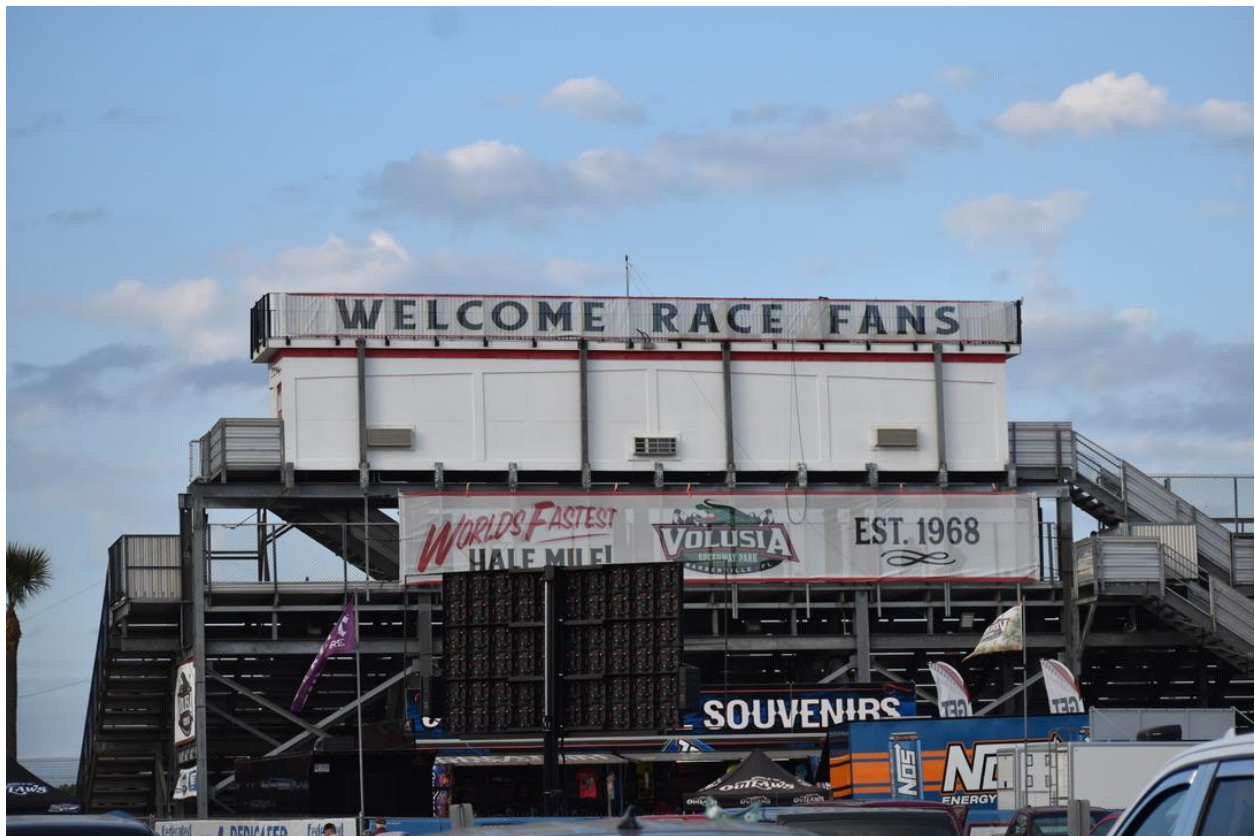


2-09-23: Volusia Speedway Park

After a much appreciated full nights sleep and a day working from home from my Airbnb, I headed off to go to Volusia for the first time. This is one of those tracks that I've raced quite a bit at on iRacing and thus is neat to finally get to see in person.

It was about an hour and a half with traffic getting out of the city and I got there right in time to pick up my will call ticket and make my way into the grandstands. When I got on to purchase reserved seats about a week ago there weren't a lot of options left and I just picked wherever I could get the highest up. I ended up in the central main grandstands, on the far side towards turn 4. The sightlines are surprisingly good, even with some haulers in the infield they don't really obstruct anything, and even the lower rows seemed pretty solid. My section in particular was a bit hindered by the fact that there's the tall chainlink fence at the edge of the grandstands in the way, but I could move my head around and see everything, just not all at once.



The track is a big half mile with a slight D shape on the backstretch. There's nice tall catch fence all around the track. The main grandstands all have seatbacks and it's quite a bit taller than the rest of the bleachers around the track, down the front and into turns 1 and 2. They had two video boards in the infield, one large one that seemed to be from Dirtvision and the other that may have been permanent.



As hot laps started I wandered to the top of the stands to the landing up there. The boxes were set up quite a bit higher and the area below them and above the seats seemed to just be open and had great views, so I ended up standing there the entire time. I was kind of surprised that they didn't care about people standing there, but they didn't, and a couple people even had lawn chairs they set up. It seems I could have bought a GA ticket and just set up camp up top where it seems to have as good a view as anywhere.



There were 36 World of Outlaws sprint cars that signed in, including NASCAR drivers Alex Bowman and Kasey Kahne. The 94 modifieds included Justin Allgaier, Justin Haley, and Matt Crafton as far as NASCAR drivers, plus Travis Pastrana.

The Outlaws ran hot laps in four groups, and did wheel pack in between the groups in an unusual order, sometimes splitting the hot laps with wheel packing in the middle of a group. Then was qualifying, two cars at a time since the track was so big. The track started out on the bottom and quickly build a cushion that slowly moved up throughout hot laps, but once qualifying hit it pretty much stayed where it was and the track actually slowed down pretty noticeably over the course of qualifying.

I took the chance then to wander around the midway. There were a surprisingly large number of merch trailers, probably a dozen of them for different drivers, including a couple modified drivers. They didn't seem to have track concessions but had half a dozen food trucks there with some pretty good looking food. I didn't have a chance to get anything because modified hot laps were starting up right about then.

They hot lapped in groups of 12 or so and were about 4 seconds slower than the sprint cars. They were able to move the cushion up the track even further.

Sprint car heats were mostly on the bottom without a lot of passing outside of the initial start. I did appreciate that they gave the one to go signal right after they all caught up with the pace car and even before they're lined up, giving them through one and two to get in position before going green in four. No extraneous pace laps.

The first four drivers that locked into the redraw were all PA Posse, which had a strong showing throughout the night. They brought the third place finisher in each heat into the infield to do an interview after each one, presumably because the top two are in the redraw and will be interviewed during that. I'd also forgotten that World of Outlaws does double file restarts and I really appreciate that.

The modifieds were split into six groups and ran features only, 15 laps each. They were able to pretty much run anywhere on the track, and the racing was pretty good as a result. It was surprisingly clean, except for the second heat that had two multi-car pileups early. Travis Pastrana won his main from third.



The Outlaws dash got interesting one lap when Anthony Macri pulled up in front of Danny Dietrich for the lead. They came together nose to tail and I thought Macri was going to get put into the wall but he held on to win.

Cory Eliason was leading the LCQ until he lost power again, just like in his heat race, also from the lead. There was a tiny bit of rain that picked up right before the race, and it was light enough that I could see it visibly changing direction in the wind generated by the cars at speed.



All throughout they didn't touch the track, and didn't take excessive breaks. I appreciated the well run show and track that stayed together nicely. Unfortunately, right as the pace car left the track and they were half a lap away from taking the green in the Outlaws feature, the rain came harder and they ended up calling the race for the night. They at least got most of the show in, I counted the track, and felt satisfied enough. The feature probably would have been pretty good but it's also a big fast track and that doesn't always go together with good racing. Odds are someone would have run away with it but that'd kind of how it often goes at shows like that, you really go there for the prestige and the speeds and sometimes the show is really good too. It was definitely worth going though and always fun to see a track I've driven quite a bit on iRacing. The speeds are impressive and it's a pretty nice facility overall.