

11-05-23: SBC Fairgrounds

I was excited to learn last year that a new short course off road series was being put together to run in southern California. CORR and TORC used to run a bunch of races down here, and LOORRS at least ran a handful, but as much as I love how well Championship Off Road has been doing in the midwest it's sad having so many good tracks in the southwest without a regular tenant.

I didn't know really anything about Great American Shortcourse but for a two hour drive I was more than happy to check it out. The Sunday show was features only starting at 8:30am. I decided to skip most of the kids classes and got there around 10am. The track is a part of the San Bernardino County fairgrounds. We got there and saw that a flea market was taking up a large portion of the parking area. We were able to find a spot but later in the day it might have been tricky. It took a minute to figure out where to actually get into the pit area since everything seemed to be fenced off but we found it eventually and picked up our wristbands. It's always fun that the pits are fully accessible for short course offroad events.

My previous experiences with short course offroad were with national tours and therefore had giant crowds, necessitating arriving very early to get a good seat. I didn't expect quite that level of crowd for this event, and I was correct in that assumption. In fact, I may have been one of the only people there not affiliated with a race team. The people in the grandstands were constantly changing depending on what was on track. We were able to get nice seats at the top row with good visibility of the whole track, excluding a few spots made hard to see by the poles from the covered roof.

We arrived in the middle of the J2 kart feature, a kids class that was mostly notable because one kart biked and rolled in turn 5, got pushed back on the wheels, and biked and rolled in the exact same place the next lap.

The first countable race was the mini stocks, which were four cylinder full-size trucks. There were 4 of them, plus 1 open V8 that raced at the same time. There was a battle for the win on the final lap, and attempting a crossover the second place truck biked and rolled in turn 4.



The mod karts had 11 in their feature and they always have way more power than I expect them to have. They ran the full course (as opposed to the shortened one that J2 karts ran). They got some real air on the jumps and had a battle for the lead for many laps, with second eventually getting into first on the final lap and giving the win to third.





There was an hour intermission for lunch and track prep, during which we walked into the flea market and got some pretty good Mexican food for lunch, since that's the thing to get while I'm down in this part of the country. They were pretty prompt starting back up at noon. The track prep mostly consisted of a single road grader and the occasional pass with the water truck. I couldn't figure out exactly what the road grader was looking for in determining what parts of the track to turn over versus leave alone, but he seemed to know pretty precisely what it was.

5 SR1 UTVs races, then 6 limited buggies and 2 1600 buggies. I wasn't expecting a ton of buggies, but the production turbo UTVs were a bit disappointing with only 8. They had a quarter of them upside down before the race was over though. There were another 7 prod 1000 UTVs in a separate race.



The 5 pro buggies put on the wildest race of the day. In the second corner of lap one, one car drove deep into the turn and right into another car, driving up and over it and getting well up on two wheels and off the track before continuing on. That triggered a full restart, upon which in turn four, two cars (possibly the same two) got together exiting the turn and one again drove over the other, this time rolling the bottom car onto the roof. In both incidents both cars continued on in the race. Without even completing a lap we had two cars drive over another car, something I definitely don't usually expect to see.

There was a black flag later in the race for someone intentionally turning another car around, and there were a lot of mistakes which led to closer racing and actually quite good racing throughout the feature, even with only 5 cars. When pulling up into victory lane, third place rear-ended second in clear retaliation and I think the officials disqualified him for it as they brought out a different driver for the third spot on the podium.





At some point the road grader started tilling the track with the rear blades, something I don't think I've seen before. They didn't roll it in or anything, just started the race like that. It worked, I don't know what exactly it was trying to do.

There were 5 pro lites that also put on a good show. One biked in three and kept going immediately, barely losing time. It was pretty close in the first half, then after the competition caution it spread out a bit more, though coming to the line second place lost power and third came from a long way back to barely sneak by at the the finish.



They kept it moving pretty good between features. They did the podium celebration and had track prep happening while that was going on, and didn't waste too long before bringing out the next feature. It wasn't the 30 minutes per race pace that I'm used to with Championship Off Road, they averaged a good bit better than that (though there were distinctly fewer cars here too).

The day ended with Pro 2s. There were four total but one had engine trouble and could only limp around the track for a lap to get starting points. There were no real battles, but you could tell how much more power those trucks have over anything else that was there.



It was a fun day of offroad racing, even if the car counts were pretty low. The 5 cars in pro buggy and pro lite put on quite the show and it was a beautiful day in November for it, about 80 degrees and sunny. Much more relaxed than other short course races I've been to as well, at least so far as finding seating goes, so that's at least nice. I liked the track, it didn't blue groove and seemed to hold together nicely, some roost but no dust even with the big cars. The most unusual thing was that the finish line was just flat, no finish line jump or anything. There were several large jumps in other places, and a split lane coming into the final turn. It's always fun to see short course off road and it's nice to have it so close to LA.