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SIDECARS ROCK OLYMPIC PARK

Some spectacular racing greeted fans at Olympic Park Speedway on Saturday night with the running of the 2010 Sidecar Shootout, which was won with great authority by local stars, Byren Gates and Mick O'Loughlin from Warren Monson and Deven Gates.

The double seven format proved to be most successful as more chances are given to, perhaps some of the lesser riders, but this meeting had intensity right from the start as all teams worked hard for enough points to get them to their own semi-final, which would then give them the chance of winning the Dudley Bradshaw Trophy.

Whilst Gates and O'Loughlin won all their heats and finished on a maximum score, it was the "Dad's Army" team of Chris Holmes and Neale Hancock who finished with the second selection chance on eight points. The older gents have some very good machinery under them this season and are using it and their massive experience to be really at one with their racing. Total local domination in division one continued with Andy O'Rourke / Jason Mayes just "pipped" for third place points on count back from Clint Mayes / Jamie Knudsen, with each team on seven points.

O'Rourke / Mayes were fortunate to join the Gates / O'Loughlin team going into the final, with the bad luck probably going the way of the elderly team, who came home in third place in the final. At the after meeting presentation, it was interesting to hear Dad's Army passenger Neale Hancock say to many young fans that "old folks can still have a lot of fun and enjoyment racing Sidecars".

In the second division it was again some good riding from another of the locals when Jason Bradshaw and Simon Cohrs won all the heats that they finished, just spinning out coming into turn one, while carrying a bit too much corner speed into the turn, in the heat where the stakes were the highest. They and their machine looked fast all night and they were always going to be the team who gave it to Australian Champions, Mark Mitchell and Tom Golding, but it was the pressure coming from the SA pair that caused the local boys to spin while trying to gain ground on the Title holders. Joining both these teams in the semi-final was Ouyen team of Scott and Kane Munro, who are just getting faster with each meeting and are now riding some very good lines and Warren Monson and Deven Gates, who just pegged away at their task and accumulated enough points to make it into their fifth ride for the night. Monson has one of the fastest engines going around and when track conditions are suitable, Monson is always hard to beat.

In a most eventful final, racing lines were at a premium and, with the pressure on for a place in the Trophy event, spectators saw the exclusion of both the Australian Champions and the Ouyen pair for cutting a corner during the race, although Mitchell pointed out to the Referee, that he had had to go slightly infield to avoid any contact with the Munro team, who he figured were in some sort of trouble just ahead of him. The Referee was not having too much of that story and it was the two local teams who went through to the main event for the evening.

The Dudley Bradshaw Trophy was won clearly by the Gates / O'Loughlin team, who shot out of the gate with amazing speed and settled nicely into a race winning rhythm.

Bradshaw and Cohrs got away just slightly to the advantage of Monson and Gates, who chased hard for nearly two laps before moving through into second place. Monson and Gates were able to maintain their advantage, but at no time during the event were the event winners ever under pressure of losing their chance at glory.

A reduced group of Quad racers still provided some good racing but it was the second support group, the boys in the "Motorcross Mayhem" who brought the crowd to light, with some daring and even sometimes desperate riding. Prominent Dirt Track star, Rohan Tegart, had some great battles with Nick Waters, with the wily old fox, Jason Stewart always in contention, from Lewis Gunn, Brock Gates and Josh Knights. Most interest was created when a reverse direction event was included, as many of the riders are only tuned to race in an anti-clockwise direction and, when forced to think the opposite way of going, things can be quite difficult for some.

Sunraysia's sidecar fans are in for a massive meeting next weekend, with the North West Funerals – Victorian Sidecar Championship to be held. The field will be strengthened by three past Australian Sidecar Champion teams, who have ten Championships between them. Darrin Treloar / Justin Plaisted, Scott Christopher / Trent Koppe and the amazing Glenn and Nathan O'Brien will all be in attendance, just to get some high level competition. Top opportunity will come for the best Victorian team, whether they win the event or not, as it will ensure that they represent Victoria in the Australian Title in Newcastle at Easter. This could be the easiest way into the National Title, as the Qualifying meeting will be expected to be very tough and to make it through a solid qualifying meeting and then race for the Championship the next night could be most stressful.

Only Sidecars will operate next Saturday night, as a full compliment of "classic" chairs will be the support for the Victorian meeting. Patrons will enjoy the full Sidecar schedule as the season now turns to three wheeled action as the main entertainment.

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