

LATE MODEL DIGEST

October 18, 2023



Brown blossoms away from Hickory

First 2023 SRL wins for Shepherd, Woodside • Northeast home-track return wins for Bly, Turbush • Benedict brags in Ontario

PHILIP GOODMAN PHOTO

Shepherd rolls after restart at Kern

From staff and series reports

BAKERSFIELD, Calif. (Oct. 15) — After two seasons of following the full schedule in the Spears SRL Southwest Tour, Buddy Shepherd scaled back his racing this season. He chose to stay close to his home near Bakersfield, leaving half a dozen SRL stops.

He had an extremely-short trip to haul his latest victory trophy after the October Classic at Kern County Raceway Park. This thrilling event, in which he slipped past Dan Holtz for the lead on a restart with seven laps remaining, almost wasn't on his agenda, because of pending surgery for his father Dick Shepherd.

"We definitely had luck on our side this weekend. We'd been missing that for a couple of years," the 24-year-old driver said.

Holtz and Blaine Rocha swapped the lead a couple of times in the middle stages. Rocha appeared to be in good shape for his first SRL triumph since 2017, but then he lost his four-second advantage due to a flat right front tire. That set up Shepherd's heroics against his fellow home-track racer.

"Holtz kinda spun the tires on the restart and he got a little free off," said Shepherd, who started on the



Kevin Peters

Blaine Rocha earned the Zero Drag fast time award from PFC Brakes. He took the lead after the service break but then dropped out with a flat tire with seven laps left.



Sal Sigala Jr.

Buddy Shepherd and crew chief Zach Dunson enjoy the trophy for the main event of the October Classic presented by Bulwark Fire Resistant and TenCate Protective Fabrics. Dunson works with a number of VanDoorn customers, and this was his first time attending a West Coast triumph.

pole after the draw. "I was able to get my nose underneath him and lock down the pass."

This was Shepherd's second win since the passing of his car owner Nick Sivesind in late 2021. Since then



Kevin Peters

Dan Holtz led at the lap-85 break at Kern County Raceway Park in Bakersfield, Calif. He wound up second in the season finale for the Spears SRL Southwest Tour.

his family has rebuilt the team, fielding a VanDoorn Racing Development chassis with HP Elite power and support from Toby Hagar Trucking, Crystal Pools, Advance Distribution and Schaeffer's Oil. This was a rare event in which his widow Traci was unable to attend, but the families are still close.

"We still have dinner with her almost every Monday night," Shepherd said. "There are some crew guys that were on the team when he started it five years ago, and all the connections we made with VanDoorn were from Nick. The whole circle's still together."

October Classic presented by Bulwark FR and TenCate Protective Fabrics: 1. Buddy Shepherd; 2. Dan Holtz; 3. Austin Herzog; 4. Cody Dempster; 5. Jacob Gomes; 6. Dylan Zampa; 7. Jake Bollman; 8. Nick Cooper; 9. John Moore; 10. Cassidy Hinds; 11. Scott Sanchez; 12. Blaine Rocha; 13. Johnny Bedingfield; 14. Seth Wise.

Lap leaders: Shepherd 1-7, Rocha 8-31, Holtz 32-85, Rocha 86-127, Holtz 128, Shepherd 129-135 • Cautions: 4 • Fast qualifier: Rocha, 17.896 seconds



Sal Sigala Jr.
Sean Woodside (45) fends off an inside pass attempt
 by Linny White in the season finale for the Spears Pro Late Model Series presented by Sigma Performance Services.

White's advice to Woodside turns table

From staff and series reports

BAKERSFIELD, Calif. (Oct. 15) — Through early October only two drivers had managed to keep Linny White out of victory lane in 2023. Derek Thorn pulled one off in a one-off in Madera Speedway's annual Short Track Shootout. Before that, White won 11 of 15 points races in the top class at Irwindale Speedway and six of seven in the Spears Pro Late Model Series; the other wins went to Trevor Huddleston.

Sean Woodside added his name to that special list in the Spears Manufacturing-sponsored season finale at Kern County Raceway Park. White gave a heck of a fight to Woodside, a former NASCAR Winston West Series champion whose Late Model operation has been a client of White Racing Services for about two years.

"He was at my door," said Woodside, from Sau-

gus, Calif. "I think we ran about 10-12 laps side by side. "I feel like I've led a lot of races this year and he just drives by me with 15 to go. It's nice to know we've got our car better."

A few weeks before this October Classic, White tested this #45 at Irwindale. That gave Woodside the needed edge at the other southern-California half-mile – and set up some good-natured ribbing between the two veterans.

"He said, 'How am I gonna pay my bills this month?'" He said. "Linny had to get through traffic, and I think (Ethan) Myers got into him, so it took him a little bit longer to get up to us until a yellow bunched us up."

Woodside, who operates Apache Rental Group which organized the set at the next two days' Dancing with the Stars program, qualified sixth and drew the pole in the series' top-eight lottery. He had enough to fend off White's late charges, edging the runaway series champion by less than half a car length at the checkered flag. The accomplishment of the #45, a Hamke Race Car also supported by Cardmax, Peak Carburetors and JMS Ignition, is one of many feathers in the WRS cap.

"We won the Havasu championship," Woodside said about the Arizona track whose season runs from November to March. "Jeff Peterson won the title at the Bullring (at Las Vegas Motor Speedway), and Cody Kiemele's leading the points at Orange Show. The last two years have been pretty amazing."

October Classic presented by Sigma Performance Services and Motor City Buick-GMC: 1. Sean Woodside; 2. Linny White; 3. Seth Wise; 4. Christian Bazen; 5. Holly Clark; 6. Kabe McClenny; 7. Scott Youngren; 8. Ethan Myers; 9. Hans Beeler; 10. Ryan Martin; 11. Johnny Borneman; 12. Brody Armtrout; 13. Cassidy Hinds; 14. Kale McClenny; 15. Eric Norris; 16. Justin Philpott; 17. Cody Kiemele; 18. Mike Beeler; 19. Roy Luft; 20. Barry Karr.

Lap leader: Woodside 1-54 • Cautions: 1 • Fast qualifier: Wise, 19.694 seconds



Sal Sigala Jr.

Sean Woodside shows off one of the trophies for the October Classic at Kern County Raceway Park.



Rosa Andrade

Seth Wise set fast time and finished third in the 54-lap Pro Late Model race at the half-mile in Bakersfield, Calif.

Big bucks for Brown in debut at OCS

From staff reports and Joshua Weatherman/Short Track Report

ROUGEMONT, N.C. (Oct. 15) —

Throughout this season at Hickory Motor Speedway, in which he won nine Late Model Stock Car features and became the second-youngest champion in the long history of the racetrack, Kade Brown relied on the experience of his team owner Matt Piercy. Piercy won the Hickory track title in 2015 and has several more successful seasons there.

He also learned from Piercy at Orange County Speedway heading into the second annual Orange Blossom Shootout presented by Puryear Tank Lines. But the scenario was different, because this was Piercy's first time visiting OCS in addition to Brown's.

"It's awesome," he said. "The surface is a lot like Hickory's, with how much we had to maintain the tires. It's just faster with a little bit higher banking and wider corners. We walked the track to feel out the bumps and stuff, and it's just an old worn-out surface."

The first impression for the #23



Philip Goodman

Kade Brown (23) pulls alongside race-long leader Deac McCaskill with one lap remaining in the Orange Blossom Shootout presented by Puryear Tank Lines.

likely won't be topped by any future races at the 3/8-mile oval. The 17-year-old Brown tracked down race-long leader Deac McCaskill near the end of the 150-lap main event, delayed one day by rain, then cleared the veteran on the final circuit as McCaskill scraped the front stretch wall.

"I knew my best shot was through

turns three and four," Brown said. "I had a good run coming to the white in turn one. He was better in one and two, but I maintained. I knew in three that we were gonna be good. I talked to him after the race and he said he stomped on it and sent it, 'cause he thought that was his only shot. We touched a little bit down the back straightaway once earlier, but it was very slight. I knew I was gonna race Deac respectfully, 'cause he's got more respect than anyone."

McCaskill had topped time trials and held the point through the first 80 laps until the competition yellow. McCaskill, Brown, Brenden Queen and Ronnie Bassett Jr. led the group of contenders onto pit road for fine-tuning and the allowed fresh right-rear tire. They all restarted on the high side, then zipped past Tristan McKee who stayed out dur-

ing the break.

Brown dropped spots to Queen and Bassett in the middle stages, but soon after the break he was back in second. Within minutes it was back to the #23 and #08 show, which ended in the best way for Brown, whose Performancer chassis is supported by natural anti-inflammatory vitamin company Valasta, Puryear Racing, Race City Steel, Carolina Driveline, KRC Power Steering and Joes Racing Products.

Orange Blossom Shootout presented by Puryear Tank Lines: 1. Kade Brown; 2. Deac McCaskill; 3. Brenden Queen; 4. Tristan McKee; 5. Jared Fryar; 6. Grant Davidson; 7. Camden Gullie; 8. Carter Langley; 9. Buddy Isles Jr.; 10. Conner Jones; 11. Jeff Sparks; 12. Ronnie Bassett Jr.; 13. Alex Fleming; 14. Terry Dease; 15. Blake Bledsole; 16. Darren Krantz; 17. Kenny Forbes.

Lap leaders: McCaskill 1-149, Brown 150 • Cautions: 4 • Fast qualifier: McCaskill, 14.45 seconds



Philip Goodman

Kade Brown shows off the oversized victory check from one of his sponsors at the bullring in Rougemont, N.C.



Corey Latham

Brenden Queen finished third in the 150-lap Late Model Stock Car special. This car will be put up for sale by Lee Pulliam Performance at the end of the season.

Brocktober: Champion goes distance

From staff and team reports

THORNBURG, Va. (Oct. 15) — Alex Brock won 10 Limited Late Model points races at Dominion Raceway this season. The postseason event at the .4-mile oval was probably sweeter than any from May to September.

"My crew chief Eric Winslow wanted to go out and win this one," said Brock, from Chesterfield, Va. "We've got 12 wins; one was Eric's (July 1 at South Boston Speedway). It's been a really good year for me and Sellers Racing."

The headliner at the facility's Track or Treat special was set at 118 laps,

named for the bar and grill on site. Brock, who has been a Sellers setup client since 2020, enjoyed the experience advantage in longer races. He spent the late 2010s in Late Model Stock Cars, running some big shows and completing every lap in the Hampton Heat 200 in 2020. Mike Gano and Richard Storm were the only other drivers in this field with LMSC time.

Brock started on the pole but fell back as far as eighth in the race. Then he zipped to the lead after a three-wide move with Gano and Ayden Millette with about a dozen laps remaining.

"There was a lot of green-flag rid-



Tracy Mackereth/Unique 1 Photography

Peyton Lee (2) battles fast qualifier Chase Johnson en route to a second-place finish at Dominion Raceway near Spotsylvania, Va.



Tracy Mackereth/Unique 1 Photography

Alex Brock looks to the outside groove to get past midrace leader Ayden Millette during the Track or Treat Day presented by 118 Bar & Grill.



Mitchell Richtmyre Photography

Alex Brock emerges from his car after his 11th win of the season in the division Dominion Raceway calls Virginia Racers.

ing," Brock said. "Those guys wanted to go instantly, and they were gonna burn it up. I ran the fastest lap of the entire

race on lap 116, and that was almost two tenths quicker than the field. We wanted to show our hand right there at the end."

The winning #9, a Hedgecock chassis with additional support from his employer A-Plus Roofing, Atlas Roofing, Brock's Bar-B-Que, Elite Force Staffing, W.G. Speaks, Midnight Performance, Brew Craft Bar & Kitchen, Chesdin Automotive, QuinPrint & Creations, engine builder Tanner Automotive and the Jeff Katz Show, enjoyed a few car lengths on runner-up Peyton Lee at the end. This was his final start of the season, but Winslow has plans to run once or twice later this fall, likely including the Thanksgiving Classic at Southern National Motorsports Park.

Track or Treat Day presented by 118 Bar & Grill: 1. Alex Brock; 2. Peyton Lee; 3. Christian Kestermann; 4. J.D. Eversole; 5. Jason Pittman; 6. Richard Storm; 7. Kayla Surlis; 8. Rob Jenkins; 9. Josh Blankenship; 10. Driver unidentified; 11. Chase Johnson; 12. Reid Murphy; 13. James Johnson; 14. Barry Moore; 15. Mike Gano; 16. Ayden Millette.

Lap leaders: Johnson 1-2, Murphy 3-25, Millette 26-104, Brock 105-118 • Cautions: 2 • Fast qualifier: Johnson, 16.331 seconds

Claremont Motorsports Park

Returning champion rebounds at home

From staff and team reports

CLAREMONT, N.H. (Oct. 15) — Ricky Bly won 11 times in the NHSTRA-sanctioned Outlaw Late Model class at Claremont Motorsports Park last season, then planned his next step up the ladder. One of the rungs on that ladder seemed to break when Bly put his foot on it in 2023.

His move was to the American-Canadian Tour, but Bly only started two of the four races he entered, and he finished none. An ACT-sanctioned event as part of his home track's three-day Fall Challenge helped provide the boost to look ahead to next year.

Bly, from Sunapee, N.H., led from start to finish in the 75-lap main event at the third-mile oval. This division was a late addition to the weekend schedule, and Bly was definitely one of the advocates of the decision.

"We knew about a week and a half ago that we'd run," Bly said. "(Track owner) Mike Parks messaged me to see what I thought about it, and I thought it was a no-brainer given how many ACT cars there are here in New England. Unfortunately the Fall Brawl (at Riverside Speedway, paying \$5,000 to win as opposed to \$1,200 here) was rescheduled on top of it when it rained last week; we were sure a handful of those guys were coming to Claremont."

The biggest name whom Bly beat



Emily Miller/Miss Em's Photography Adventures

Ricky Bly (28) sets up a pass on Randy Cole Jr. in heat race action at Claremont Motorsports Park. Bly led all 75 laps of the feature.

in this race was childhood friend and frequent past rival Aaron Fellows, who has a couple of Claremont track title seasons even more dominant than Bly's in 2022. Fellows has done more modified racing since the pandemic, but he brought back his ACT car and finished a few car lengths behind the #28, an RSB chassis sponsored by Bly Machine and Usko's Contracting.

That car has been a source of frustration throughout the spring and summer. There was some early excitement when he finished eighth in an ACT preseason race at Hickory Motor Speedway, but then it went downhill.

"This was the worst year ever," Bly said. "The next race at Hickory (later that day) I totaled a brand new car. Then we had an ignition wire melt at Lee, then it happened again at White Mountain. We hit on something (in a weekly race later at White Mountain) and hit on something and ran sixth, and the car was like night and day. We're on an uphill thing right now. I kept telling everyone that I can't wait for the year to be over, but since it's ended on a high note I'm like, 'Let's go again.'"

Fall Challenge: 1. Ricky Bly; 2. Aaron Fellows; 3. Chris Roberts; 4. Chip Grenier; 5. Kyle Goodbout; 6. Richard Brown; 7. Cole Littlewood; 8. Randy Cole Jr.; 9. Johnny Silva; 10. Keith Johnson; 11. Allen Fellows; 12. Cam Curtis; 13. Leo Martin.

Lap leader: Bly 1-75 • Cautions: 2 • Heat race winners: Fellows, Curtis

Riverhead Raceway

Rough road smoothed by victory in finale

From staff and team reports

LONG ISLAND, N.Y. (Oct. 15) — In the previous two seasons Riverhead Raceway reduced the schedule for its Late Model division, citing car counts which were often in single digits. The class was built back up somehow, and Late Models were in action about twice a month in 2023.

That meant better feelings for those who won, especially repeat champion Jeremy McDermott and fellow multi-time winner Artie Pedersen. This spring and summer Brandon Turbush might have felt a little left out, due to his fortunes at the quarter-mile. Turbush ran eight of 10 races at Riverhead, but only finished two.

The season finale turned out better for the driver from Manorville, N.Y., as he led all 25 laps. Questions filled his head in the closing stages, especially after late yellows.

"I got a little bit nervous with Brian Doyle putting a lot of pressure on me; he'd send it in and get to my bumper, then I'd pull away. I looked at the scoreboard and thought, 'This is when they black-flagged me at the last race,'" Turbush said about the Sept. 16 race where he led from the pole until his fuel cell began leaking.

"I looked up around lap 17 and then the caution came out, and I'm like, 'Oh, this is not what I needed.' I cleared him down the backstretch, then Pedersen, who won three



Maureen Steuer

Brandon Turbush, whose season began at Florida Speedweeks in February, poses with his husky Koda after winning the Late Model season finale at Riverhead Raceway. Turbush's sister Allison is a veterinarian and they rescued the dog two years ago.

or four races this year, moved into second. I just tried to keep a three-car-length gap on him. We're coming to two to go, and of course the caution comes out again. I've got Pedersen on the outside and Jeremy's now in row two. I'm thinking, 'This might be it,' where bad luck strikes again."

Nothing bad happened this time for Turbush, who drove a Howe chassis with engine service from Billy the Kid and support from Freddy Ligon Racing, Spider Webb Motorsports, SeaPro Marine Dock Builders, Blazin' Bagels Deli, Black Diamond Detailing, Lolly's Hut, WC Designs and PD Carburetors. This was a great day overall for the team, as newly-crowned legends track champion Richie Davidowitz finished fifth in Turbush's second car.

"Last year my dad ran that car for the full season, but this year he said he wanted to step back and focus on helping me out," Brandon said. "A few times we brought the second car out to try to get it dialed in, with my cousin Mark Stewart in once and truck driver Matt McGrath once, and usually we'd tell them to ride around in the back and shake it down. This time we told the kid, 'All right, let's see what you've got,' and pulled the reins back and let him go."

Championship Night presented by Cecil Palm Tree: 1. Brandon Turbush; 2. Artie Pedersen III; 3. Jeremy McDermott; 4. Brian Doyle; 5. Richie Davidowitz; 6. Gerard Giordano; 7. Keith Rotzi; 8. Ed Chesiak; 9. Jesse St. Clair; 10. Kevin Metzger; 11. Jenn Krpata; 12. Alyssa Paprocky; 13. Paul Cummings; 14. Chris McGuire.

Lap leader: Turbush 1-25 • Cautions: 4 • Heat race winners: Pedersen, Turbush

Bookends for Benedict: Delayed ACC win

From staff and track reports

PETERBOROUGH, Ontario (Oct. 14) —

Going solely by distance, Peterborough Speedway is the home track for Late Model mainstay Danny Benedict. The 27-year-old from Orono has many more laps in his career at Sunset Speedway, even though it's a nearly-two-hour haul for the #54 team.

Benedict bookended his 2023 campaign with victories at each facility. In May he triumphed in the season opener for the APC United Late Model Series at Sunset for his first series win. Nearly five months later came his other trip to the winner's circle, in the main event of Peterborough's annual APC Autumn Colours Classic.

Those times between the wins were not that terrific for Benedict. After two more podiums to start his APC tour pursuits put him in the series' early points lead, the bottom seemed to fall out with a pair of DNFs and some other mediocre days. He slipped to seventh in the final standings for the Pro Late Model tour, and he needed a boost to send him into the off-season.

"This certainly made it a lot better," Benedict said. "We just ran into a bunch of bad luck. We figured we were pretty good here, even though I haven't really raced here much in Late Models; we won quite a few four-cylinder races when I was a kid."

Fueling his optimism for this Classic, also sponsored by KOD Disposal and next year's Motorama show, was the fact that he finished third in the 2022 event. He was never lower than second in this edition, which at 167 laps was Ontario's longest Late Model race this season.

Benedict paced the first 86 laps before the halfway break. Race-long runner-up Treyten Lapceвич zipped around him on the next restart, but Benedict regained the point less than 20 laps later and enjoyed some green-flag time in the second half.

"I just set him up off turn two and drove under him," Benedict said. "After that I could drive away from him. We had four or five restarts, and I managed to clear him on every one."

The final margin of victory was .78



Melissa Smits/OneNine Marketing

Danny Benedict (right) led the last 60 laps for the victory in the Pro Late Model headliner at the APC Autumn Colours Classic. He finished almost a second ahead of Treyten Lapceвич (center), while Gord Shepherd (left) was another tick back in third.

second for Benedict, whose McColl Racing Enterprises chassis is sponsored by North Country Property Maintenance, Mobil 1, GTA Fabrication, Epic Racewear, Groupe Theetge, Flatheads Designs, B&W Enterspises, Baudo Auto Service, Dan McHattie Race Cars, Annie's Quilt Shop and Sam Ester Welding Supply. The multi-car battles were from third on back in the race, delayed a week by rain; Gord Shepherd wound up on the podium after James Horner and Ryan Kimball each spent time in that position.

Electric City 167 presented by Auto Parts Centres and Toronto Motorama: 1. Danny Benedict; 2. Treyten Lapceвич; 3. Gord Shepherd; 4.

Lane Zardo; 5. Bobby Cousineau; 6. Brandt Graham; 7. Coltin Everingham; 8. Paul Maltese; 9. James Horner; 10. Jacob Mercer; 11. Gary Hannah; 12. Sean Walker; 13. Norm Stoddard; 14. Ryan Kimball; 15. Jassen Whyte; 16. Jonah

Bell; 17. Tyler Junkin; 18. Gary Elliott; 19. Josh Gruntz. Lap leaders: Benedict 1-86, Lapceвич 87-103, Benedict 104-167 • Cautions: 9 • Fast qualifier (of 21 drivers): Benedict, 13.555 seconds



GSR Asphalt

Treyten Lapceвич finished second in a guest appearance driving dirt and pavement veteran Glenn Styres' car at Peterborough, Ontario.