After taking three races off after the halfway point of the ARCA Racing Series presented by Menards season and effectively removing himself from championship contention, Tom Hessert's goal was simple: Win.

That's just what Hessert did in the Kentuckiana Ford Dealers ARCA Fall Classic presented by Federated Car Care at Salem Speedway, leading the final 78 laps for his second ARCA victory.

Hessert (No. 52 Federated Auto Parts Chevrolet) was excited to win not only in a race supported by his primary sponsor, but also at such a historic track. He made clean start after clean start on restarts as the race wound down.

"I'm really into the history of our sport and hearing all about Salem and all of the guys who raced here, I'm glad I got to be one of the guys to go to Victory Lane here," Hessert said. "The track just kind of worked out for us. We were all on the right tires at the right time. I knew if we could maintain with whoever was behind us for the first 10 laps (of a run), we could eventually inch away and that's the way it ultimately worked out for us. Federated's been our sponsor for the year, so it's really, really cool."

Chris Buescher (No. 17 Roulo Brothers Racing Ford) edged Chase Elliott (No. 9 Aaron's Dream Machine/HendrickCars.com Chevrolet) in the final laps to finish second. Buescher extended his points lead to 85 over Frank Kimmel (No. 44 Ansell/Menards Toyota) - who finished fourth but did not lead laps - and won the Bill France Four Crown Award by 40 points. The Bill France Four Crown includes four races, one on each type of track that the series competes on in a given year: speedway, short track, road course, and dirt track.

Elliott won his first career Menards Pole Award presented by Ansell, but Buescher stormed by him at the start and led the first 47 laps. Buescher, though, was collected in a Lap 48 accident when another car spun in front of him. He received significant rear damage, and several other top-10 contenders were tied up as well.

ARCA officials threw a red flag, and when cars began to roll again, Elliott took the lead on Lap 48 and Buescher drove to pit road for repairs. With Kimmel rising to second while Buescher languished outside of the top 10, Buescher's 70-point lead atop the series standings entering the race appeared to be in jeopardy.

Elliott led through two more caution periods, looking every bit the contender who had finished in the top 10 in each of his first five ARCA starts. But after the race's fourth caution, Frank Kimmel II (No. 09 Motor Honey/Casite.com Ford) started to charge at his home track.

Kimmel II quickly made up the deficit and passed Elliott on Lap 89 and extended his lead to nearly two seconds as the race approached its halfway point. On Lap 97, though, Hessert passed Elliott for second, and started to move in on Kimmel II.

A caution bunched up the field, and on the Lap 123 restart, Hessert made the decisive move of the race and drove by Kimmel II, who led off of pit road. Hessert made clean restarts on Lap 146 and 153 green flags and held leads of under one second for most of the end of the race. With 20 laps to go in the 200-lap event, Elliott had moved back to second. He drove one position ahead of Buescher, who had rebounded after making several pit stops, taking continued repairs, and using a fair amount of championship resolve.

Buescher drove by Elliott for second before the finish, but their battle in the waning laps helped Hessert cruise ahead to a large lead in front of them. Kimmel, determined not to lose too much ground in the championship pursuit, drove to fourth. Alex Bowman (No. 22 St. Jude Children's

Research Hospital Dodge), who earlier in the day made his NASCAR Nationwide Series debut at Chicagoland Speedway and then flew to Salem Speedway, advanced to fifth.

Hessert crossed the start/finish line on Lap 200 with a 2.976-second win, ahead of Buescher, Elliott, Frank Kimmel, Bowman, Mingus, Kimmel II, Brennan Poole (No. 25 Venturini Motorsports Chevrolet), Gallagher, and Matt Lofton (No. 16 Strutmasters.com Chevrolet).

Seven cautions slowed the race for 41 laps. The race finished in one hour, 36 minutes, and four seconds, at an average speed of 69.319 mph.

BAYER AND BAYENS

BIG GAS WINNERS

Brian Bayer of Birdseye, Ind., driving a car owned by Chad Hall, led flag-to-flag in winning the Federated Auto Parts 50 for the Lucas Oil Great American Stocks. The victory was Bayer's second of the season.

David Bayens, who was locked in a tight battle for the 2012 season championship with Louisville's Shawn Smith, finished in second place and that was good enough to secure the title, the second consecutive for the Memphis, Ind., driver.

Smith, who entered the race leading the point standings by two, finished third in the 50 lapper and dropped to second in the final season standings, four points behind Bayens (483-479). Bayer ended up third in the standings (470).

Kyle Hadley and Todd Kempf rounded out the top five in the Federated Auto Parts 50, with Shannon Beckham, Justin Trinkle, Jerry Norris, Roger Williams and Eric Books making up the second five in that order.

Racing returns to Salem Speedway on Saturday and Sunday, October 27th and 28th, as the Smoker Friendly Discount Tobacco Halloween 200 closes out the 2012 racing season at the famed facility.