

Midwest 150 Saturday at Salem Speedway

Written by George Browning
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Championship late model racing takes center stage at Salem Speedway Fueled by the Hoosier Lottery on Saturday night, as the JEGS/CRA All-Stars Tour makes its inaugural visit to the high banks for the Touchstone Energy Midwest 150 presented by Focus Eyewear.

The JEGS/CRA All-Stars Tour is one of the fastest growing stockcar series in the nation, featuring teams and drivers from throughout the U.S. and Canada.

“We’re certainly excited about hosting the JEGS/CRA Tour at Salem Speedway Fueled by the Hoosier Lottery,” said track general manager Richard Deaton. “Over the past few years we’ve watched this series grow in stature while showcasing some of the top young drivers in the nation.”

The JEGS/CRA All-Stars Tour “young guns” will undoubtedly garner their share of attention at Salem, but it could be a track veteran that grabs the post race headlines.

Former Salem Speedway Fueled by the Hoosier Lottery late model and CRA Super Series champion Chuck Barnes Jr. has filed an entry for the upcoming event. The second-generation driver, who has recorded 11 career late model wins at Salem, finished second to Chase Elliott earlier this season at Lebanon (Mo.) I-44 Speedway.

Barnes can expect plenty of competition at Salem from the likes of 17-year-old Cody Coughlin of Delaware, Ohio, who has assembled an all-star crew, including former Dale Earnhardt Sr. crew chief

Kevin Hamlin, to oversee his JEGS Chevrolet race team.

Other top drivers expected include Landon Cling of Tempe, Ariz., who drives for Scott Neal Racing the defending JEGS/CRA championship team; former ASA competitor Brent Downey of Brownsburg, Ind., and Michigan’s Brandon Hermiller, nephew of former ARCA Racing Series star Tim Steele.

Adding to the Kentuckiana flavor of the event will be Jeff “Dr. J” Berg of Louisville, Corey Deuser of Lanesville, Ind., Jerrod Foley of Williamsburg, Ky., and Hunter Baize of Bremen, Ky.

Through four point races this season, the JEGS/CRA All-Stars Tour produced four different winners as Elliott won at I-44 Speedway, Chad Finley at Columbus (Ohio) Speedway, Coughlin at Michigan’s Dixie Motor Speedway and Travis Braden at Berlin (Mich.) Raceway.

According to JEGS/CRA All-Stars Tour officials a full field of 24 plus late models are expected for the 100-lap main event on Saturday evening.

POINT BATTLES HEAT UP IN SALEM DIVISIONS

Joining the JEGS/CRA All-Stars Tour at Salem Speedway Fueled by the Hoosier Lottery will be the Lucas Oil Great American Stocks (GAS), the O’Reilly Auto Parts Pure Stocks and the Portland Recycling Front Wheel Drive Stocks.

David Bayens of Memphis, Ind., and Brian Bayer of Birdseye, Ind., remain locked in a tight battle for the top spot in the Lucas Oil Great American Stock standings heading into the Focus Eyewear 50. Bayens, who has won the first two races of the season, leads Bayer, the second place finisher in both races, by just five points (208-203).

Todd Kempf (192) of Huntinburg, Ind., Kyle Hadley (180) of Louisville, and Roger Williams (180) of St. Paul, Ind., round out the top five in the GAS standings.

In another tight race, Travis Rogers of Charlestown tops Mike Kestler of Louisville (309-303) in the O’Reilly Auto Parts Pure Stock division. Louisville area drivers, Greg Smith (293), Ethan Dunn (278), Kenneth Shake (265) and Ken Sumner (265) fill the next four positions in the current standings.

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Defending track champion Austin Baum of Shepherdsville, Ky. shows the way in the Portland Recycling Front Wheel Drive division, leading Chris Maynard of Louisville by 13 points (212-199). Jason Adams of Louisville (185), James Blanchard of Louisville (172) and Brian Troxell of Louisville (166) round out the top five in the standings.

HOOSIER LOTTERY NIGHT AT THE TRACK

The Touchstone Energy Midwest 150 presented by Focus Eyewear has been designated Hoosier Lottery Night at the track.

“This is the first of two Hoosier Lottery Nights planned for the speedway in 2013,” said Deaton. “The Hoosier Lottery has a passion for delivering fun and entertainment at venues it visits, so we’re excited about the upcoming event at Salem.”

The Hoosier Lottery trailer will be on site with special ticket and prize giveaways. In addition the first 1,000 spectators, age 18 and over, through the ticket gate on Saturday will receive a free Hoosier Lottery scratch-off ticket.

With every \$5 purchase at the Hoosier Lottery trailer race fans will get to spin the prize wheel for lots of fun Hoosier Lottery tickets and prizes.

SHORT NOTICE BAND TO PROVIDE PRE-RACE ENTERTAINMENT

Pre-race festivities kick-off on Saturday night with The Short Notice Band providing musical entertainment in the Lowe’s Zone, situated behind the main grandstand, from 5 to 6:30 p.m. The Short-Notice Band plays a combination of classic rock and country tunes.

Spectator gates open at 3:30 p.m., with practice getting underway at 3:30, qualifications at 6:00 and the first race at 7:15 p.m. (EDT).

Tickets are currently selling for the Touchstone Energy Midwest 150 presented by Focus Eyewear and may be purchased on-line at www.salemspeedway.com or by calling 883-6504 or toll free 1-888-246-7223. Advance general admission tickets are priced at \$14 for adults with advance reserved seat tickets \$19 each. Advance children’s tickets (age 7-12) are \$3 each. Kids, age 6 and under, are admitted free when accompanied by an adult.