

New Englander David Gravel Wins 52nd Williams Grove Speedway National Open
Connecticut driver nets \$50,000 with prestigious, first ever Grove win over outlaws!

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Mechanicsburg – Williams Grove Speedway graduate David Gravel scored the biggest win of his career on Saturday night at the track when he took victory in the 52nd annual World of Outlaws National Open for sprint cars, worth \$50,000.

The Connecticut native started on the pole of the field for the 40-lap National Open after the 55-car field was narrowed down to 28 starters.

Lucas Wolfe flanked Gravel for the start.

Sixth starter Stevie Smith moved into fourth with five laps down while Gravel held sway followed by Wolfe and Dale Blaney.

Blaney was applying heavy pressure to Wolfe for second and the pair was racing closely together for the spot when Smith locked fast to the inside lane and made an exciting two car pass in the second turn to blast from fourth to second.

Smith was closing in on Gravel as both men worked lapped traffic when the races first caution flag unfurled with 15 laps away, slowing the pace for the first time.

Gravel chose the inside lane for the double file restart and beat Smith off of the bottom to lead the field down the frontchute followed by Wolfe, Blaney and defending outlaws champion Daryn Pittman.

Smith raced in the leader's shadow for the next several laps, unable to get enough drive to complete a pass of Gravel and the front runners again entered the backmarkers with 15 laps to go.

Then a final yellow flag bunched the field with 13 laps to go as Greg Hodnett rolled to a stop in the first corner, slowing the pace for the caution before the yellow turned to red for refueling.

Gravel again chose the inside groove for the restart with Smith on the outside in second, Blaney in third and five-time Open winner Donny Schatz, who started seventh, now up to fourth.

Smith pounced on the restart, following Gravel thorough the first and second turns before diving low in turns three and four to drive up off of the fourth corner with the lead as lap 28 was scored.

And then just as Smith had done earlier in the race, chasing Gravel virtually nose to tail around the track, Gravel did the same thing with Smith.

Lap after lap and inside the final 10 circuits, Smith crossed the finish line with Gravel glued to his rear bumper, trying to make his way to the \$50,000 checkered flag.

But disaster struck Smith just after the pair completed the 33rd tour as the leaders set their mounts into the first turn.

Smith seemingly spun his car in front of the field as he broke low to run across the bottom of the track while Gravel broke high, wide and handsome up against the fence for a run through the turns.

But Smith never stopped his car, instead completing a 360-degree spin as the field took evasive action to avoid contact.

As such with Smith moving away although getting passed by numerous cars, a yellow flag was avoided and the benefactor of Smith's spin was Schatz, who had been racing third since the last restart.

Schatz took over second by virtue of the Smith spin and began chomping into Gravel's advantage.

However lapped cars during the races final three circuits helped keep Schatz at bay as the North Dakota pilot needed a clear inside lane in order to make his attempts at snaring the top spot from Gravel work.

With Schatz's runs somewhat thwarted by the slower traffic running the middle to bottom grooves, Gravel was able to sneak away to the prestigious victory, which turned out to also be his first ever at the historic Cumberland County oval.

Immediately upon climbing out of his Roth No. 83 sprint car, Gravel began apologizing to Smith.

"It really sucks that I got into the back of Stevie," Gravel revealed of apparent contact with leader Smith.

"I feel really, really bad, it takes away (from) the win."

"I just got him good enough and got him sideways. I'm sorry to all you fans."

"I wished we coulda' raced it out," Gravel said.

"I'm just ashamed that I hit him."

Then along came second place finisher Schatz to the microphone, who put a different spin on the situation when asked what he saw of the contact and what he thought when he saw it.

"I probably shouldn't say," Schatz said.

"You have that racin' with the 83 I guess from time to time. He came out on the good side tonight."

Pittman rode home third at the finish, noting that he didn't feel bad behind the wheel but that he struggled to make anything happen during the entire event.

Blaney finished fourth with eighth starter Lance Dewease driving up to fifth.

Sixth through 10th went to Shane Stewart, Danny Dietrich, Brad Sweet, Stevie Smith and Alan Krimes, who started 28th.

Heats went to Stewart, Dewease, Schatz, Craig Dollansky and Danny Holtgraver,

Curt Michael claimed the C Main, Doug Esh took the B Main and Gravel won the dash to earn the pole for the Open.

Fast time was set by Pittman with a lap of 16.883 seconds.

October 4, 2014 Feature Finishes:

410 sprints, 40 laps: 1. David Gravel, 2. Donny Schatz, 3. Daryn Pittman, 4. Dale Blaney, 5. Lance Dewease, 6. Shane Stewart, 7. Danny Dietrich, 8. Brad Sweet, 9. Stevie Smith, 10. Alan Krimes, 11. Craig Dollansky, 12. Paul McMahan, 13. Lucas Wolfe, 14. Brent Marks, 15. Kerry Madsen, 16. Danny Holtgraver, 17. Tim Shaffer, 18. Cody Darrah, 19. Logan Schuchart, 20. Joey Saldana, 21. Dave Blaney, 22. Jason Sides, 23. Kraig Kinser, 24. Brian Montieth, 25. Greg Hodnett, 26. Steve Kinser, 27. Doug Esh, 28. Don Kreitz Jr.

DNQ: Justin Henderson, Gerard McIntyre Jr., Rodney Westhafer, Steve Buckwalter, Ryan Wilson, Nicole Bower, Cory Haas, JJ Grasso, Glenndon Forsythe, Tim Glatfelter, Jacob Allen, Brian Paulus, RJ Johnson, Troy Fraker, Ryan Bohlke, Lynton Jeffrey, Brock Zearfoss, Aaron Ott, Austin Hogue, Nicki Young, Pat Cannon, Ryan Smith, Curt Michael, Justin Barger, Logan Wagner, Ryan Taylor, Adam Wilt