

Kicking Up the Dirt – WSS Round 7 and Australian Open – Night 2

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Last night Donny Schatz concluded his 2014-2015 Australian tour with his sixth consecutive win at AusDeck Patios Archerfield Speedway, taking out Round Seven of World Series Sprintcars, and his eighth Australian Open, lapping up to and including 10th place in a very strong 20-car field. It was a clean sweep for Schatz on this tour, remaining undefeated during his six appearances, and while Kerry Madsen, who led the first fifteen laps of the A-Main event, was the best positioned Australian to try beat Schatz to the line, but Schatz proved too strong. Madsen faded slightly as the race wore on and it was with James McFadden and Jamie Veal both having beautiful runs to round out the podium. Kerry Madsen finished fourth ahead of Brad Sweet in fifth.

With qualifying completed on Friday night it was straight into the heat events last night with Matt Egel and Queenslander Peter Lack sharing the front row for the start of heat seven. The first attempted start was aborted, officials deeming Egel to have jumped the start and warning that a second offence would see him placed at the rear of the field. Second time around and the leading pair raced side-by-side across the line and into turn one. Lack pulled ahead a little as they exited turn one and while Egel fought valiantly on the low line, Lack managed to secure the race lead as they rounded turn two. Danny Holtgraver, Brooke Tatnell and Daryl Clayden had a close battle over the minor places, and managed to pull slightly ahead of the rest of the field. Clayden soon dropped back a couple of car lengths, leaving Holtgraver and Tatnell to argue over third, while at the front of the field Egel was biding his time. Just a few laps into the race Egel saw his opportunity and made it look easy as he slipped underneath Lack through turn two to steal the lead. Lack tried to stay with him but Egel quickly built a small margin over his rival, while further back in the field Ian Madsen and Donny Schatz were racing wheel-to-wheel for several laps before Madsen cemented his position in front and set out after Kyle Hirst. Matt Egel went on to take the win ahead of Peter Lack, with Danny Holtgraver across the line in third. Brooke Tatnell finished in fourth and led Daryl Clayden, Kyle Hirst, Ian Madsen, Donny Schatz, Tim Kaeding, Brad Sweet, David Whell, Kevin Titman and Trent Pigdon home.

Heat eight started with Davey Heskin from pole position and Andrew Wright alongside. Heskin got the jump when the green flag flew, quickly settling into the race lead. Wright tried to challenge but was forced on the defensive by a very hard charging David Murcott, while further back in the field Bryan Mann had moved to the high line to run around the outside of Jason Sides. James McFadden was also on the high line, coming from the rear of the field, and working on a way past Steven Lines. McFadden then set his sight on Jason Sides, but instantly came under fire from both Lines and Jamie Veal. Meanwhile, at the front of the field David Murcott had not only made his way into second and closed in on Heskin and the race lead, but was putting all kinds of pressure on Heskin. Murcott was relentless on the low line but ultimately could not stop Heskin out in front. Davey Heskin, who nearly didn't make the show as car owner Brodie Tulloch fell ill and spent the day in hospital, went on to take the win ahead of David Murcott,

Andrew Wright, Robbie Farr, Bryan Mann, Jason Sides, Steven Lines, Jamie Veal, James McFadden, Lee Nash and Darren Jensen.

Heat nine was an action-packed affair that started with Callum Zizek and Daniel Harding from the front row, with Danny Reidy and Brent Aprile right behind. Zizek and Harding raced side-by-side into the opening corner with Harding securing the lead by the time they entered turn two. Zizek settled into second with Brent Aprile third while Luke Oldfield took to the high line to try for a spectacular outside pass on Danny Reidy. Unfortunately Reidy drifted up track, making contact with Oldfield and sending him hard into the wall coming out of turn two. Oldfield inverted the NQ17 racer down the back straight and as the rest of the field took evasive action, both Brent Kaeding and Andrew Liebke were caught with nowhere to go. Kaeding, despite making heavy contact with the upside-down Oldfield, was able to keep his U69 racer moving, and while Oldfield was able to walk away from the wreck, both he and Liebke were out of the race. A full restart followed with Zizek and Harding still leading the field to the green. Again the leading pair drag-raced side-by-side into turn one with Zizek this time emerging in front and Harding settling into second ahead of Brent Aprile as Donny Reidy and Brent Kaeding argued over the minor places. Unfortunately the race was barely one lap old when Zizek spun the T22 racer entering turn two, leaving Harding nowhere to go. Contact between the two saw Harding flip into turn two, with Paul Morris also caught up as the field took evasive action. Zizek restarted at the rear of the field while Harding was unable to restart and Morris was relegated to the infield, officials deeming his car too damaged to continue and issuing him with a mechanical defect. Brent Aprile inherited the lead with nine laps still to run, the North Queensland based racer quickly opened a small lead over Danny Reidy and Brent Kaeding, while further back in the field Brent Kratzmann and Andrew Scheuerle raced wheel-to-wheel as Scheuerle tried to find a way past. Kerry Madsen began making his way forward, spending several laps chasing Danny Reidy before eventually getting past on the outside as they raced out of turn four and down the main straight towards the chequered flag. Brent Aprile took the win, with Kerry Madsen, who had initially started from position ten, across the line in second, beating Danny Reidy by just 0.24 seconds. Brent Kaeding finished fourth and led Andrew Scheuerle, Brent Kratzmann, Dave Fanning and Callum Zizek across the line. Daniel Harding, Paul Morris, Luke Oldfield and Andrew Liebke all failed to finish the event.

Andrew Wright and Matt Egel shared the front row for the start of heat ten and while they raced side-by-side into turn one, it was Wright who managed to secure the race lead. Egel stayed with him, running the high side and keeping the pressure on, while David Murcott tried the bottom as he challenged the leaders for position. Further back in the field though Daryl Clayden spun the W45 racer right in front of Brad Ayers, Ian Madsen and Tim Kaeding as they entered turn four. Ayers clipped the front end of Clayden and headed towards the wall, leaving Kaeding no where to go and contact between the pair followed. Meanwhile Ian Madsen turned the T10 around a full 360 degrees as he tried to avoid Clayden, pausing perfectly as he got the car facing the right direction once again and drove away from the incident, slipping underneath Kaeding as Kaeding climbed over the right rear of Ayers. Both Ayers and Clayden were out of the

race, though neither driver was injured, with both Madsen and Kaeding restarting the event. Andrew Wight led the restart from Matt Egel and David Murcott with nine laps still to run. Wright got a brilliant start and opened a comfortable lead as soon as the race resumed, while Egel held a comfortable second as the battle for third raged just behind him. David Murcott, Brooke Tatnell and Robbie Farr argued over position, with Jamie Veal slipping underneath Farr when the latter ran too wide through turn four. Steven Lines joined the fight, while at the rear of the field Madsen battled with Kaeding and Brad Sweet. Madsen soon faded, struggling with a poorly handling car, leaving Kaeding and Sweet to battle, while at the front of the field Tatnell was all over the back of Matt Egel, with Jamie Veal closing in fast. Andrew Wright went on to take the win ahead of Matt Egel, Brooke Tatnell, Jamie Veal, David Murcott, Robbie Farr and Steven Lines. Brad Sweet and Tim Kaeding crossed the line almost side-by-side, Sweet securing eighth by just 0.132 seconds, with Kaeding home in ninth and Ian Madsen limping the T10 home in tenth. Daryl Clayden and Brad Ayers failed to finish the event.

Heat eleven started with Peter Lack from pole and Tasmanian Callum Zizek alongside. Lack got the jump on the start and started opening a small lead, while Danny Reidy tried to run the high line around Zizek. Danny Holtgraver tried to run underneath both Zizek and Reidy in turn one, but contact with Zizek was enough to turn Holtgraver sideways and start a spectacular barrel roll into turn two. The rest of the field took evasive action, with David Whell, Brent Kratzmann and Paul Morris trying to sneak past Holtgraver on the top side, only for Kratzmann to run over the front end of Morris, with Dave Fanning also caught up and Andrew Scheuerle on his side in turn one. Holtgraver and Scheuerle were both out of the event, while Fanning restarted at the rear of the field and Lack and Zizek led the field around for a full restart. Lack again got the best start while Danny Reidy put the challenge to Zizek in search of second place. Donny Schatz began to work his way forward, making his way past both Kratzmann and David Whell in quick succession, and had started putting the pressure on Kyle Hirst when the race was brought under caution. Brent Kratzmann had spun in turn one, having been trying for an inside passing move on David Whell, leaving Dave Fanning and Paul Morris nowhere to go. Peter Lack led the restart with seven laps left to run and pulled away from the field, while mid-field Kyle Hirst and Donny Schatz exchanged positions several times as the race wore on. Peter Lack went on to take the win, with Callum Zizek hanging on to finish second and led Danny Reidy, Kyle Hirst, Donny Schatz, Paul Morris, David Whell and Trent Pigdon across the line. Brent Kratzmann, Dave Fanning, Danny Holtgraver and Andrew Scheuerle all failed to finish the 10-lap journey.

The twelfth and final heat of the weekend got under way with Daniel Harding and Davey Heskin from the front row and Brent Aprile and Lee Nash close behind. Harding got the jump on the start with Heskin quickly settling into second but with Aprile really putting the pressure on. Mid-field Nash, Brent Kaeding and Jason Sides raced three-wide through turn two, while Kerry Madsen and James McFadden resumed their battle from the feature event on Friday night. Madsen had the advantage as he tried to keep McFadden behind him while also searching for a way past Nash, but McFadden was smooth and

relentless as he used every inch of the racing surface to try to find a way past Madsen. Once both Madsen and McFadden had made their way past Nash, things really started to heat up, as they chased down Jason Sides, with McFadden able to slip underneath Madsen as they exited turn four and raced down the main straight. Sides was searching for a way past Brent Kaeding but things came undone in turn three with Sides spinning slightly on the bottom before getting airborne, almost hesitating for a split second on his right rear tyre, poised in a vertical position, before falling somewhat gently up-side-down, the front end of the S7 racer resting softly on the inside wall of turn four. A determined Sides restarted at the rear of the field as Harding and Heskin led the restart with three laps left to run. James McFadden took to the highline immediately through turns one and two, before switching to the bottom to try and get underneath Kaeding. Kaeding however fought back and the pair nearly came to disaster as they raced down the back straight, with McFadden finally getting the job done on the high line a lap later. Daniel Harding took the win ahead of Davey Heskin with Brent Aprile in third. James McFadden ran the highline and crossed the line side-by-side with Luke Oldfield, McFadden securing fourth by just 0.102 seconds. Oldfield finished fifth and led Brent Kaeding, Kerry Madsen, Bryan Mann, Lee Nash, Darren Jensen, Andrew Liebke and Jason Sides across the line.

Brad Ayers and Kevin Titman pulled out of the C-Main event leaving just five cars to contest eight laps, with the top two to transfer to the back of a very tough B-main field. Tim Kaeding and Dave Fanning started from the front row, with Darren Jensen and Trent Pigdon close behind and Andrew Liebke rounding out the field. Kaeding got the jump on the start with Fanning initially settling into second before Jensen slipped underneath as they rounded turn four on the first lap. Fanning fought back hard for a couple of laps but Jensen soon opened a small but comfortable margin, leaving Fanning to battle with Pigdon and Liebke at the rear of the field. Tim Kaeding took the win with Darren Jensen in second, the pair transferring to the B-Main, with Trent Pigdon, Dave Fanning and Andrew Liebke rounding out the field.

The Shootouts were next on the track, with the top eight qualifiers to contest the Bronze, Silver and Gold Shootout events. The Bronze Shootout was first up, with qualifiers five to eight hitting the track for three quick qualifying laps. Andrew Scheuerle impressed with a 12.671 second lap the fastest of the shootout, while James McFadden stopped the clock at 12.729 seconds and would transfer to the Silver Shootout with Scheuerle. Jamie Veal and Brent Kaeding would start the A-Main event from positions seven and eight respectively.

Kyle Hirst and Steven Lines joined Andrew Scheuerle and James McFadden on track for the Silver Shootout. James McFadden this time topped the order with a 12.503 second lap, with Steven Lines second quickest and advancing with McFadden to the Gold Shootout. Kyle Hirst and Andrew Scheuerle had secured fifth and sixth starting positions in the A-Main event.

The Gold Shootout got under way with Kerry Madsen and Donny Schatz joining James McFadden and Steven Lines on the track. Kerry Madsen managed to upstage Donny Schatz, securing the fastest time, a 12.408 second lap and lock

into pole position for the A-Main event. Schatz was close behind, stopping the clock at 12.470, just 0.062 seconds slower than Madsen. James McFadden and Steven Lines would share the second row of the starting line-up for the A-Main event.

Eighteen cars rolled out for the start of the twenty-lap B-Main event. It was a quality field, with any of the eighteen starters more than capable of winning any feature event in the country if luck was on their side. David Murcott started from pole position, with Brooke Tatnell alongside, with Bryan Mann and Danny Reidy out of row two. Murcott got the jump on the start and Tatnell settled briefly into second, while Bryan Mann secured third ahead of Danny Reidy. Luke Oldfield ran the high line as he searched for a way around Ian Madsen and Davey Heskin who were battling on the low line, while Paul Morris began trying to climb his way through the field. Madsen managed to slip underneath Reidy and set his sights on Mann, while Oldfield persisted on the high line. At the front of the field Tatnell slipped by Murcott in lapped traffic, taking control of the race, with Bryan Mann, Ian Madsen and Danny Reidy in hot pursuit. Both Oldfield and Jason Sides were coming on strong, while back at the front Murcott was again challenging Tatnell for the lead in thick lapped traffic. The race ran twenty laps without incident, with Brooke Tatnell taking the win ahead of David Murcott, Ian Madsen and Bryan Mann, with Jason Sides and Danny Reidy also making the transfer to the A-Main event. Luke Oldfield only narrowly missed a transfer position, crossing the line in seventh and leading Brent Kratzmann, Tim Kaeding, Davey Heskin, Danny Holtgraver, Paul Morris, Daniel Harding, Callum Zizek, Daryl Clayden, Lee Nash, David Whell and Darren Jensen across the line.

The star-studded A-Main event rolled out onto the track with a quality field of twenty cars set to contest a gruelling 50-lap journey. Donny Schatz had undoubtedly been the man to beat all weekend, and combined with his history of dominance in this event, having won it seven times previously, he was certainly the hot favourite to again stand atop the podium. Having won the Shootout event, Kerry Madsen had Australian hopes well and truly alive, with Madsen being in truly magnificent form and proving to be the best Australian chance at beating Schatz to the chequered flag. A challenge was also highly possible from James McFadden or Steven Lines, two of the best Australian competitors on the scene and sharing the second row right behind Madsen and Schatz. Madsen got a brilliant start and quickly secured the race lead, with Schatz in second. Schatz took to the highline through turn two, securing the lead by the time they rounded turn three, only for Madsen to slip straight back underneath in turn four. Schatz had a look on the inside of Madsen as they exited turn two but couldn't quite get the job done, with Madsen hanging on to the lead as chaos unfolded at the back of the field. Robbie Farr seemed to slow a little heading down the back straight and David Murcott came off the bottom of the track coming out of turn two, with Murcott running over the front end of the Q7 racer of Farr. With the front end ripped from the Q7 racer, Farr was launched into an end-to-end roll down the back straight. Farr was not injured in the incident but both he and Murcott were out of the race.

Kerry Madsen led the restart from Donny Schatz and James McFadden with 49 laps still to run. Madsen continued to lead, with Schatz biding his time, patiently waiting for the right opportunity, while further back in the field Jamie Veal and Brad Sweet were impressive on the high line as they began to make their way closer to the front. Brent Aprile and Ian Madsen battled deep in the field, as Brooke Tatnell, Bryan Mann and Danny Reidy all tried to make their way forward from the rear of the field. Two very distinctive racing lines made for a brilliant race, with the bottom proving fruitful for some, while others preferred the cushion, which was literally only centimetres from the wall. The leaders approached lapped traffic, with Schatz edging his way ever closer to Madsen until he finally made his move, sliding underneath Madsen as if he were standing still as they rounded turns one and two. Madsen fought back hard but a small mistake cost him ground and he soon found James McFadden right on his tail. McFadden ran the highline, with Madsen on the bottom, spending just a few laps chasing him down and completing a beautiful outside passing move on Madsen through turn four to steal second. Madsen again fought back hard, the pair often two abreast over the next few laps, with Madsen occasionally getting his nose just in front, only for McFadden to race back ahead on the high side. Madsen lost ground when a lapped car on the bottom forced him to change lines through turn four, and while Madsen chased after McFadden, the NQ25 racer had opened a small margin. Madsen also had a very hard charging Jamie Veal on his tail, as further back in the field Ian Madsen and Andrew Scheuerle exchanged positions several times. Danny Reidy and Bryan Mann put on a great show deep in the field, running wheel-to-wheel and swapping positions several times as Donny Schatz systematically and calmly worked his way through lapped traffic. James McFadden was a solid second while Kerry Madsen and Jamie Veal put on a truly spectacular show for race fans. Once in the lead of the race Schatz simply ran away from the field, never seriously challenged for his position, with the only really hairy moment coming in the final stages of the race, when he slammed the main straight wall hard while attempting a big outside passing move on Andrew Scheuerle that would put the Queensland Champion a lap down. Schatz waited patiently, watching his rival and finally sweeping around the outside of Scheuerle with just half a lap remaining. There is simply no denying that Donny Schatz is an absolute master at AusDeck Patios Archerfield Speedway, taking the win and clean sweeping six wins from six race meetings on this Australian tour. It is the eighth time Schatz has won this event, again taking home the \$20,000 winners cheque. James McFadden was impressive as the first Australian home, crossing the line in second with Jamie Veal having an inspiring run to finish third and round out the podium, the Australian boys certainly impressing in a very tough field. In an event that ran 49 laps without a stoppage, early race leader Kerry Madsen managed to cross the line in fourth ahead of Brad Sweet, while Jason Sides was perhaps the biggest mover of the race, finishing in sixth after initially transferring from the B-Main Event. Sides had a less than desirable run through qualifying and the heats and had started the B-Main from position fourteen before securing a transfer to the A-Main and starting from position nineteen. It was a breath-taking run to the front of an immensely talented field and one can only wonder how different the race could have been had Sides started the A-main from the front of the field. Steven Lines finished an impressive seventh in the A-Main event, with Brooke Tatnell, Kyle Hirst, Andrew

Scheuerle, Brent Kaeding, Ian Madsen, Danny Reidy, Peter Lack, Bryan Mann, Brent Aprile and Andrew Wright rounding out the finishers. Matt Egel pulled out of the event after only 34 laps with mechanical issues on the W53 racer, while both Robbie Farr and David Murcott exited the race after their contact on the second lap.

Sprintcars Queensland will now take several weeks off, returning to Toowoomba Speedbowl on Saturday 07 February 2015 before heading back to AusDeck Patios Archerfield Speedway on 21 February 2015. Some of our teams will be heading away over the coming weeks, with the Scott Darley Memorial happening in Sydney next weekend, and the Grand Annual Sprintcar Classic and several other prestigious events coming up on the national calendar. We wish those teams travelling to these events a safe and successful trip, on and off the racetrack. For all the fans – be sure to stop by and say hello to any or all of the Queensland teams (they love a chat) and be sure to cheer on your favourite. For those that have supported Sprintcars Queensland and our competitors at AusDeck Patios Archerfield Speedway over the past couple of weeks – we thank you for your support and we hope to see you all back trackside in February 2015!