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## **Wreckers to Checkers: SCoNE's Dan Douville at Canaan Dirt Speedway**

BY MARK McKEON

CANAAN, NH – After wrecking on Wednesday night during the Empire Super Sprints A-Main at Utica-Rome Speedway in Vernon, NY, Sprint Cars of New England hotshoe Dan Douville of Bridgewater, NH came roaring back to sweep the night at Canaan Dirt Speedway on Friday.

Wheeling the Coastal181.com/Amtech Tank Linings sponsored Sprint Car and starting 16th in the 19 car field, Douville abandoned his favorite territory on the outside groove and used the entire track from top to bottom to work through traffic.

“When we don’t wreck on the first lap, we seem to finish well,” Douville joked. “There really wasn’t a cushion tonight and the track was good all the way up. We took a lot of gear out for the feature and that allowed me to pull off the bottom a little better. Matt Robie ran a good race and it was good to see Mark Cole up there because he’s been struggling, but I think he found something a couple weeks ago and he’s going great. We had a fast car because all 7 of the guys who help me, pitched in to rebuild the front end after Utica.”

Multi-time Granite State Mini Sprints champ Matt Robie had the best run of his fledgling Sprint Car career, leading the 25 lap event for 18 circuits before Douville scooted by on the inside of turn two.

“I felt real good and the car was the best it’s been yet; I really want to thank everybody that helps out with the car,” said a smiling Robie. “Maybe if it wasn’t for the last caution I might have gotten the win, but Dan’s been doing this for a long time and he’s real good at it. That’s alright because we’ll be back again next time.”

Former SCoNE Champions Mark Cole of Lebanon, NH and Shawn Lawler of Mason, NH had strong runs, finishing third and fourth. Chad Dow of Campton, NH making only his fourth start of the year, blew off the cobwebs quickly and came from 19th to finish fifth.

All three caution flags were for trouble in turn three. On lap 3, racing veterans- but Sprint Car rookies -Jim Lowrey and Will Hull got together; on lap 9 Bruce Kimball spun, but executed a 360 and continued; on lap 14, Lacey Hanson’s car climbed the embankment supporting an infield light pole.

Douville and Robby Bodwell won the heat races, which both went green to checker.

The Sprint Cars of New England have a week off before their grueling and much anticipated Labor Day Weekend Triple Crown Series. Over Labor Day Weekend, they’ll be at Canaan Dirt Speedway on Friday, Bear Ridge Speedway on Saturday and Legion Speedway on Sunday, where they’ll headline the Open Cockpit Sunday Super Series.

SCoNE Feature (25 laps) 1. Dan Douville, Bridgewater, NH, 2. Matt Robie, Hill, NH, 3. Mark Cole, Lebanon, NH, 4. Shawn Lawler, Mason, NH, 5. Clay Dow, Campton, NH, 6. Chris Donnelly, Piermont, NH, 7. Kevin Chaffee, Fairlee, VT, 8. Andy Seuss, Hampstead, NH, 9. Tyler Rich, Pike, NH, 10. Jim Lowrey, Jr., Tilton, NH, 11. Jake Williams, Center Tuftonboro, NH, 12. Shawn Berry, Center Ossipee, NH, 13. Brandon Valley, Center Ossipee, NH, 14. Bruce Kimball, Lebanon, NH, 15. . Dylan Campbell, Southboro, MA, 16. Lacey Hanson, Orwell, VT,

17. Will Hull, East Montpelier, VT, 18. Bob Giuliani, Middeton, NH, 19. Robby Bodwell, Sanford, ME.

Notes: Douville and Chris Donnelly have been rivals for years, first in Stock Cars and more recently in Sprint Cars. They're locked in a tight points battle, which may go down to the final race of the season, as it did last year, when Donnelly emerged as the champ. But their rivalry ends at the finish line. Douville explains: "Chris Donnelly was the first person to call me on Thursday morning after we wrecked at Utica-Rome, to find out if we needed anything to be here. That says a lot about his character. Tonight, we found that the left front rotor was bent and I didn't have one, so he lent me one. Don't get me wrong, he wants to beat me and everybody else on the track, but he wants to do it on the track, not because somebody is stuck in the pits. I don't think he likes winning as much, if people have an excuse for losing."

Douville's wreck at Utica came on lap 14, when he had no place to go and clipped a car that had spun in turn one. Damage was significant. "We had to change the front axle, some radius rods, the drag link, tie rod, front spindle and hub, and the left front and left rear tires. We got home at 5:00 am Thursday morning and then I went to work. We worked on it until midnight Thursday and then I went to work on Friday and worked until 3:00 pm and we headed for the track. I didn't even have time to wash it; we just wiped it down by hand and called it even. We normally don't like to do that, we like to take our time and wash it, but we just had no time this week. Running with the ESS on the 5/8 mile was an educational experience for me, about the way the wind affects the wings at those higher speeds. I didn't realize how much down force it really applies, so we were bottoming the car out. We really didn't have the correct bars on it, we tried to adjust with some shocks and we adjusted the ride height, but it wasn't the way to go, we ended up being too tight in the feature and it would push the nose. If I flew it in, I was OK, but I was afraid I would wash up the track and wreck somebody, so we tried to play the attrition game, but unfortunately, we were part of the attrition. We had a good time, the ESS folks are a good bunch of guys, and Dean Reynolds is really on top of things."

Clay Dow spent all of Thursday night swapping out the engine in his Sprint Car, which blew when Dow was racing with the Empire Super Sprints at Lebanon Valley Speedway a few weeks ago. Dow bought Dalton Varney's car and pulled the engine from it. His fifth place finish was dramatic, especially considering he started nearly in the parking lot.... Mark Cole found a set-up error after the heat and hustled to reset the car during intermission.... after spending the day at an Open House at his business, Jim Lowrey Auto Restoration in Tilton, Lowrey had to re-block his car to adjust the ride height and cure a binding chassis... Shawn Berry's crew was among those who elected a gear change in the quick change rear end during intermission... Brandon Varney chased a pair of gremlins, a bent in/out lever cable during hot laps and a sticky throttle during the heat...Bob Giuliani was without the services of car owner Harvey Kage, but had a new crewmember- nephew Nathan Whitely of Haverhill, MA, a student at Whittier Tech... Douville's primary sponsor, Coastal181.com, also sponsors the car that Blake "Sideways" Shepard used to win the Modified race, which was only open to drivers who haven't won a Modified race in recent times. SCoNE driver Will Hull finished third.