

Turner holds off Sutcliff and Baley to win the Dutch Oven Grand Prix



Thursday June 3rd, 2010. Story by Ed Sutcliff

Season Three of the Red Sox Racing League's 2010 schedule brought 23 drivers back to the Zandvoort Grand Prix course for the 93 mile Dutch Oven Grand Prix. Last season's race at this track provided a very close finish, so fans arrived at the track with high hopes of seeing another competitive event. They were not disappointed. Les Turner proved why he was last season's points champion as he started on the pole and led every lap of the Dutch Oven GP. Turner never had a chance to enjoy the lead however, because the 2nd and 3rd place cars of Ed Sutcliff and Michael Baley filled his rear view mirror for the entire event. The three drivers would eventually finish the race within a second of each other.

Pre-race festivities again featured RSR driver Wilbur Gildersleeve signing autographs and taking pictures with fans at the city's nude beaches. The hugely popular driver from Georgia was treated like a hometown favorite by the enthusiastic crowd. Another crowd favorite, Divina Galica, provided fans with plenty of pre-race photo ops as she answered

questions about her 2nd place finish at the 1978 British Formula Grand Prix held at Zandvoort.

The Dutch Oven GP required drivers to navigate 35 laps over the 2.67 mile layout. Thirteen challenging corners forced league drivers to remain focused as the slightest loss of concentration usually meant a damaged car and an early end to the race.

Les Turner earned the pole with a qualifying lap of 1:35:428. Ed Sutcliff started second after posting a lap of 1:35:497. Barry Blocker started in 3rd with the only other sub-136 qual lap (1:35.917). Robert Magee began the race in 4th, while Scott Husted (5th), Jeff Thomas (6th), Michael Baley (7th), Wilbur Gildersleeve Jr (8th), Jim Albertson (9th), and Andrew Feldman (10th), filled out the first five rows. David Holzwarth, Chris Templin, Chad Tracy, Bill Hadden, Eric Porterfield, Kevin Kyle, Divina Galica, William Kabel, J. Paul Jones, Kermit Gentry, David Pyner, and Dennis Heaney completed the starting grid. An unexplained loss of power forced Terry McCuin to miss the grid.

Turner got a terrific start and out dueled Sutcliff for the inside position entering turn one. Blocker also got an impressive jump at the start and briefly made it two wide entering turn one. Hard driving by the field caused several incidents which forced nine drivers to pass or be passed before they got back to the start line to begin lap two. The 7th place car of Michael Baley managed to avoid danger while improving four spots to take third place on the first lap, a position he would not relinquish for the remainder of the event.

Damaged vehicles forced Pyner, Jones, Heaney, and Blocker to retire early. Additional mishaps forced Gentry and Kyle off the track midway through the event. Turner demonstrated his coolness under pressure as he held off Sutcliff and Baley as the lead pack navigated past damaged cars, accidents, and around slower traffic. The intense battle between the lead pack did not slow the drivers however, as they eventually drove away from the 4th and 5th place cars of Gildersleeve and Magee. Thomas and Husted kept pace with Magee until Husted brushed the wall hard enough to require repairs during a pit stop.



Thomas commented about the incident after the race. “We had some awesome racing from lap 1 to lap 30. Scott Husted and I were pushing each other hard as we traded positions several times. Scott finally lost it in the fence on lap 30. I hated to see him go as it sure was fun racing that hard through the event with him.”

Turner’s battle with Sutcliff and Baley produced exciting racing lap after lap. The drivers eventually finished the race within one second of each other as they gave fans around the course plenty of reason to cheer. All top three finishers finished the race with lap averages of 1:37:2, a pace which was faster than the previous event held here during season two. Baley recorded the fastest lap of the event, 1:36:247, on lap 26.

Turner breathed a huge sigh of relief after taking the checkered flag. “This was one of the most intense races I’ve ever been involved in” said Turner. “Sutcliff and Baley would have pounced on me at the slightest mistake. This victory is a huge step for TeamDraft and our goal of securing another RSR championship.”

Sutcliff was happy to finish in 2nd place. “I almost lost position to Blocker on lap one.” “After that, I did everything I could to put pressure on Les during the race. He was just too smooth. He never missed a braking point or corner entry.” Sutcliff added that his race with Turner wasn’t the only thing on his mind during the event. “RSR newcomer,

Michael Baley was all over me once he got past the early traffic. I really believe Michael was faster than me, but he raced very cleanly and did not force an incident which could have ruined both of our races. He will be giving Les a run for his money in the next race.” Baley, a new member of the RSR league, served notice to the group that he would be a force to be reckoned with by laying down the fastest lap of the race, and posting the fastest lap average for the event.

Ignoring pain caused by the sunburn he received at the beach, Gildersleeve climbed four positions to finish in 4th place. The 5th place car of Magee was close behind Gildersleeve. Thomas (6th), Feldman (7th), Hadden (8th), Holzwarth (9th), and Husted (10th) rounded out the top-10 finishers.

Albertson finished the race in 11th place after battling an early wreck and an over-anxious pit crew. “After qualifying in 9th place with a full fuel load, I jumped in the gas on the start, only to have to check up for a car in front of me as I was still upshifting. The old accordion effect kicked in and the field got together before I could react. My car was damaged, so after limping around the track with an ill-handling car, I decided to enter the pits. Unfortunately my crew thought I’d called for a wrecker so they filled up my gas tank without actually fixing the car! I didn’t realize their mistake as I drove around trying to figure out why my car was handling so badly until the crew radioed that I had enough fuel to wear out the tires, wear out the driver, and drive non-stop from Zandvoort to London! To finish in 11th place was enough to cause this old driver to end the race with tremors in his legs, shaking sore hands, and a HUGE smile from all the fun. What a treat to race with friends as talented and polite as the RSR members. It was a wonderful night of racing with our new members, who obviously have the RSR spirit of courtesy and respect on and off the track. If the first race is any indication of how the rest of the season will be, we are all in for some good clean fun!”

RSR drivers will travel to Watkins Glen for the New York Grand Prix next week.