

## ***New Jersey's Alex McCollum defends his reign in Bethel's 'Legendstock', as he outduels NASCAR driving star Christian Eckes to Victory!***

July 10th, 2021:

**White Lake, NY:** Race fans traveled to Bethel Motor Speedway on a hot humid day to see a strong turn-out of INEX Legends racers as the speedway presented its national 'Legendstock' event. Also, the ATQMRA Winged TQ Midget Series made another stop at the speedway and always put on a show of exciting high-speed racing.

A 28-car field of INEX Legends took the green for 'Legendstock' a 50 lap national qualifier feature. Top gun, Alex McCollum who fared the best in qualifying action jumped into the lead over Tanner Jones and Connor Holderbach. National NASCAR star Christian Eckes invaded his former hometrack looking to win another Legendstock title and he quickly moved from fourth position to take second on lap 3. The first caution waved for a slowed Chris Piasecki on the backstretch on lap 13. The restart found Eckes putting heavy pressure on McCollum for the lead but was unable to obtain the position as they battled lap after lap. Meanwhile a heated battle was going on for third between Jones and Holderbach as the two drivers swapped positions several times with George Tomko quickly chasing behind in fourth position. Lap 31 found the yellow flag waving for a spun Storm Drew in turn 3 which in turn brought out 'yellow fever' in subsequent laps culminating in a big turn two crash when Holderbach and Tomko tangled collecting Jack Polan, Joe Pryzybylinski, Jack Gerzabek, and Piasecki. Lap 37 found Joey Braun inheriting third position and began to challenge the two leaders while having to fend off a hard charging Jones now running in fourth. Eckes continued his pressure on McCollum trying both high and low to find a path by, but McCollum continued to be unshakeable. Jones muscled by Braun to take third position as he quickly began to reel in the leaders. The last caution came out on lap 48 for a spun Charlie Hodge setting the stage for a green, white, checkers shootout. The restart found Eckes making a strong run going into turn 3 to take the lead coming to the white flag. McCollum fiercely returned the same move going into turn 1 and reclaimed the lead coming out of turn two. Eckes then found Jones squeezing by to take second position by half a car length at the checkers with Braun and Allan Pedersen closely following to take positions fourth and fifth at the checkers in an overly exciting feature finish among the top five drivers. McCollum was the INEX classified Pro winner, Jones was the Semi-Pro winner, Bryan Gardella was the top finishing Master's driver, and rookie Ryan Kuhlthau was the Young Lions winner completing a statewide New Jersey sweep among the four winners. Chris Sinatro, Eugene Drew, Braun, and McCollum were heat race victors while Hodge won the B-Main feature.

ATQMRA Winged TQ Midget racing found the bad luck continuing for driver Buddy Sload as his racer quickly went pitside with a locked-up brake caliper. The front row of rookies, Tyler Wagner and Tyler Ferris were quickly schooled by experience as Ryan

Tidman took the lead and began to pull away as Jeff Kot moved into second position. Joey Bailey moved past Kot to take second position on lap 6. Lap 8 found the caution coming out for a spun Ferris in turn 4. The restart found a familiar Bethel duel between Tidman and Bailey as the two drivers battled wheel to wheel for several laps in an exciting battle of driving. Bailey prevailed to take sole control of the lead as the halfway flags waved. Tidman was able to stay withing striking distance but was unable to make a formidable challenge to retake the lead. At the checkers, it was Bailey taking the win in the beautiful Boyd owned machine over Tidman, and Kot

Also highlighted was the Bandolero class as they held their special 'Empire 25' feature which proved to be a great race long shootout among three drivers. Long Island native Rodney Dowless Jr. and track champion, Monika Deckelman swapped the lead back and forth several times in exciting fender to fender hard racing while Rhode Island racer Richie Helger chased in quick pursuit sitting in the catbird position. Coming to the checkers, it was Dowless picking up his first career Bethel feature win just edging out over Deckelman and Helger who also put in a strong finish in his first ever start at the speedway.

Kyle Dunham took the early lead in the Dirt Modified feature, but the yellow came out on lap 2 as Andy Crane slowed on the frontstretch as he headed pitside. The restart found former Flemington Speedway racer, Jeff Parker getting parked hard into the turn 4 wall resulting in heavy damage to his machine. Dunham continued to lead but the halfway point proved to be a scary one as Jerry Curry's engine detonated in turn 1 causing an oil fire to erupt bringing out the red flag as he came to a stop in turn two. Curry quickly emerged from his car unscathed to the crowd's cheers as the fire extinguished itself but forced him from the event. The restart found current point leader, Bill Deckelman overpowering Dunham with an outside charge to take the lead on lap 11. Deckelman then began to widen his lead as Dunham and Mike Roth battled for second position. Lap 15 was fruitful for Roth as he nosed ahead to take second from Dunham. At the finish line it was Deckelman collecting his third feature win of the season over Roth and Dunham.

NASCAR street stock racing found Ivan Guerra taking the early lead, but a strong running Joel Murns shuffled into the lead on lap 3 and began to pull away from the pack. Murns continued to lead easily in the caution free event but on the hunt were Kyle Welsch and JB Morris as they worked their way into the top three. Welsch then reeled in Murns and passed him to take the lead at the halfway point. Murns continued to hold off Morris while Welsch pulled away. With two laps to go, Morris made a gruff squeeze pass going into turn 1 to take second from Murns. At the checkers it was Welsch crusing to his second feature win of the season over Morris and Murns.

Mike Roth coming from fifth position picked up his third win of the season in the NASCAR Sport Mod feature. Dunham and Parker finished second and third, respectively.

Former track champion, Dan Houghtaling shot out to the early lead over Tisha Curry in Four Cylinder feature racing. Coming from the back of the pack were top guns, Mike Travis, and Jerry Kingeter. Coming from ninth starting position, Travis moved into the top three on lap 7 as he got around rookie Sean Lynch. Just past halfway, Travis passed Curry to take second and quickly set his sights on the leader Houghtaling. Kingeter coming from tenth position began to reel in third place running Curry. Lap 13 found Travis powering ahead of Houghtaling to take the lead going into turn one. Kingeter continued to battle door to door with Curry concluding with a gruff inside squeeze pass going into turn one on lap 17. Houghtaling then got bottled up in lapped traffic allowing to Kingeter to capture second on the final lap. Travis went on to win his third feature win of the season over Kingeter. Post race, third was awarded to Curry as Houghtaling came up light on the scales.

Easton Houghtaling picked up his first career Beginner Bandos feature win as he led every lap and held off newcomer, Michael Lefort III to take home the popular win to much fan applause. Olivia Tyler put in a good race to finish third.