

The 39th Rattler Races at South Alabama Speedway

Story & photos: Phillip Prichard, MSA

The 39th Annual Rattler 250 at the South Alabama Speedway started with a multiple-car wreck on the very first lap and featured numerous caution flags throughout the 250 laps. But Christopher Bell had the dominate car for the entire race and sailed to the checkered flag.

Anderson Bowen of Suwanee, GA was the pole sitter; he was the last of 38 cars to qualify. On the initial lap, Stephen Nasse made contact with Bowen, causing Bowen to spin. 10 cars were caught in the melee in turns three and four. This brought out a red flag for an hour to clean up the wreckage. The two cars suffering the most damage were those of Kyle Grissom and Bubba Pollard as both cars were towed off the track. Grissom wasn't able to return, but Pollard did get back on the track when action resumed until overheating problems forced him to retire. Grissom, Chad Finley, Bret Holmes and Daniel Keene, Jr., were knocked out of the race. Pollard, who won the Rattler 125 on Saturday night and has 23 career Late Model wins at South Alabama Speedway, ended up finishing 24th in the 33-car field.

Bell, a 20-year-old from Norman, OK, who drives for Kyle Busch Motorsports,



CHRIS BELL WON RATTLER 250



BUBBA POLLARD TOOK THE 125 RATTLER

said the 250-lap event was the longest race he has participated in. As a custom after the Rattler 250, the champion is asked to pose with a rattlesnake. Bell did as asked, but it was the only time during the day the winner appeared uncomfortable. He stated, I don't do snakes with a quick smile.

Casey Smith of Austin, Texas, finished second and defending NASCAR Xfinity Series champion Chase Elliott finished third. Elliott, who finished seventh in an Xfinity Series race in Phoenix on Saturday afternoon before flying to south Alabama, stayed around the middle of the pack most of the day before turning it on late to get in contention. Elliott had to go to the rear of field due him not being present for qualifying. After the last break at 200 laps, Elliott was able to move toward the front.

When the final caution came out on

Lap 219, Bell had the lead over Smith and Elliott. Once the green flag dropped, Bell did what he done all day long – opened a comfortable lead and cruised to the victory.

Rounding out the top 10 behind Bell, Smith and Elliott were Daniel Hemric, Garrett Jones, Ty Majeski, Harrison Burton, Bowen, Nasse and Augie Grill.

Bubba Pollard of Senoia, GA, won the Rattler 125 Pro Late Model Series Race on Saturday night. He became the first three-time winner of the event. Corey Ruble, Harrison Burton, Ryan Luza and Bret Holmes rounded out the top five.

The Rattler 250 was the culmination of a weekend of season-opening races at the track and was the first of the season on the Southern Super Series.

Visit southalabamaspeedway.com for more information.

Dane Westby Dies in Streetbike Crash

Story & Photo: Phillip Prichard, MSA

Professional motorcycle racer, Dane Westby died in a streetbike crash in Tulsa. He hit a utility pole while riding his bike on the way to his parents' house. Westby was riding a Honda Hawk street bike when the crash happened. Police said Westby was wearing a helmet and friends said he was also wearing full protective gear.

Dane "The Wolverine" Westby raced superbikes for the Yamalube/Westby Racing team. He finished 3rd overall in points in the American Motorcycle As-

sociation Pro Daytona SportBike season last year.

He won his first race at age 7 at Hallett, Oklahoma and began road racing in 2003, according to his biography.

He rode a bicycle from Tulsa to Daytona International Raceway earlier this month and drove the pace car for the 2015 Daytona 200.

He is survived by his father, former AMA superbike racer Tryg Westby, his mother, Jane and sister, Scarlett, as well as his girlfriend, fellow racer Patricia Fernandez.



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