

Hailie Deegan Makes Last Lap Pass to Win on Las Vegas Dirt

LAS VEGAS — Hailie Deegan was not to be denied.

In what she called the biggest race of her season and her "rebound race," second wasn't going to be good enough.

Thanks to a last-lap pass, she didn't have to settle for a runner-up finish. The 17-year-old from Temecula, California, captured her second career win and opened up the 2019 K&N Pro Series West season in Victory Lane in the Star Nursery 100 at the Las Vegas Motor Speedway Dirt Track.

After having a pedal extension problem in her heat race forcing her to start ninth, she slowly and methodically worked her way into the top five by the lap 51 break. With some new tires and adjustments, she restarted third behind Derek Kraus and Jagger Jones.

Kraus was passed by Jones with 31 laps to go, and Deegan followed him through. But the No. 6 got smaller and smaller in her windshield, racing out to a four-second lead with 10 laps to go.

Just like she did before the midway break, she slowly reeled Jones in. As the

white flag flew, Deegan was in striking distance of Jones. With the help of lapped traffic, the No. 19 dove to the inside, cleared Jones off Turn 2 and sped to the checkered flag.

"In the end we wouldn't have caught him if it weren't for the lapped cars," she said. "And they got in his way. If I was him, I'd be mad. Really mad. But some people's losses are other people's wins and we ended up getting it done. I knew what we had to do to win. I knew it was going to come down to the last lap again and we made it happen."

The NASCAR Next driver was not optimistic about her chances pre-race, saying her car was extremely ill-handling and the track wasn't conducive to her style of dirt racing. But in the downtime between the heat and 100-lap main, she did some homework and things changed.

"Mostly just me working on my lines," she said. "The line I was trying to run didn't work for my car, so I had to move around and find which line worked. Once we found that, fixed the car, the car was great. The track was still icy, and we



Hailie Deegan celebrates following her Star Nursery 100 victory.

still weren't good, but it was better than everyone else."

The thrill of victory for some is dichotomous with the agony defeat for others. In his first career K&N Pro Series West start, Jones seemed to be on his way to a victory.

Unfortunately for the 16-year-old from Scottsdale, Arizona, and his Sunrise Ford Racing team, circumstances dictated otherwise.

"Hailie definitely had a little more speed at the end," he said dejectedly. "But I think I would've held her off no problem, but lapped card cut me off, pushed me right into the tire on the last lap and Hailie was just able to get underneath me. Definitely wanted that win."

Jones wasn't upset with Deegan for the move. He was frustrated with Kenny Bumbera, who made life difficult for Jones on the final lap. When the door opened, Deegan kicked it down.

"Oh I think her move was fine," Jones

said of Deegan's last lap maneuver. "I mean she didn't really do anything too bad. It's just the lapped car cut me off in front. It just pushed me up the track. Once that all happened she had a whole lane to herself. It was kind of given to her, which is unfortunate on the last lap. It just sucks sometimes."

Joey Tanner came home third in his first career series race for Jefferson Pitts Racing. Kody Vanderwal and Todd Souza rounded out the top five.

After leading a race-high 60 laps, Derek Kraus finished sixth with Trevor Huddleston, Travis Milburn, polesitter Austin Reed (led the first eight laps) and Matt Levin completing the top 10.

The next K&N Pro Series West event will take place Saturday, March 30 at Irwindale Speedway.

Story courtesy of NASCAR / Photos: Nigel Kinrade Photography for NASCAR



Hailie Deegan made sure to celebrate after opening the season up with a victory.

**FONTAINE'S
COMPUTER
GROUP**

7214 Douglas Blvd.
Ste. #B-1

Douglasville, GA 30135
fontainescomputer@hotmail.com
SE HABLA ESPAÑOL

Telephone: 770-852-1568 • Cell: 770-885-0706

15% OFF ANY
COMPUTER
REPAIR!
NOT VALID WITH ANY
OTHER OFFERS.

FREE
DIAGNOSTIC
FREE BASIC
ANTIVIRUS

**\$15 OFF ON ANY SIZE OR
BRAND NAME LCD MONITOR!**

**Free Antivirus • Free Estimates
Free Computer Recycling**

EST. 2007

MABLETON TRADING CO
& OUTDOOR POWER



LAWN EQUIPMENT / GENERATORS
SALES • SERVICE • PARTS • PICKUP • DELIVERY

5836 Mableton Pkwy SW, Mableton, GA 30126
PHONE: 770-948-2447 HOURS: Mon-Thurs 9am-6pm, Fri-Sat 9am-5pm