

ML/GL Round 5 Recap -- Road America

Written by Neal Agran
Monday, 25 August 2014 07:48

Round 5 of NASA's Midwest and Great Lakes 944 Spec championships took place at the world famous Road America on August 1-3. The draft on this track's long straights makes for close racing and frequent position changes, and this three race weekend did not disappoint. Drinks and dinner at the historical Siebkens Resort and the chance to share the track with the professional Pirelli GT3 Cup series also made for a memorable event.

Race 1

Neal Agran earned the pole, followed by Gary Barton, Shannon McCue, Shane Patza (in his rookie debut), Ken Frey, Brad Raum, Sudhir Chhikara, Peter Nystrom, and Michael Cooper. At the flag, Agran got the jump and was able to slip away as Barton and McCue exchanged 2nd multiple times on the first lap. As Barton built a gap on McCue after reclaiming second, a 5-way battle for 4th emerged as the race to watch. Chhikara eventually took control of the scrum in lap five, moving from 7th to 4th and eventually building a small lead on Patza in 5th. Immediately behind, Frey and Nystrom fought tooth and nail to the end, with Frey earning 6th in a drag race to the line. Cooper and Raum rounded out the field.



Race 2

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An abbreviated qualifying session shuffled the field for Race 2, setting up a fantastic battle. Agran again secured the pole in a flyer lap, followed by Barton, Cooper, Patza, Chhikara, Nystrom, Raum, McCue, and Frey. Agran and Barton formed a breakaway two car train for the first several laps, but the race to watch was the four-way battle for 3rd between Cooper, Chhikara, Patza, and McCue. Each eventually held the position as they jockeyed in a four car train over the first half of the race – twice in the case of Cooper. McCue made the critical move four laps from the end, shifting from 5th to 3rd in a single lap while Patza fell back to 6th with an off course excursion. In the closing minutes, Patza, benefiting from data coaching throughout the weekend, clicked off the second fastest lap of the weekend to regain the tail of the fight for 3rd and set up a sprint to the finish.



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