

## **BRUNELLE TOPS THE LIST OF WINNERS IN EVANS MILLS OPENER**

*May 22, 2017*

EVANS MILLS, NY – The debut of the Mills Modified division at Evans Mills Speedway has been many months in the making, and – in spite of three rainouts in an attempt to get Opening Night in – came to fruition this past Sunday on the 3/8-mile asphalt oval. When the checkered flag finally flew, Randy Brunelle found himself in Victory Lane, marking his place in history as the first-ever winner in the class. The event was sponsored by Black Diamond Heat, located in Evans Mills, NY.

Brunelle, who was the winningest driver in the Pro Stock class at the speedway in 2016 in spite of running a limited schedule, picked up the win in the heat race and subsequently started on the pole for the feature, with Vern LaFave to his outside.

LaFave got the jump on the initial start, and took the lead by a slim margin over Brunelle for the first lap as the two battled for the top spot until LaFave spun and brought out the first caution of the race and was forced to restart at the rear of the field. This gave Mike Hall Jr. the opportunity to run wheel-to-wheel with Brunelle, though Brunelle retained the advantage. Bobby Newman entered the mix in third, but began to slide backwards in the field with mechanical difficulties by lap five.

Meanwhile, LaFave was marching back towards the front, and he and Hall Jr. kept fans on the edges of their seats as they fought for second, giving Brunelle the opportunity to pull away. Newman pulled off the track with 22 of 30 scheduled laps complete, and the face of the race changed with 24 laps complete, as rain began to fall on the speedway and the race was put on rain delay.

The shower was brief and the track crew dried the track quickly, and the race was able to resume 15 minutes later. As the cars were preparing to take the green flag once again, Hall Jr. retired with mechanical issues. With Brunelle's lead erased, the final laps of the race were a close battle between Brunelle, LaFave, and Terry Gardner. Brunelle was able to hold off the hard-charging competition, and he crossed the line ahead of LaFave and Gardner.

For the first time in his INEX career, 20-year-old Anthony Riforgiato picked up the Legends win. Riforgiato's racing resume includes numerous Bandolero wins, but the Legends victory had eluded him until this past Sunday. Dalton Rombough and Daniel Carter made up the front row for the start of the race, with Rombough getting out to the lead at the drop of the green. Breanne Gilligan came to second briefly, but Riforgiato took the spot away with only two laps in the books. Rombough, Riforgiato, and Cater mixed it up at the front of the field before something appeared to break in Rombough's car, and the caution came out. Rombough had to be towed from the track, handing the lead to Riforgiato for the restart. By that time, Nate Plantz had worked his way to Riforgiato's back

bumper, and he began to apply pressure. Plantz chased Riforgiato for the remainder of the event, but was unable to make the pass, and Riforgiato claimed the win over Plantz and Carter.

Josh Duke started on the pole and led every lap to take down his first Bandolero win of the season. Duke wasted no time learning the quick way around the track, and he was able to build a sizeable lead as Cole Perry and Tyler Christman battled for the second spot, which Christman took over just prior to the halfway point of the event. A yellow flag at the halfway point tightened the field back up, but Duke had a flawless restart and once again got out front. When the checkered flag flew, Duke took home the win over Christman and Perry.

During the offseason, Pro Stock driver Bill Miner – who picked up two feature wins in 2016 on his way to a second place finish in the season standings – expressed his intention to make a championship run, and he got off to a good start this past Sunday, picking up the checkers in the 25-lap feature event. Miner attended several of the practice sessions at the speedway prior to Opening Night, working out bugs with the new car that he purchased during the offseason. Miner started on the pole for Sunday's event, and led every lap en route to the victory. Defending champion Ray Bancroft, however, didn't make it easy for Miner, as the two ran in close quarters over the entire race distance. Bancroft got a second shot at the lead following a caution with 18 laps complete, but Miner never surrendered the spot and Bancroft had to be content with second. Jason Duke was third.

Defending division champion Richard "Ike" Stone took down the Thunder Stock win in dominating fashion. By virtue of his heat race win, Stone took off from the pole, with Josh Burns in tow. Burns threw all he could at Stone, who continued to pull away from the rest of the field. With only a single caution to slow the pace of the race, Stone cruised on to victory over Burns and Theresa Sanford.

Bob Schroy led every lap of the 4 Cylinder Truck event to take down his first win of the season. In the early laps, Schroy had to contend with Kyle Simpson, but Simpson lost momentum following a caution with just four laps complete, opening the door for Zak Petrie to come to second and mount a challenge for the lead. Zack Christman, competing in his first-ever race, came to the third spot. Schroy was able to keep the competition behind him, as he took the checkers over Petrie and Christman.

The Classic Asphalt Modifieds made a visit to the speedway, and Dan Willmes took down the win over Terry Wilson and Tim Janes.

The next scheduled event at Evans Mills Speedway is this coming Sunday, May 28<sup>th</sup>, when the track will host the first of two scheduled "Driver Autograph Nights". Drivers from all classes will take part in an on-track "pit party" during intermission, allowing fans to get "up close and personal" with the cars and their drivers. On the schedule are the Mills Modified, Legends, Bandolero, Pro Stock, Thunder Stock, and 4 Cylinder Truck classes. Gates open at 2:30 pm, with practice

beginning at 3:30 pm, and racing set to go green at 5 pm. Grandstand admission is just \$10, with children age 15 and under admitted free of charge. There is a \$2 discount for military with valid ID. VIP booth upgrades are available.

More information, including a complete schedule, can be obtained online at [www.evansmillsspeedway.com](http://www.evansmillsspeedway.com), or by calling (315) 221-9180.

MILLS MODIFIED FEATURE FINISH (30 laps): 1. Randy Brunelle, 2. Vern LaFave, 3. Terry Gardner, 4. Bobby Newman, 5. Mike Hall Jr.

LEGENDS FEATURE FINISH (20 laps): 1. Anthony Riforgiato, 2. Nate Plantz, 3. Daniel Carter, 4. Trevor Halladay, 5. Breanne Gilligan, 6. Jason Christman, 7. Kyle Hafemann, 8. Chris Malbeuf, 9. Bryan Chirico, 10. Mike Riforgiato, 11. Dalton Rombough.

BANDOLERO FEATURE FINISH (15 laps): 1. Josh Duke, 2. Tyler Christman, 3. Cole Perry.

PRO STOCK FEATURE FINISH (25 laps): 1. Bill Miner, 2. Ray Bancroft, 3. Jason Duke, 4. Terry Gardner.

THUNDER STOCK FEATURE FINISH (20 laps): 1. Richard "Ike" Stone, 2. Josh Burns, 3. Theresa Sanford, 4. Jamie Murphy. DNS – Zac Stone.

4 CYLINDER TRUCK FEATURE FINISH (20 laps): 1. Bob Schroy, 2. Zak Petrie, 3. Zack Christman, 4. Kyle Simpson, 5. Charles Sibley.