

Lux podiums at Runoffs

Scotty B. White forced to pit while leading

BY TOM MOORE
For *NayKid Racing*

TOPEKA, Kan. — The SCCA Touring One (T1) class race for production-based sports cars was expected to be the highlight of the National Championship Runoffs weekend here at Heartland Park Topeka. It did not disappoint.

NayKid Racing's Cindi Lux of Aloha, Ore., earned second in the event, ranking as the highest-placing NayKid Racing driver and the highest-finishing Dodge Viper SRT10. Lux started fifth driving the No. 78 Kumho Tires-Dodge Motorsports-SRT-Nike-MOMO USA-Forgeline Viper while teammate Scotty B. White of Puyallup started from the pole position but would finish 17th, one lap down to winner Lance Knupp of Fenton, Mich.

White was leading in his No. 3 Kumho Tires-Dodge Motorsports-SRTCORSA Exhaust-Red Line Oil Viper when a left-rear tire was punctured, forcing an immediate stop for new rubber. The NayKid crew changed both rears as a precaution.

"Was that a shame or what?" White asked. "We came here thinking we didn't have a prayer and then the next thing you know we are the car to beat! All I can say is the months of hard work by the NayKid gang and the Dodge Motorsports guys added to the sheer awesome engineering masterpiece of the SRT10 Viper. Altogether that really showed through on the new Viper-size Kumhos. The problem is we are just too heavy. At 3,840 pounds any small pebble could go right through any tire and that was the race. I guess that's why they call it racing instead of winning, huh?"

In total, the Viper SRT10s of NayKid Racing led all but two laps of the event, but came 1.262 seconds short of their first Runoffs victory.

The tight, 2.5-mile layout of Heartland Park set the tone for a dramatic duel to the end. Lux, who made a spectacular jump from fifth to third on the first lap, stalked and then masterfully out-braked the Ferrari of Edward Zabinski on the sixth lap to move to sec-

Runoffs on SPEED

SPEED Channel will air each event at this year's SCCA Runoffs on Tuesdays, beginning Nov. 7. The full schedule:

Nov. 7, 9 a.m. (PST), C Sports Racing
Nov. 7, 10 a.m., GT-2

Nov. 14, 9 a.m., Showroom Stock C
Nov. 14, 10 a.m., Formula Continental

Nov. 14, 11 a.m., Showroom Stock B
Nov. 21, 9 a.m., Formula Mazda

Nov. 21, 10 a.m., Sports 2000
Nov. 21, 11 a.m., H Production

Nov. 28, 9 a.m., Touring 3
Nov. 28, 10 a.m., Formula Ford

Nov. 28, 11 a.m., GT-3
Nov. 28, noon, Formula 500

Nov. 28, 1 p.m., Touring 2
Nov. 28, 2 p.m., F Production

Dec. 5, 9 a.m., American Sedan
Dec. 5, 10 a.m., Spec Racer Ford

Dec. 5, 11 a.m., Touring 1
Dec. 12, 9 a.m., GT-Lite

Dec. 12, 10 a.m., Spec Miata
Dec. 12, 11 a.m., GT-1

Dec. 12, noon, Formula Vee
Dec. 19, 9 a.m. 10 a.m., E Production

Dec. 19, 10 a.m., D Sports Racing
Dec. 19, 11 a.m., G Production

Dec. 19, noon, Formula Atlantic

ond. When White, who held an eight second lead at the time, was forced to stop three laps later in the 18-lap race, Lux assumed the top spot. About the same time, Knupp had moved into second from his sixth-place grid position. Lux, the four-time Northern Pacific Division Champion, charged lap after lap but watched the lighter Corvette slowly eat into her lead.

On lap 16, Knupp's quickest of the event, he closed on, then edged alongside the 1999 American Le Mans Series Women's Global GT Series Champion. The two touched for the second lap in a row — this time mirror-to-mirror contact — as they rushed onto the main straightaway. Knupp took the upper hand moving past Lux and into the lead. Lux fought to regain but would be un-

able to rally.

"I believe that will go down as one of the most eventful races in a long time," Lux said. "We had the fans on their feet the last two laps. It was a classic GM-Dodge battle. At the end of the race, unfortunately, my car really started to feel the negative effects of the 140 pounds of weight the rules added to us a few weeks ago. I couldn't hold off the Corvette. I gave it everything I had but just came up one lap short."

Lux narrowly missed becoming the first T1 class driver to ever win the prestigious SCCA "Triple Crown" for earning victories in the Kohler/Chicago Region June Sprints at Road America, a divisional championship (Lux won her fourth-straight Northern Pacific (Nor-Pac) Championship with six victories), and the Runoffs. Nonetheless, it was her highest-ever finish at the Runoffs and matched Dodge's highest finish (White took second in 2005) with the newest iteration of the Dodge Viper SRT10. Coming into the Runoffs, NayKid Racing had won 11 of 13 races, earned 12 pole positions and set eight track records.

NayKid Racing has played key roles in the event for the past several years and Saturday's winner-takes-all championship event was no different. Both Lux and White led (White laps 1-8, Lux laps 9-16) and White won the pole with a lap of 1:47.034 to establish the Runoffs record at Heartland Park. Lux's qualifying time of 1:48.728 assured that four of the top-five grid positions were held by Viper SRT10s. Overall, seven of the 24 cars entered in the T1 class were Vipers matched against a pair of Ferraris, one Porsche and a flood of Chevrolet Corvettes. Dodge would earn two of the podium positions and four of the top-10 spots with its SRT-tuned supercar.

"Disappointed? You bet," Lux said. "But overall, it was a great week for Dodge, Kumho Tire and all of our guys who worked non-stop. We did everything correct all week; pole, new track record, both drivers leading the race. It would have been so darn cool to come in one-two but it just didn't work out that way."