

Defying 15:1 Odds, Eastlack and Hayes Triumph at Catfish

• MARC 2004-2005 Season Opener Stars in QuickTime Movie •

Cambridge, Massachusetts, October 9 – Some new/old faces in the Production program, and some new/new chassis in the Super Stock race were the main points of interest leading into the Catfish Throwdown, the Miniature Auto Racing Club's first tilt of the 2004-2005 New England HO racing season. In the end, strong track knowledge and time-tested equipment were the difference, as two local fellers came out on top.

Throughout the day, track namesake Henry Catfish Hayes was everywhere, filming racers and racing for what would become a 3-minute short feature. The result can be seen at www.catfishinternational.com

Production racing (stock BSRT G3 roller with the addition of any rear hub and slip-on silicones, open-wheel body) attracted a strong field of 12. This included several racers who were returning to the class as a result of a rules change, allowing any member with fewer than three MARC championship class wins to compete. The preseason championship odds, as computed by noted "Frognosticator" Eric Chagnot, showed a bias to several heavy hitters who would, ultimately, come up short on the day.

In the Group C Semi, Catfish regular Hakim Harris came out on top, riding a fine run on gutter Red to the win. Gerry Cullan, Eric Chagnot, and Benny Leyro brought up the rear. Benny had driven from NYC to Albany for a race, then home to NYC, and then to Cambridge, roughly 400 miles, all in the span of about 16 hours. Dedication.

The B Semi included the Jahls, Jr. and Sr., Super Bob Ferrara, and the 2003 Catfish Production champ, Marc Gosselin. In the end, Tom Jahl had everyone covered, on every lane, for top lap total into the Main, with 115. Stephen Jahl had big car trouble in the third heat, and wasn't a factor thereafter. Ferrara, a welcome addition, struggled on the gutters, but made a respectable showing for third. And Gosselin did not have the otherworldly car he did last year, and so was second.

The A Semi was stacked with Production monsters – Joe Eastlack, John Shortsleeves, Erik Eckhardt, and Paul Avis -- and save for Jahl Sr. and Hakim Harris, the Main event could easily have been pulled straight from this group. It was close all the way, but Catfish regular Eastlack essentially won it in the first segment with a 30-lap run in Yellow, running even-up with Erik, who was in the track's quickest lane, Blue. Result, after some very close racing: Eastlack 114, Shortsleeves 108, Eckhardt 106, and Avis 102.

And so the Production Main. Tom Jahl elected to start on White, allowing him to

finish on hotshoe Blue. Joe Eastlack, in a move of supreme confidence -- or complete foolhardiness -- chose to start on one gutter, Yellow, and end on another, the track's worst lane, Red.

Somehow, he made it work. Jahl won the first segment, Eastlack won the middle two, and then had plenty in hand to hold Jahl off while finishing the race up with a very steady run on Red. All kudos to Joe, who quickly made a mockery of the Vegas/Chagnot 15:1 line on his Production championship prospects.

In the Super Stock program, three new chassis -- the Storm, Thundercat, and the Cosmic T+ -- saw their MARC debuts, joining the Super G3 on the tech sheets.

Also, it was the first MARC race under our new Super Stock rules, allowing any armature in these all-ceramic-magnet cars. The cars were more challenging to drive, and the lap totals were not, at least in this first trial, substantially increased over last year's cars, powered by "hot stock" motors.

20 racers entered, divided by four Catfish International lanes, means... five semis!

And, we'd have both an A and a B Main. After a lot of thrashing, a lot of pizza, and a lot of jokes from the race director/odds-maker, it shook out like this:

In the B Main, John Shortsleeves (334) took last year's Catfish-winning G3, added a 6-ohm Spinner arm, built an early lead on the always-dangerous Erik Eckhardt (328), and held on for the win. John Stezelecki (324) was a model of consistency, but a mid-race crash robbed him of ponies, and he motored home third. And Paul Avis (316), tipped by Vegas at 10:1 to take the 2004-2005 series, ran a fine Yellow and a monster Blue, but could not come to terms with those other two lanes.

In the A Main, it was Team BSRT 1-2, with Rob Hayes, Mr. Home Track Advantage, taking the win with a new track record of 358. Rob ran a G3 soft chassis, 6-ohm Spinner arm, and new 21T delrin crown, to confound the oddsmakers (15:1). Dr. John Pileggi (3:1 odds) was second, with a 38 gauge Spinner powering his G3, with 350. Todd "Tattoo" Duda (2:1) totaled 336, just hanging on for third, by sections, over Micro Speedworks' Dan DeCosmo (2:1). Both Todd and Dan were running the new Cosmic T+ chassis, in its maiden voyage.

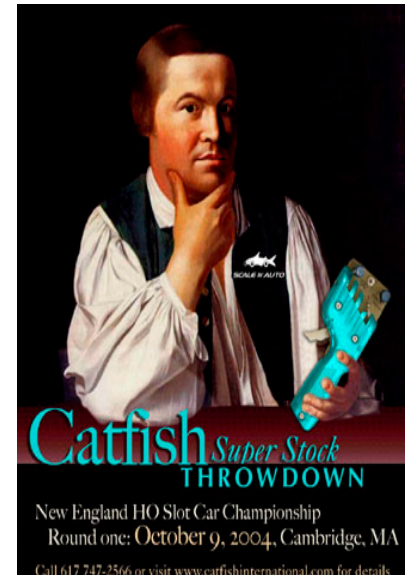
As always, many thanks to our longtime sponsor at Catfish International, Scale Auto/BSRT, for their generous support.

Several BSRT Super G3 cars, armatures, painted bodies and new accessories made their way into the 21 appreciative racers' 42 hands. Thanks also to Micro Speedworks for donating copies of their new T+ chassis and bulkhead.

Another race, another great day at Catfish. As a wise man once said, it's not about the racing, but the friends you make along the way. This has certainly been true for me. I feel very fortunate to

host this race and the good people who attend each year.

Thanks to everyone (Benny, you are a wonder!) for making the trek. And congratulations to young Ethan Duda for his strong showing on the day. You're the future, buddy!



Cambridge, MA 10/9/2004

Super Stock

A-Semi

Driver	Yel	Blu	Wht	Red	Total	Place	Points
Rob Hayes	90	89	93	86	358.08	1	100
John Pileggi	88	90	88	84	350.06	2	95
Todd Duda	86	91	83	76	336.13	3	90
Dan DeCosmo	84	88	84	80	336.10	4	85

B-Semi

Driver	Yel	Blu	Wht	Red	Total	Place	Points
John Shortsleeves	84	89	84	77	334.21	5	80
Erik Eckhardt	82	87	83	76	328.20	6	75
John Stezelecki	80	81	82	81	324.08	7	70
Paul Avis	82	85	77	72	316.20	8	65

A-Consi

Driver	Yel	Blu	Wht	Red	Total	Place	Points
Dan DeCosmo	49	54	54	50	207.16	mu	
John Stezelecki	45	52	49	47	193.11	mu	
Bruce Beaulieu	44	45	49	46	184.25	9	60
Joe Eastlack	45	44	48	42	179.14	12	45

B-Consi

Driver	Yel	Blu	Wht	Red	Total	Place	Points
Rob Hayes	53	55	56	52	216.10	mu	
Todd Duda	50	52	50	48	200.25	mu	
Eric Chagnot	45	47	43	39	174.01	15	30
Hakim Harris	40	50	38	38	166.25	16	25

C-Consi

Driver	Yel	Blu	Wht	Red	Total	Place	Points
John Pileggi	52	55	52	50	209.18	mu	
John Shortsleeves	49	52	49	43	193.02	mu	
Gerry Cullan	37	1	43	33	114.23	19	10
Ethan Duda	28	35	22	23	108.01	20	5

D-Consi

Driver	Yel	Blu	Wht	Red	Total	Place	Points
Erik Eckhardt	51	53	51	42	197.23	mu	
Marc Gosselin	49	49	42	44	184.13	10	55
Bob Ferrara	45	48	45	36	174.22	14	35
Benny Leyro	39	42	41	34	156.00	18	15

E-Consi

Driver	Yel	Blu	Wht	Red	Total	Place	Points
Paul Avis	49	54	44	45	192.25	mu	
Tom Gray	44	48	46	42	180.19	11	50
Tom Jahl	46	53	41	37	177.18	13	40
Cedric Prevoc	41	41	40	38	160.16	17	20

Cambridge, MA 10/9/2004

Production Class

Main

Driver	Yel	Blu	Wht	Red	Total	Place	Points
Joe Eastlack	44	46	45	41	176.11	1	100
Tom Jahl	40	44	46	38	168.05	2	95
John Shortsleeves	40	44	43	36	163.05	3	90
Hakim Harris	38	39	37	37	151.29	4	85

A-Semi

Driver	Yel	Blu	Wht	Red	Total	Place	Points
Joe Eastlack	30	30	29	25	114.17	mu	
John Shortsleeves	27	29	27	25	108.06	mu	
Erik Eckhardt	26	30	26	24	106.16	5	80
Paul Avis	25	26	27	24	102.04	6	75

B-Semi

Driver	Yel	Blu	Wht	Red	Total	Place	Points
Tom Jahl	26	32	30	27	115.25	mu	
Marc Gosselin	23	27	26	21	97.26	8	65
Bob Ferrara	20	25	23	21	89.21	11	50
Stephen Jahl	27	26	10	0	63.00	12	45

C-Semi

Driver	Yel	Blu	Wht	Red	Total	Place	Points
Hakim Harris	27	29	27	26	109.01	mu	
Gerry Cullan	24	27	26	22	99.17	7	70
Eric Chagnot	19	26	24	22	91.17	9	60
Benny Leyro	24	21	22	24	91.05	10	55



Todd Duda 1965 -2004. You will be missed!

2004-2005 MARC Members only
Super Stock

Rank	Name	Race 1	Totals	1 Drop
		SS		
		10/9		
1	Rob Hayes	100	100	0
2	John Pileggi	95	95	0
3	Todd Duda	90	90	0
4	Dan DeCosmo	85	85	0
5	John Shortsleeves	80	80	0
6	Eric Eckhardt	75	75	0
7	John Stezelecki	70	70	0
8	Paul Avis	65	65	0
9	Bruce Beaulieu	60	60	0
10	Marc Gosselin	55	55	0
11	Tom Gray	50	50	0
12	Joe Eastlack	45	45	0
13	Tom Jahl	40	40	0
14	Bob Ferrara	35	35	0
15	Eric Chagnot	30	30	0
16	Hakim Harris	25	25	0
17	Cedric Prevoe	20	20	0
18	Benny Leyro	15	15	0
19	Gerry Cullan	10	10	0
20	Ethan Duda	5	5	0

2004-2005 MARC Members only
Production

Rank	Name	Race 1	Totals	2 Drop
		10/9		
1	Joe Eastlack	100	100	-
2	Tom Jahl	95	95	-
3	John Shortsleeves	90	90	-
4	Hakim Harris	85	85	-
5	Eric Eckhardt	80	80	-
6	Paul Avis	75	75	-
7	Gerry Cullan	70	70	-
8	Marc Gosselin	65	65	-
9	Eric Chagnot	60	60	-
10	Benny Leyro	55	55	-
11	Bob Ferrara	50	50	-
12	Stephen Jahl	45	45	-