



## ROGERS BROTHER #2 BECOMES A FIRST TIME WINNER by J. Troiano

### Wild Night Of Racing Sees Unusual Top Five

Everything about Saturday night's USAR ProCup Series race at Southern National Speedway (NC) wild, from the action on the track during the race to the action in the pits after the race. Even the Victory Lane celebration was wild... thanks to the over-jubilance of a series first-time winner.

Even though Brad Rogers has stood out on his own with a pretty impressive rookie season thus far in 2004, he has still lived in the shadows of his successful brother Clayton. But on Saturday night, Brad used patience, timidness and then all out speed to lock up his first-career ProCup Series victory in just his 10th career start.

"It's hard to explain what it feels like," said Brad after climbing from his car. "Winning the lottery maybe? I don't know. Just incredible. I've always raced with my brother and we've won a lot of races together. But I've always been the one on his pit crew that covers him with a lot of



Brad Rogers celebrates his first career ProCup Series win with a series of donuts. (51 Photos)

water when he wins and now it is other people doing it to me.

"It's kind of far fetched to think a cat who has run just one year of late model stocks can jump in a Hooters car and win a race. It is hard to do, but you have to have people like this team behind you do it. I knew it was just a matter of time. I had faith in myself and so did everyone else.

"We were a top five car. Clayton was probably better. So was Bobby (Gill) and (Danny) O'Quinn. I had a third- or fourth-place car. But things worked in our favor. They all had problems. We didn't. In the end, a win is a win."



Rogers (#29) was able to hold off a surprisingly fast Jody Lavender (#99).

Brad played it smooth and kept his #29 out of trouble when every else seemed to find it.

Shane Huffman had the dominate car at the outset. Huffman jumped out to the lead from his outside pole spot and led until lap 113, while Danny O'Quinn Jr., who started ninth, took the lead.

That is when things got really interesting.

O'Quinn stayed out when the rest of the leaders pitted and pitted himself a few laps later. Huffman worked his way back to the front and found Bobby Gill chasing him down.

Off of a restart on lap 180, Huffman and Gill got together coming into the green. The contact sent both cars into the wall just past the flag stand and caused significant damage on both. Huffman's right rear cut down, forcing him to pit road while Gill continued to stay out front. To add insult to injury, Huffman was then penalized one lap by USAR officials for having a crew member over the wall without a helmet.

That gave Gill the lead, and despite racing a battered car, he held off the comings of several drivers until O'Quinn got back up to second. Finally, O'Quinn made a charge at Gill for the year and the two made contact. Gill spun and brought out another caution. Officials then penalized O'Quinn and sent

him to the rear of the field for rough driving, handing the lead over to Rogers.

Rogers held on through the last 25 laps and several challenges from Michael Ritch , including one green-white-checker restart at the end, for the victory.

"All I was thinking was 'don't spin the tires, don't spin the tires' because you are wanting to go so hard and I think I spun the tires all the way down to turn one," said Brad of the late race restart. "I lit (the tires) up. I thought (Ritch) might have a good shot at getting by me after that.

"So I knew I just had to hit my marks. You have to hit them every lap or someone is going to get by you. That is how good these cats are."

After a great series of donuts and some exuberant celebrating with his crew members, Brad emerged from his car a ProCup Series race winner and got a special little message from older brother Clay.

"Clay came over and said congratulations and that he was happy for me," said Brad. "That is all he said, but that is all he had to say. That makes me feel good. Really good."



Rogers is the leading rookie in the season after 10 races.

"It is great," Clay said of Brad's win, sounding more like a proud papa rather than a brother running the same championship title as his younger sibling. "He has really worked hard the last year and a once he got things going at Concord (Motorsport Park, NC) in the late model stocks.

"He decided he was going to chase that racing dream pretty hard and he's done a heck of a job. He come on fast in these cars. I couldn't be more proud of him than I am right now. Hopefully, he'll go and wrap up that Rookie of the Year in the south and the the overall rookie in the post season.



Michael Ritch had his best run of the season and finished second at Kenly (NC).

"I'm as proud right now as I've ever been. I wish things would have went better for us tonight so I could be a lit happier. It is tearing me apart not being able to be as happy for Brad as I should be. It is just tough to do tonight."

That night included Clay, who sat on the pole for the evening going a lap down after a crew member went over the wall without a helmet during his pit stop, fighting to get the lead back and then being penalized yet another lap when he got together with Daniel Johnson (who drives the car that Clay drove last season), setting up the green-white-checker finish.

Johnson even came down and confronted Rogers after the race following the incident. No punches were thrown, but officials broke it up after some shoving and a lot of words were exchanged.

Ritch held on for second, while Jody Lavender, Billy Bigley Jr. and David Pletcher rounded out the top five finishers.

Speed51.com will have much more of the wild night in the ProCup Leftovers, including photos, comments and all of the recap from Rogers, Johnson, Huffman, Gill, O'Quinn and much more this coming week.