

Foxwoods/Racing Against Cancer Team Captures 2nd Place at Mansfield!

(MANSFIELD, OH) – When the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour headed to Mansfield, Ohio for the running of the Mansfield 150, not one team knew what to expect. The Modifieds had never competed at the fast, half mile oval and most of the drivers had never even seen the track. The Foxwoods/Racing Against Cancer team brought the yellow #77 to the track with high hopes, as their recent 4th place finish at Stafford brought some momentum to the summer stretch of racing.

Driver Doug Coby used the first 45 minute practice session to find the line around the track. The Chase Racing #77 was turning laps consistently in the 15.5's and 15.6's, which put them in the middle of the field when the first practice results were recorded.

“We ran a 15.50 and the fastest lap was turned in the 15.2's,” said Doug, “What the practice sheet doesn't show you is that the guys that went in the 15.2's did that for one lap and then immediately fell off to the 15.5's and 6's. Our car never changed during practice, so I was really happy with how well it was handling on the longer runs. Those guys who were fast were all fast early on in the session. Our fastest lap wasn't until lap 61 of practice, so I was happy to spend a lot of time out on the track finding different lines and making sure the car was handling how we needed it to.”

Doug and the #77 were one of the last few cars to circle the speedway for their two lap time trial run. The first lap of 15.54 was nothing spectacular, but their second lap of 15.46 put them into the 8th spot. It was slightly off Donny Lia's 15.27 second pole speed, but the team was still happy with the outcome.

“This was an impound race,” said Doug, “Meaning we couldn't make any changes to the car after time trials. It's tough to decide whether to set the car up for the race or for time trials because you usually can't have both. We always choose to shoot for race setup, and in this case, our race setup happened to give us a decent time trial run.”



Doug had the Foxwoods/Racing Against Cancer #77 out front early on.
(Howie Hodge photo)

After redrawing the #2 starting position, Doug lined up for the 150-lap feature next to the #0 of Danny Sammons. When the green flag flew, Coby and the Foxwoods/Racing Against Cancer rocket made quick work of Sammons and blasted into the lead before the field reached the start finish line. Doug would lead the first 13 laps of the event before the #28 of James Civali took the lead away, and brought the #19 of Ronnie Silk and the #4 of Lia along with him.

“When the 28 got next to me, I knew there were a line of cars behind him,” explained Doug, “I tried to get a good run on the outside going into turn one and I overdrove the corner. I washed up the track which made it really easy for the 19 and the 4 to get past. Once we settled into 4th, the race went for a long stretch of green flag racing, and I knew we'd get better the longer we raced.”

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The race stayed green until lap 53. During the 40-lap green flag run, Doug hounded the back of Lia to search for a way past the series points leader.

“We had a way better car than Donny at that point,” said Doug, “It was unbelievable how difficult it was to pass on that track though. Every time I thought I could get a run on him there just wasn’t enough room. I’m sure I could have wrecked him to get by, but at lap 50 of a 150 lap race, I was happier to make him use up his tires to try to keep me behind him.”



Doug applied heavy pressure to Donny Lia for the third spot early in the race. (Mary Hodge photo)

During the caution, Silk, who was leading at the time, decided to pit for tires. This moved the #77 up to third place on the restart. When Civali led the field back to green on lap 59, Doug used his position on the bottom lane to move past Lia into second. On that lap, the rest of the field checked up behind Civali and Coby, which allowed the two to open up a sizeable advantage over the third place car of Woody Pitkat.

By lap 70, Civali and Coby stretched their lead over third place to a full straightaway. The #28 and the #77 were never separated by more than four car lengths during this time. Both cars appeared to be equally matched, as Doug would close the gap and crawl close to Civali’s rear bumper, but then Civali would stretch his lead out to a car length or two. As the two started coming up on lapped traffic, Doug saw it as an opportunity to gain on Civali.

“Lapped traffic is never easy to deal with when you’re leading,” said Doug, “I know from experience that the lapped cars always seem to put up a fight with the leader more than they do for the second place car. We were able to close in a few times on the back of the 28, but once we started lapping 4 or 5 cars, it got to the point where we were still a car length or two behind him.”

The next caution didn’t come out until lap 96. By this time Civali and Coby had a half track lead on third place and were beginning to work on putting cars running in the top 15 one lap down. With the way the event was unfolding, Doug knew the next restart would be crucial in determining his team’s chances of winning.

“It turned into a single file race with very few cautions,” recalled Doug, “I knew that if I could get the lead it would be hard for the 28 to get back around me. When we lined up to go racing on the next restart, I wanted to get as good of a jump as possible to see if we could get out front again.”

Doug did get a good jump on the restart on lap 101. He beat Civali to the start finish line and the two sailed into turn 1 side by side. Civali used the bottom groove to stay along side of Doug through



Doug edges out in front of race winner James Civali on lap 101. (Howie Hodge photo)

CHASE RACING

NASCAR WHELEN MODIFIED TOUR

turns 1 and 2, and pulled ahead as they entered turn 3. Doug was able to tuck back in line behind Civali, and the two once again opened up an advantage over the rest of the field.

As the field completed lap 104, a light rain started to fall and the caution was brought out for just the fourth time. The rain came down harder and the field was brought down pit road under red flag conditions on lap 108. Though the rain eventually stopped and the track was dried, the Mansfield 150 was deemed officially complete at 5:25 pm on lap 108 because the Busch East Series event that followed the Modifieds was scheduled to be live on television at 5:30 pm. The Chase Racing team was left with a well deserved second place finish, but was also left wondering what could have been had the race gone green for the last 42 laps.

“I’m really happy that we were able to bring Racing Against Cancer and Foxwoods out to Mansfield for this show, and I’m even happier that we brought them back a second place finish,” said Doug, “Of course I think we had a shot at winning the race if we had gone back to green and completed all 150 laps, but who knows, maybe things could’ve taken a turn for the worse and we might not have even gotten second. All in all, it was a great finish for us at a new track in front of a bunch of new fans. Knowing that our race was also on live television, I’m happy that we were able to get our sponsors some well deserved exposure in front of a live national audience. One of our crew guys who couldn’t make the trip to Ohio called us afterwards and said that we were pretty much on air for the entire broadcast period since we were so far in front of the rest of the field, so that’s pretty cool!”



One of the “perks” of finishing in the top three was getting stuck on the infield for the Busch East series race. © (Mary Hodge photo)

The next event for the Foxwoods/Racing Against Cancer Whelen Modified Tour team is the Made in America 300 at Martinsville Speedway this Saturday night.

Thompson Race Note

On Thursday, August 16, 2007 the Chase Racing #77 team competed in the New England Dodge Dealers 150 at Thompson Speedway. With the #77 two laps down in the 19th position, the race was halted by a terrible accident on lap 106 that claimed the life of New Jersey driver John Blewett, III. The days following the accident have been very difficult for everyone associated with the Modified racing community and hit the Chase Racing team especially hard. John drove for the Chase’s for over four years and captured wins at Loudon, Stafford, Thompson, Wall, and Concord behind the wheel of the #77. After driving for the Chase’s, John took his family owned #66 to wins at Stafford and at both Loudon races during the 2006 season. Everyone on the Chase Racing team sends their thoughts and prayers to the Blewett family. John’s presence at the races will be greatly missed and he will be remembered by many as one of the best to wheel a Modified on the Modified Tour. RIP John, we will miss you.

