



## Swindell Claims 24<sup>th</sup> Annual COMP Cams<sup>®</sup> Short Track Nationals

**Little Rock, AR** - Sprint Car legend Sammy Swindell conquered a field of 100 of the nation's best Sprint Car pilots to claim his second event title in the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual COMP Cams<sup>®</sup> Short Track Nationals at I-30 Speedway (Little Rock, Arkansas) on Saturday, October 29<sup>th</sup>.

In Sprint Car racing there are hundreds of special events across the country each year, but there are only a handful of crown jewels. The annual COMP Cams<sup>®</sup> Short Track Nationals at I-30 Speedway in Little Rock falls on the list of illustrious events that every competitor wants to win. Each year the best Sprint Car drivers in the country and the most avid fans converge on the high-banked, 1/4 mile oval located in central Arkansas. The event is known for its close quarters racing and wild happenings. Even more notable is that the event is typically filled with drama, and the 2011 edition of the crown jewel event was no exception.

Exactly 100 Sprint Cars from sixteen states entered the event on October 26<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011. After a successful practice night on Wednesday evening the racing action was slated to get underway on Thursday, when approximately half of the field was to take to the track for their preliminary programs. Mother Nature proved to be an antagonist on the opening night, however, as intermittent rains became terminal midway through Thursday's program, forcing the balance of the action to be completed the following evening before the commencement of Friday's schedule.

When the action resumed on Friday evening under cool conditions, it was Broken Arrow, Oklahoma's Brady Bacon, who wouldn't let a severely smoking engine, virtue of an oil overflow, slow him down as he raced to the preliminary victory. A hard-charging Shane Stewart finished in second and Travis Rilat came home in third. With their performances the trio locked into Saturday night's 40 lap finale.

With the Thursday program finally completed a little over 24 hours after it initially began, the Friday slate of racing tackled the 1/4 mile oval. A star-studded field that included many of the nation's best went to war in the event. While former event champions and Bartlett, Tennessee residents Jason Sides and Sammy Swindell waged a heated battle for the lead early in the event, it was former World of Outlaws Champion Danny Lasoski who passed both drivers late in the race to claim the preliminary win. Sides and Swindell followed him across the line to lock into Saturday night's main event.

With the preliminary events in the history books, Saturday's program was next on tap. A near-capacity crowd began funneling into the facility early Saturday morning, and by 6:00 p.m. that night spectators were parking as far away as a mile down the road as I-30 Speedway was bursting at the seams with racers and fans. The massive crowd would not leave disappointed.

By 7:30 p.m. hot laps were underway, and prior to the racing action several presentations were made to various drivers. The most touching involved a former racer, Josh Howard, who hails from Byhalia, Mississippi. Howard was paralyzed from the waist down in a freak accident during the race's 2007 edition. Over the past few years he has fought hard on his road to recovery, and while he still isn't able to walk, he has surpassed the expectations of many of his doctors. The 2011 running of the event marked his first time back at the COMP Cams<sup>®</sup> Short Track Nationals, and he was there to present the Josh Howard Determination Award, which is a special award presented each year to the driver who demonstrates the most drive and determination to overcome adversity. The award for 2011 was presented to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma's Wayne Johnson, who, despite doctor's predictions, returned to racing late last year after almost having his right foot completely severed in a racing accident. It was an emotional moment as the entire crowd gave the pair a standing ovation, and many of the fans came to give Howard their well-wishes.

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With the event's opening ceremonies in the rearview mirror, racing finally began. The field was distributed into a series of alphabet races, whose lineups were determined by driver's performances on their qualifying nights. The preliminary events started with a pair of E-Mains and concluded with a pair of B-Mains. By the time the B-Mains were completed, a field of 21 cars had been assembled for the coveted \$15,000-to-win and \$2,400-to-start feature. Via a dash held earlier in the night for the top six cars that had locked into the feature on their qualifying nights, it was Danny Lasoski and Shane Stewart who sat on the front row for the 40 lap finale.

As the race went green Stewart jumped to the lead, with Lasoski, Bacon and the fourth-starting Swindell in tow. Swindell quickly worked his way to the second position and stalked early leader Shane Stewart until lap 13, when he raced past Stewart for the top spot exiting turn four. Once out front Swindell methodically began to motor away from the field as Bacon moved past Stewart for second. By lap 25 Swindell had a straightaway lead, and looked to be on his way to a comfortable win before the caution flew on lap 28 for a spun car. During the caution Swindell's right front went flat. Swindell is one of the most polarizing drivers in the sport; fans either love him or hate him with no middle ground, and when it was announced that his tire had gone flat, many of his naysayers came to their feet cheering thinking that his bid at a second title was gone. However, the determined Swindell would be far from done.

When the field lined up for the restart Swindell had a four car cushion between himself and second place runner Brady Bacon, as four lapped cars were placed in between the duo. When the green flag flew for the final time Swindell would do his best to drive his injured mount away from the field as Bacon needed four laps to clear the lapped cars. Once he cleared the traffic he had open track between himself and Swindell, but it wouldn't matter as even with the flat tire Swindell inched away from the field to claim the \$15,000 payday, marking his second COMP Cams® Short Track Nationals title and first since 1990. He was followed across the line by Bacon, Stewart, Lasoski and Sides.

In victory lane a confident Swindell commented in front of a crowd full of mixed emotions.

“The last few years all I needed to do was finish and I'd win, but things broke or different things have happened like a tire going flat or whatever,” Swindell explained after his ninth career COMP Cams® Short Track Nationals feature start. “We had a flat tonight, but it didn't slow us down, with three wheels it was still better than anybody else. Those guys better go back to work.”

Swindell's victory lane comments saw the crowd reply with many boos, while a handful of Swindell supporters gloated in the moment. Whether or not race fans were pleased with the result, one thing was for sure, another COMP Cams® Short Track Nationals had entertained the masses and produced just enough drama to tide race fans over during the off-season. In total a massive purse that boasted over \$116,000 was paid out over the course of the weekend's festivities.

Full results for the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual COMP Cams® Short Track Nationals can be found at [www.I-30Speedway.com](http://www.I-30Speedway.com).

#### About COMP Cams®

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