

Muddy derby thrills hearty fans

By Tom Betz
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Keeping the arena wet was not a problem Saturday night as Mother Nature dropped about half an inch of rain on the area to make the Kiwanis Demo Derby a muddy, slippery, event to open the Northwest Kansas District Free Fair.

A field of 18 cars and two pickups smashed it out with Derek Framholtz winning the main event and Chris Zimmerman winning the pickup duel.

A light rain was falling as the evening got started, but Rich Simon, Kiwanis derby chairman, said they were going to do the derby rain or shine. The grandstand wasn't full, but a good crowd kept dry to watch the wild event.

"We don't have a choice," said Kiwanis member and announcer Jeff Mason. "We don't have a rain date so we will go ahead."

In past years the Sherman County Rural Fire Department has brought fire trucks to help keep the arena wet between rounds, but that was not a problem this year. The firemen were called on a couple of times to put out an engine fire.

The arena was muddy, and once the cars got to spinning, sliding and crashing, the mud got deeper. Spectators on the sides of the arena got a few mud souvenirs and mud flew into the announcer booth on more than one occasion.

The evening opened with Janet Redlin singing the national anthem before the first heat.

With mud flying, the cars in each heat would line up for a big run and as they got close would slide right by each other or go spinning off without doing any damage. It took quite a bit of patience for the drivers to connect and begin to eliminate the competition.

J.J. Howard had his 911 decorated as an American flag and he and Andrew Miller were the top two winners of the first heat.

David Rose, Jerry Friese and Travis Ludowese were the winners of the second heat.

Framholtz, Neal Thornburg and Blake Saint came out of heat three.

Grady Cloyd and Corbin Townsend got to advance to the final by being the top two in the slop heat.

Between the slop heat and the derby main event two pickups got a chance to duel it out. Andrew Drennan was in one pickup and Chris Zimmerman in the other. The two pickups slid around and managed to hit each other a few times before Drennan's pickup got stuck on the berm on the east side because his drive shaft broke.

Drennan kept throwing up his hands as Zimmerman took aim and pushed the other pickup over the berm. Zimmerman won the duel, and Drennan told the officials he was disappointed as he wanted the duel to go on for more time.

This was the first year a pickup heat has been tried, and Simon said he was pleased to get at least two to give it a try.

From the heats and slop, 11 cars entered the arena for the main event, and as the cars began smashing, Mother Nature opened up with a heavy rain. Cars that were officially out of the competition were further pushed and smashed as the finalists went sliding into each other or spinning away to get a better angle.

When the rain began to subside a bit, two cars were left battling with Framholtz and Thornburg trying to knock the other out. Finally Thornburg had to break down his flag, giving the win to Framholtz.

Framholtz was the winner



Muddy conditions (above) prevailed in the arena for the annual Kiwanis Demo Derby on Saturday as cars spun, slid and churned up mud sending showers of mud balls around the arena and into the announcers booth. A couple of times action was halted to have the Sherman County Rural fireman (right) put out a fire under a hood. A large puff of smoke came out of Grady Cloyd's car (below) as he got slammed from the side in one of the heats on Saturday night.

Photos by Tom Betz
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Wednesday in Colby, and has a great chance to win the overall in St. Francis on Saturday.

Blake Saint was named the aggressive driver. Kiwanis officials had some questions about the rookie driver, whether it ought to be Brooke Redlin or Eric Ross.



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NORTHWEST TECH is pleased to announce the grand opening of the Betz-Saint House located at 1219 Center Street built by the 2009-2010 Northwest Tech Construction Division. The date is August 4 from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm MDT with a ribbon cutting. This energy efficient, low maintenance home is perfectly located within walking distance to area churches, art center, town and beautiful parks. Proceeds from the sale of the home go back to support the ongoing commitment of "hands-on" education by Northwest Kansas Technical College.

The Northwest Tech Admissions Team will be available on August 4 to assist any prospective students with enrollment or questions regarding the Carpentry, Engineering and HVAC programs offered at the College. For more information on these programs, call 1-800-316-4127 ext. 515, 785-890-3641 or go to our website at www.nwktc.edu.

