

Kiwanis Demo Derby smashing thrill for crowd

By Tom Betz
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The arena was plenty wet Saturday night as the Kiwanis Demo Derby became a muddy, slippery, event to open the Northwest Kansas District Free Fair.

A field of 7 cars and four trucks smashed it out with Dustin Smith (01) winning the car feature event and J.J. Ficken (36) winning the truck heat.

The weather was hot, but the arena had been soaked well before the event, and appeared to be extra slippery in the first car heat as the drivers slid around and tried to get up enough speed to knock the competitors out.

David Rose (17), Ryan Hosz (0) and Smith (01) were the top three in the heat. J.J. Howard (911), Neal Thornburg (26) and Tyler Martin (212) came back in the slop heat and were added to the feature.

Before the car feature three pickups and a suburban duelled it out for top prize. This was the second year for the trucks, and Ficken (36) was the winner when Chris Zimmerman (411) in the suburban lost his engine and broke off his flag. Zimmerman had won the first truck duel the year before.

At one point Zimmerman had Ficken's pickup on the south burm, but when the two vehicles got tangled they were pulled apart and the contest continued.

The other two trucks were driven by Andrew Drennan (3X) and Blake Saint (55). Drennan's truck got pushed over the south burm and Sain't truck died in the middle of the arena.

In the feature car event the car of David Rose (17) got shoved into the burm on the northeast and he was out first.

Martin's car almost got stuck



Drivers in the car division of the Kiwanis Demo Derby ganged up in the arena (above) on Saturday night trying to knock each other out of the heat. The car in the middle was Neal Thornburg (26), Ryan Hosz (0) already had front wheel problems, David Rose (17) hit Thornburg and Dustin Smith (01) hit Rose. J.J. Howard (911) was looking for a good angle to get into the pile up. Howard's car (right) was having trouble later in the heat and flames were shooting out of the exhaust.

Photos by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

on the burm in front of the chutes, but he was able to get free only to have his car die a few minutes later. Thornburg kept his car moving and was the last one out leaving Smith

as the winner.

Hosz was chosen as the aggressive driver for the night. Track officials said there were no rookies in the event this year.



Goodland graduate named head coach in Manhattan

Jesse Woodard, 1993 Goodland High School graduate has been named as the head track coach at Manhattan High School. Woodard has been the assistant track coach for eight years, overseeing the sprinters.

Manhattan athletic director Mike Marsh said he felt like Woodard was a good fit to take over for retiring coach Gary Schwandt.

"Jesse has been a head assistant coach for the past eight years and his leadership and knowledge about track are very good characteristics of his, and I'm sure his leadership, will carry him through," he said. "I know we all look forward to working with him next year.

Woodard went to Kansas State University at Manhattan after high school graduation and he played tight end from 1995-97. He spent most of his time on special teams and had one career catch, the first

completion of Jonathan Beasley's career. He is currently the offensive line coach for the Manhattan High School football team.

"I'm excited," said Woodard. "I was a little shocked when Gary retired, but he will still be around, and it will be fun because it's not like he left me with the cover bare. It will be a challenge but I have great assistants and it will be fun."

Woodard said he met with the athletic director following the Pittsburg State football camp at the beginning of June and then began speaking about the job with him just before the Fourth of July.

March said around that time he offered the job to Woodard, and he learned this week that the offer has been accepted.

Woodard said he consulted with his family and Schwandt before making a final decision on the job.

On the list of things to work

on now that he has the position, Woodard said he has to find a solid replacement for Schwandt in coaching a strong group of hurdlers.

"I thought Gary did an excellent job and we have great assistants so I will let them do their things," he said. "My biggest concern is finding someone to coach hurdles and replace Gary on things."

With Woodard's direct connection to football, he said he has had recent conversation with the Manhattan football coach Joe Schartz about integrating more players into the track program.

"I've talked with Joe about it and we want to get some more kids out, some of the bigger kids out to throw," he said. "The football players have always been some of my best sprinters, so we have a good connection and hopefully we can make it better."

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7								4

Level: Beginner

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