

LATE MODEL DIGEST

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Rubeck sends Carlson team, Saturday crowd out with thrill

The last image of the BRP Big 8 Limited Late Model Series feature at the 40th annual Oktoberfest race weekend wasn't of winner Ross Kenseth or local favorite and runner-up Skylar Holzhausen. What was left on the frontstretch while the others took their cool-down laps was the car driven by Steve Rubeck.

Rubeck tried to wrestle fourth away from Jeremy Lepak going through turn four and it backfired a bit. Rubeck slid up the frontstretch a bit and crossed the finish line sideways – still keeping fifth place – and nudged the inside wall. His front bodywork was a bit bent, and one of the orange cones was wedged into the frame, but otherwise everything was good for the veteran from Monroe Center, Ill.

And it drove the freezing but large throng of fans to cheer for a guy from that state south of the Wisconsin border.

"When you race in Wisconsin, it's not that I have a black hat, but I betcha I won't see 15 fans all night long," Rubeck said. "That's the cool part. I love being the underdog. I like being under the radar."

Rubeck wasn't an underdog after time trials,

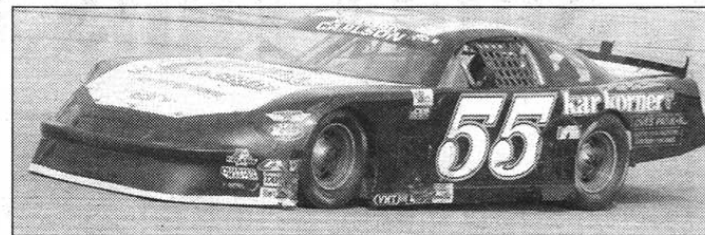
because he topped the speed charts. The inversion put him 11th, and the outside line had a better start than the inside at the drop of the green.

"I think he got everything he could get," Ryan Carlson said. "It took us 15 laps to pass a car that was holding us up. Steve was nice for a while."

The nice one was Carlson, who tabbed Rubeck to pilot his family-owned car for the 'Fest. They're both based around Rockford Speedway, as is John Knaus who drove the Carlson entry the previous weekend at Rockford's National Short Track Championships.

Carlson is still nursing back injuries suffered in a July ASA Late Model Series show at Rockford, where he crashed violently after two lapped cars he attempted to pass made it three-wide and forced him into the wall. He hopes to be out of his upper torso brace by November and back in a race car next spring.

Because of where he was in the LaCrosse stands, Carlson didn't get to see Rubeck's last-lap heroics.



Mark Melchiori/mdmracepix.com

Steve Rubeck drove Ryan Carlson's car to fast time and an exciting fifth-place finish.

That just made Rubeck's story to his temporary car owner that much better.

"I knew it'd race very well, from what I've seen with this car," Rubeck said. "Ryan would've finished second or maybe first. I'm still getting used to how it runs. These guys think of me as a wild man, so it seems to work. These guys give me confidence like you wouldn't believe."

The super-sub's Oktoberfest continued one more day. Rubeck placed third in the four-cylinder class, filling in for new Rockford class champion George Sparkman's daughter Rachel. **LMD**

closer
look

By Jim Carson
Late Model Digest editor