

LAS VEGAS SUPER SPRINT CLASSIC RECAP

Contributed by Bill Klingbeil

SNAKE EYES COME UP FOR SCHATZ IN VEGAS

LAS VEGAS - (Feb. 26) The "City of Lights" has been pretty good to Donny Schatz through the years. He closed the 1999 and 2004 WoO season with wins at The Dirt Track at Las Vegas Motor Speedway. He clinched his first WoO championship with a victory at the track in 2006. Last February, he scored his sixth career win at the half-mile dirt oval, and on Friday, he was looking to make it two in the row at the Las Vegas Super Sprint Classic.

For 27 laps it looked like Schatz was going to get lucky number seven, but it wasn't in the cards on this night. The Fargo, N.D. racer kicked off the evening by turning the fifth fastest lap in qualifying driving the Tony Stewart Racing (TSR) No. 15 Armor All/STP/ParkerStore J&J. Later in the night, he dominated the six-lap Dash event to earn his first pole of the season.

In the 30-lap A-Feature, Schatz quickly surged ahead and was working his way through traffic pounding the cushion. On lap 10, he went to the bottom in turns three and four to pass a lapped car only to have Joey Saldana get by him to take the lead. After a yellow slowed the action one lap later, Schatz regained the post on a restart and continued leading until the next caution slowed the race on lap 17. The race went green for the final 13 laps and with two laps remaining Jason Meyers used the low groove to get past Schatz. While still in hot pursuit of the lead, Schatz saw his TSR teammate, Steve Kinser, take the lead from Meyers going into the final corner. Schatz was in striking distance to get them both at the finish line, but came up just short.

"Any time you lead a race and don't win, you're not going to be happy," Schatz said. "We wanted to get the victory and felt like we were good enough to. The fans got to see a great race, but the outcome wasn't what our team hoped it was going to be."

Schatz and the Armor All crew will be back in action this weekend at Thunderbowl Raceway in Tulare, Calif. They will be looking for victory number two of the season and third of Schatz' career at the 3/8-mile dirt oval.