

Eaton Takes First-Ever Formula Enterprises Title

Sunday, 12 October 2008

TOPEKA, Kan. (Oct. 12, 2008) — Mark Eaton, of Melbourne, Fla., recovered from an shaky start to win the Formula Enterprises National Championship in the class's debut at the 45th SCCA National Championship Runoffs. Eaton also took home the SCCA Chicago Region Triple Crown®. Nick Evans, of Dublin, Ohio, and Brandon Aleckson, of Watsonville, Calif., completed the podium at Heartland Park Topeka.

Starting from pole in the No. 92 Global Aerospace/RMS/Cincy Images Formula Enterprises, Eaton immediately dropped a spot to Evans and Matthew Inge, of Fort Myers, Fla., on the start. Keeping a cool head, Eaton quickly got back around Inge's No. 20 Land/Development Solutions Formula Enterprises, and took over the lead from Evans on lap six. The pass enabled Inge to follow Eaton around Evans and take up the second spot.

Once by Evans, Inge remained glued to Eaton's bumper taking several looks through the Turn 13/14 complex and on the front straight.

As the 18-lap race neared its conclusion, Inge began to push the car a bit too hard, making a brief off-course excursion in the Esses on lap 16. The following lap, Inge repeated the mistake, but this time could not hold on. With Inge out of the picture, Eaton crossed the finish-line 1.391 seconds ahead of second place.

"I hit the rev limiter and that's what caused it [the poor start]," Eaton said. "Nick [Evans] threw it in there and he was able to get by me. I followed him for a few laps and saw his car went away just a little bit. I happened to get a draft in that huge headwind, and I think that was probably the factor that helped me get the lead.

"I felt a lot of relief when I saw [Inge] spin off with two to go. When I saw him spin again with one to go, I knew if I just didn't throw the car off I could probably win this thing."

Though he had started to turn up the pressure on Inge in the closing laps, Evans was spared any decisions about a pass with Inge's spin and finished second.

Fourth-starting Aleckson finished third in the No. 83 Tico Const/Westek/Trinity Rcnng Concepts Formula Enterprises.

Matthew Schneider, of Lexington, Ky., and Paul Schneider, of Charlotte, N.C., completed the top five.

Lee Walther, of Oklahoma City, Okla., was the Sunoco Hard Charger, advancing seven positions in the LRW, Inc. Formula Enterprises during the race.

The Formula Enterprises National Championship race will air on SPEED, Wednesday, Jan. 28, at 1 p.m. (EST).

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