

10-20-23: Devil's Bowl Speedway (TX)
Track #204 | Mesquite, TX | ½ Mile Dirt Oval

This one was a very last minute trip. Devil's Bowl had always been one I intended to get to eventually since it has so much history with the World of Outlaws, but it never became a priority until they announced less than a week before their last race of the year that it would also be their last race ever. I bought a flight on Saturday for the next Friday to make sure I could check out the track before it closed.

I landed in Dallas, got my rental car, and made my way out to the track. There weren't a lot of people there when I arrived about an hour before hot laps.



The road in was a windy, pothole-filled road with only one lane each way. The parking lot was plenty big for tonight but looked questionably large if they were to sell out tomorrow night, which seemed like a strong possibility.



The line for the track merchandise was extremely long, presumably for the special event shirts they were selling there. The concession lines were basically non-existent. I wandered past the World of Outlaws first race plaque then to the Outlaws merch trailers. A few had lapel pins which I really appreciate and Shark Racing was doing a promotion where they gave you a free shot of whiskey with the purchase of a shot glass.



The first thing I noticed when I looked at the track was that the backstretch was noticeably and significantly higher than the frontstretch, the degree to which I've only seen before at North Wilkesboro, though the front and backstretches were level here. It provided for good visibility, and even standing on the ground I could see the majority of the track pretty well. The only issue was the temporary video board that travels with the Outlaws.



Engine heat started at 6 and they pushed off the cars on the backstretch and they drove around the outside of three and four then exited in two. They tilled the track again right before hot laps, which took over 30 minutes, then drove the modifieds and 305s around to wheelpack.



The local cars were pitted in the infield and they were still pulling in even at 6:30 when hot laps were scheduled to begin. There was a big lineup at the pit gate to get in, I could see it backing up throughout the start of the night which I'm sure contributed. The Outlaws were pitted outside the track which is always appreciated because those big haulers block a lot of the track.

I had a reserved seat in the top row on the turn four end. Visibility was very good and the benches on the top were wide and easy to stand on. Visibility lower in the grandstands wasn't bad either, again owing to the backstretch being so elevated. It wasn't quite as noticeable from the stands but I could see how the cars were going up a bit of a hill through turn two.



The sun set over turn 3 but was pretty much gone by the time hot laps started at 6:45 and I think they were waiting for cars to get in due to the backup at the pit gate. There were 31 World of Outlaws Sprint Cars, 19 limited modifieds, and around 20 305 sprint cars.

Hot laps were generally uneventful, the track seemed smooth and they tended to run about half a groove up from the bottom but a few were up higher. Apparently Wout Hoffman became the first Dutch driver to ever race with the Outlaws tonight. Qualifying was two at a time and most were on the cushion through the turns. I did notice that Harli White's engine sounded noticeably different than the other cars.

There was a healthy crowd but it wasn't anywhere near full. I ran into a couple other Trackchasers and had a nice conversation.



The Outlaws ran three heats. There were a couple dicey moments, such as when someone lost a right rear going into turn one, but he managed to keep it surprisingly under control and came to a stop outside the corner. Sheldon Haudenschild didn't make the A out of heats.

The limited modifieds ran next. They had a lot more contact, such as one car getting into the wall on the initial start then again on the backstretch pretty hard, didn't look like he was able to turn. There was a three car pileup on the start of the second heat and one got into the tractor tire protecting the infield wall on the turn four end. The 305 heats were clean but had some good racing.

The modified main was the race of the night. Three cars in a row got into the wall on the front stretch and there was a lot of contact. On the last lap they were three wide for the lead going down the backstretch and they all got together. Two went over the banking and into the wall and one backed into a tractor tire and got the rear end way up in the air, it made for a very exciting ending.

I'm glad I was able to see the track before it unexpectedly closes. It has so much history with the Outlaws and it's even better to get to see them racing here for the final weekend.