



INDEX

OPINION 12A
 SPORTS 10B
 OUTDOORS 9B
 LIFESTYLE 1B
 CLASSIFIEDS 9A



INSIDE

Faces of the Derby featured in Lifestyle

■ See some of the fans, racers and volunteers who make the Derby great. Pg. 1B

VILAS COUNTY NEWS-REVIEW

Section A

\$1.75

VOL. 136, NO. 46

EAGLE RIVER, WI 54521 • (715) 479-4421 • vcnewsreview.com

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 19, 2022

Derby again draws thousands to area

Community relations important to event

By NEWS-REVIEW STAFF

Another World Championship Snowmobile Derby and Vintage Championship is in the books, and organizers, volunteers and attendees all agreed that following both weekends of events, each had its shining moments.

The 59th annual World Championship Snowmobile Derby took place Jan. 13-16 in Eagle River as racers and fans from across the country gathered for the 59th annual event. The culmination of the weekend came Sunday when Jay Mittelstaedt of La Valle, Wis. took home the prized title of world champion as he hoisted the SnowGoer Cup with his teammates and family.

"It's overwhelming as we sit here Monday following the

events, looking back at how it all unfolded," said World Championship Derby Complex (WCDC) General Manager Dan Peck.

"We had a lot of relationships this year that again were important. Working with the city, the fire and police department and the school district. They were all so helpful. Then with the Great Lakes Medical Service. The director said it was his most favorite race he's ever been to. He couldn't say enough about the measures we put forth to help make things safe," said Peck.

Despite a cold start to Friday Night Thunder, fans packed the stands and braved

To DERBY, Pg. 2A



The hillside along the famed World Championship Derby Complex ice oval was again littered with spectators as the annual event

drew thousands of race fans and winter tourists to the North Woods over the course of two weeks. —STAFF PHOTOS

Mittelstaedt captures world title at 59th Derby Championships

By DOUG ETTEN
SPORTS EDITOR

After years of trying aboard a 440-Champ sled, the change to Formula-III was an opportunity once again for Jay Mittelstaedt of Laval, Wis., as the veteran racer was crowned World Champion after leading the final 22 laps of the World Championship Snowmobile Derby at the famed ice oval in Eagle River.

"Our goal coming in to this weekend was to just get a ring, just get into the big show," said Mittelstaedt. "We never really in our wildest imagination thought we could put it on the front step here. Just amazing, that's all I can say. I honestly just cannot believe it."

Mittelstaedt outlasted a late-race charge from pre-race favorite Gunnar Sterne of West Chicago who would finish in the runner-up spot. Following Sterne and filling out the podium was Jake Gerow of Osceola. Full results were not available as of press time.

Before the race even started, one of the top contenders was nixed from the field as a fuel pressure issue on the No. 102 Wahl Bros., Polaris meant the drive for a fifth straight World Championship was gone for



2022 Eagle River Snowmobile Derby Queen Olivia Terizzi presents the SnowGoer Cup to the 59th World Championship race winner Jay Mittelstaedt of La Valle, Wis.

Blaine Stephenson of St. Cloud, Minn. Stephenson had issues with the snowmobile as he pulled to the front stretch for pre-race ceremonies, and then as he worked along the backstretch to make final preparations, seemed to have things fixed as he met with

the rest of the field at the start line for the drop of the green flag.

Then, as flagman Jason "Rico" Borrero signaled for the start of the race, Stephenson jumped up from his sled in an attempt to restart it, only to move about 100 feet down the

front stretch causing the red flag to come out without even one lap in the books.

As a crowd of thousands looked on from the banks and hot seats, Stephenson's numerous attempts to get the snowmobile started failed, meaning that without getting it to the paddock area his team was unable to help according to rules, which dropped the pre-race favorite from the field before one lap had even been run.

Teammate Tom Olson of Lodi, Wisc., was also one of the fast sleds coming into the race, but the inability to corner following the early laps left him behind the field midway through the race, allowing Mittelstaedt alone out front contend-

To CHAMPION, Pg. 3A

Sterne picks up second-straight Friday night win

By DOUG ETTEN
SPORTS EDITOR

One of the most successful drivers in Eagle River history was atop a familiar podium again Friday evening as West Chicago, Ill., driver Gunnar Sterne piloted his No. 220 Ski-Doo to victory lane in the World Championship Derby Complex (WCDC) Sweet 16 event, culminating a lengthy Friday Night Thunder spectacular at the WCDC.

"It's nice to get the back-to-back win in the Friday night race," Sterne said following the race, which didn't get underway at the Derby Complex until nearly 11:30 p.m. "It was a long night, but being able to stay focused and cap it with a win makes all the laps worth it."

The Formula-III win secured a front-row starting

position in Sunday's World Championship for Sterne, the one race title at Eagle River that has still evaded one of the all-time winningest drivers in ice oval racing history.

Following Sterne to the finish line during the 16-lap feature was an upstart Calvin Cook of Dayton, Minn. The 19-year-old racer who has come up though oval racing's support classes was fast all day Friday, and showed his persistence late in the event as he passed a fading Blaine Stephenson, who settled for third and looked visibly tired following what was a long night of racing for many drivers who pulled both Formula-III and Pro Champ 440 sleds to

To FRIDAY, Pg. 4A



Gunnar Sterne (left) surgest just ahead of Jay Mittelstaedt as the two drivers drag race down the backstretch during Sunday's title race. Mittelstaedt would hold the lead.



ROYALTY —Three Lakes Ice Queen Kallie Volk and Derby Queen Olivia reign over the ceremonies.