

Sawyer takes Round 2 of the California Outlaw Series

Contributed by easyrider2004
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The second round of the California Outlaw Series continued on January 6th, at the infamously gnarly Barrett Junction racecourse. Round One featured perfect weather, banked curves and fast racing on the "nirvana like" Glendora Mountain Road. Round Two would be far different: under sunny and clear skies, the alligator-cracked, off-camber curves at Barrett Junction were made all the more challenging by gusting winds up to 40mph that obliterated any chance of air-braking and threatened to push riders onto the cheese-grater surface at several points on the course.

When the speedboard and streetluge racers were done, Round Two was championed by Andrew Sawyer and Digger Green. Casualties were surprisingly few, considering the wind, the road surface and the number of skaters that charged the hill for their very first time. One speedboarder found a hole in the road and cracked an elbow in the aftermath, another took a hard whack at the bottom of the course in cross-wind and Sawyer paid for his ripping finish with a yard sale that took out his two competitors, also.

Practice runs began early, under the stern direction of Rick Kludy (driving the chase truck) that even racers experienced on this infamous run take their early runs easy and slow. The temperatures were in the high 70's, making things much more pleasant than they can be at other time of the year out there, but the strong winds were daunting and gusty. Those created an interesting dilemma for the skaters: if one stood up out of his tuck to slow down, a gust might come along and actually accelerate him! We watched it happen from the roof of the chase vehicle, more than once!

The speedboarders were joined by streetluge racers on the hill. Waldo Autry came out to run the hill and Digger Green brought out a brand-new pegless, his first runs on one ever. At the bottom of the hill he reported, "It's like driving a Porsche after a hot rod Cadillac, man!" The speed of the lugers was really apparent at the bottom of the coarse hill, where they often crossed the line at over 50mph on the Silverfish radar gun, but the upper sections included so many off-camber turns that Rick Kludy was able to outrun Digger in practice down past "Doc's Corner", where the lugers could finally pull away down the "Cat Tracks" section.

The lugers battled, with Autry and Green trading places at the finish line over and over, but the final run to the finish was all Digger Green. From a tight formation coming into the final stretch, he dropped his head low and pulled away from Waldo as they came over the line and both fried shoes in an attempt to scrub speed before the hard left turn and a fence both had adorned earlier in the day. The speedboard field had thinned somewhat, due to a few crashes, but the racers went into the final rounds with hard-charging Roland Sumile enjoying his first day at Barrett and a chance to fight off the sly Andrew Sawyer, in his new, sinister-looking Icaro, and "Papa" Rick Kludy for the top slot on the podium. The Consi round pitted Justin Kludy, Georges Siddiqi and RJ Meehan against one another.

In the Consi, the skaters came down fast, during a lull in the gusting winds. Justin lead through Docs and developed a slight gap ahead of Meehan and Siddiqi as they came through Cat Tracks. Siddiqi, now accustomed the road conditions (and also on his first day at Barrett) was on the hunt and working with Meehan, however. They reeled in Kludy on the lower half of the course and RJ led Georges to the line, for an overall Fourth Place. Great racing, and no casualties! The Final Round was classic speedboard racing. The three finalists came down the hill in gusty conditions above Doc's, but came into a "relatively" calm moment as they tore through the Cat Tracks sections with a "braaap!" of their wheels. Roland "Lit" Sumile tore down the hill, leading Rick Kludy and Andrew Sawyer, as he'd done earlier in earlier rounds. This time, however, The Old Man was having none of that: he hunkered down smooth and chased Sumile, passing him before the final straight and grinning at the line as he headed for his first-ever Victory at Barrett Junction. Just at the last few seconds, Rick ducked his head and saw the tip of Andrew Sawyer's board!

Sawyer, who's been steadily improving his style and charge over the last season, had been drafting Rick down the hill and surged in a last-chance move for the line with a 48mph blast past Rick that put him a full board length ahead after the line. The late effort meant that Andrew had to lay down brakes, hard and fast, before the runout was gone and the effort tossed him down into the paths of Kludy and Sumile, who ran him over like he deserved it! All three came up grinning and stoked, but Sawyer got a few short-term souvenirs. The awards ceremony featured some hilarious, true-outlaw trophies: repainted broken boards! Sawyer's trophy was actually one of Justin's boards that Andrew broke! Classic stuff, but that wasn't all: each competitor in streetluge and speedboard scored cash from the pot and serious schwag from Sector 9, including a very rare, new, flush-mount Bomb Hills that went home with Lit. Photos from all the racing are in the Cal Outlaw Gallery, and we expect more from the "finish-line photographer" in the near future. The next, and final, round of the California Outlaw Series will be at Dump Road, in Moreno Valley, Calif. Looks like it might be Feb. 4th. It's fast, fast, fast. See you there.

Silverfish Longboarding supports all forms of skateboard racing, do you? Outlaw racing is a special class, and requires some special considerations beyond the skaters accepting responsibility for their own health and safety. The Cal Outlaw crew use clear courses, secured from traffic by various means, radio communication between the top and bottom of the course and haven't had to bury anyone yet. Be smart! See you out there.