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# BAKER SURVIVES SHOOTOUT

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BY MIKE WHITE

"Tight and twisty" was the way Freddy Baker described Waterford Hills after his first time around the hilly 1.5-mile circuit.

A total of 13 Showroom Stock competitors, with licences from the SCCA, Waterford, FIA, and even NASCAR, made the trip to Waterford for the BFGoodrich Showroom Stock Shootout. BFG provided a purse of \$6,500 for the event. Three Renault Encores also ran, but were not included in the BFG money. Part of their entry was used as their purse.

The race was run in conjunction with Waterford Hills regular race weekend, so the newcomers had plenty of time to study the line around the track. Waterford runs by the GCR, and has a noise limit of 90 db this season. All the Showroom Stock competitors had one practice session and two qualifying sessions to give them as much track time as possible.

The fastest qualifier was first-year Tom Goad in a Firebird Trans-Am with a time of 1:26.66, with Bill Bayley also in a Firebird at 1:26.74. Baker's Porsche 944 was close behind at 1:26.96. Bayley currently holds

the SSGT record at 1:24.50. Jack Broomall was not only the fastest SSB qualifier in his Shelby Charger at 1:27.44, but he outqualified both the SSA cars to be gridded fourth. Ron Lindensmith, who was Waterford SSC champion in 1982, was the fastest SSC car at 1:29.81. Allen Franzolino, in only his second race, was the top SSA qualifier in his RX7 with a time of 1:31.66. Former kart racer Tom VanCamp led the Encores with a time of 1:30.34, with Tom Managhan close behind at 1:30.45. Charles Bates, Longest Day veteran, lost one cylinder in his Firebird's engine and was the last qualifier. Rick Knoechel's Encore started last with no time.

At the green, Goad, Bayley, and Baker pulled away as the rest of the field sorted itself out. Five laps later, Bates parked his Trans-Am at Turn 5. His engine had lost another cylinder and the car could not get up to any kind of speed.

On the tenth lap, Bayley passed Goad for the lead with Baker in hot pursuit. Broomall pulled away from Andy Jones, also in a Shelby. Jones was called in for a leak and Broomall's lead was too big to overcome.





*Freddy Baker relaxes before the start of the B.F. Goodrich feature race.*

*Photo by Mark Windecker*

Farther back, the Encores were busy as Knoechel's Rinke AMC-backed car dueled with VanCamp's Kelly AMC-sponsored car. Knoechel finally prevailed, but Managhan's Southwyck AMC mount was long gone.

Denny Ura, in the only Mustang SVO, moved up to pass Mike Puskar's DILLIGAF Camaro. Puskar is another Longest Day veteran. Ura had blown two clutches on Saturday.

John Nytes, a first-year driver, was visibly gaining on Lindensmith, but after some time holding his position was unable to make any further dent in Lindensmith's lead.

Without a doubt, Mike Hurst's Omega with its automatic transmission was the crowd favorite. Every time Hurst passed the spectator area, a cheer went up.

At the front of the field Bayley, Goad and Baker were still hot and heavy. On the 25th lap, Goad spun on the downhill side of

Turn 4 and dropped from contention.

On lap 33, Tom VanCamp and John Gibson, a novice in a Shelby, tangled at the end of Waterford's 1,000-foot backstraight with no damage. Two laps later, Gibson was out of the race at Turn 4 with a suspected clogged fuel line.

As the race began to run down, Baker kept the pressure on Bayley, clipping every apex and throwing up little puffs of dust.

Bayley prevailed on the track, winning by less than a second. But at the post race inspection, which was handled by Detroit Region tech inspectors, Bayley was disqualified. He chose not to appeal, and Baker was declared the winner. Broomall won the combined A,B,C race and Managhan was the top Encore.

All the drivers were enthusiastic about the race and the track itself, and the organizers promised an even better event next season.

**MSM**





*Freddy Baker took the overall win at his first outing at Waterford Hills.*

*Photo by Mark Windecker*



*Bill Bayley sets his sights on the Porsche of Freddy Baker.*

*Photo by Mark Windecker*