



# 3DCS VIDEO

## The Missing Piece to the Puzzle

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August 10, 2009

### **Steele Claims First TORC Series Championship, Team 3DCS Atop Stock Truck Standings**

Team 3DCS and the rest of the Traxxas TORC Series presented by Amsoil traveled to Michigan's Upper Peninsula for the Bark River U.P. Off-Road 100 on August 7 and 8 for Rounds 7 and 8 of the Midwest TORC SRT series.

New changes to the storied Bark River International Raceway offered a clean slate and level playing field for all drivers, and it came to be that the cream would quickly rise to the top in each race. Heavy rain early Saturday morning further leveled the field, providing the early classes with a messy track (and resulted in pools of water on the floor of the 3DCS Video crew's tent).

First to brave the slick stuff on Saturday was the SRT Limited 2WD division and Team 3DCS representative Keith Steele. Entering the weekend on an eight race win streak dating back to the end of 2008, Keith and the #229 Monster Energy Goodyear Chevrolet hoped to clinch the first SRT series points championship in the existence of the TORC series. At the drop of the green flag, Keith found himself trailing the #248 of Luke Johnson, who hoped to thwart Keith's championship hopes. However, Keith quickly dispatched Johnson and never looked back. Keith took win number seven on the year, followed by #217 Dan "Rocket Man" Baudoux in second and Johnson in third.

Next to take a shot at the soupy track was Matt Gerald and his #195 Amsoil Lennox Goodyear SRT 1600 Light Buggy. MG took a chance on the start, opting to hesitate at the drop of the green and then try ducking to the inside of the front row. Unfortunately, he got pinched to the inside off the race line and struggled to keep moving through turn number one, and exited the corner nearly in last in the field of seventeen. MG went to work, dispatching his competitors one after another. However, battling the wet conditions and subsequent one-line track proved to be a hefty task, and Matt was unable to crack the top five, finishing in sixth. Taking the win was #173 Steve Oman.

The remainder of Team 3DCS, SRT Stock Truck competitors Eric Ruppel and Don Demeny, were next to take the green flag. Off the start, Rupe in the #837 Phil's Inc. Art Carr BFGoodrich Ford got pushed into the soft stuff on the outside of turn number one, leaving Rupe with an uphill battle to the top five. Meanwhile Don and the #885 Bayland Telephone BFGoodrich Dodge tiptoed through turn number one safely. As the race wore on, Don settled into fourth place. Meanwhile, Rupe continued to battle, nearly cracking the top five until a mid-race bobble cost him valuable positions and time. He ultimately finished eighth. Don continued to work on the #826 Dan Beauchamp for third, but was unable to make a move. On the last lap with two corners remaining, Don finally saw an opening. Coming through turn one on the racecourse, Don pulled a classic outside-in move to pull alongside Beauchamp, then fought off Beauchamp's aggressive set up into the finish line hairpin to take third, with Beauchamp literally attached to his rear bumper.

Sunday's races saw a much dryer track from the start, as the threat of inclement weather held off for all of Saturday night and Sunday morning. Taking the track first was again the #229 Monster Energy Goodyear Chevrolet of Keith Steele. A win and a third place or worse finish by Luke Johnson was needed for Keith to clinch SRT Limited 2WD points with one weekend remaining. Keith grabbed the holeshot, but had company in what was arguably his most hotly contested race of the year. Following closely behind were the #217 of Dan "Rocket Man" Baudoux and the #297 of Ben Wandahsega. Wandahsega slowly lost grip on the leaders as he battled with #248 Luke Johnson for third. Baudoux followed Keith all the way to the mid race caution, and after the caution threatened to make a move for the lead. However, Keith proved to be too much for Baudoux and cruised to his eighth straight win. Johnson moved into third when Wandahsega pulled off with just over one lap remaining, but was unable to run down Baudoux.

Keith Steele and the #229 Monster Energy Goodyear Chevrolet are your 2009 Traxxas TORC Series presented by Amsoil SRT Limited 2WD Champions!

Matt Gerald and the #195 Amsoil Lennox Goodyear car were next to take the track on Sunday. A dry track and better starting strategy allowed MG a clean, safe start. Determination was key as MG worked his way into third behind #125 Jamie Kleikamp. Eventually MG was able to work his way around Kleikamp and into second, but was unable to run down #172 "Pumpkin Power" Greg Stingle. At the checkered flag the finishing order was Stingle, MG, and Kleikamp in the top three.

Entering the final weekend at Crandon, MG is fourth in points, trailing leader #166 Jeff Virnig by eight. When asked if he planned to turn it up a notch at Crandon, MG commented, "We have to. We don't have a choice. If we want to get a championship out of this we have to be on top at Crandon."

SRT Stock Truck is a hotly contested points battle as well, and Sunday's race only turned up the heat with one weekend remaining. Don Demeny's #885 Bayland Telephone BFGoodrich Dodge

and Eric Ruppel's #837 Phil's Inc. Art Carr BFGoodrich Ford both jumped out to clean starts. Rupe quickly settled into second with Don in third, a battle seen frequently throughout the season. However, neither were able to catch eventual race winner #820 Scott Beauchamp. Rupe finished second and Don finished in third.

With one weekend remaining, Don leads SRT Stock Truck points by one point. Rupe is tied for second with #807 Craig Metz. Consistency had been key for Don so far, as he leads points despite not taking any wins this year. "It's a good sign to be here without a win. Consistency has always been my strength. Now we're geared up for a run at the top of the podium in Crandon. It'd be nice; it'd really help to put us over the top."

The final rounds of the Midwest SRT division of the Traxxas TORC Series presented by Amsoil are in Crandon, WI on Labor Day Weekend as the conclusion to Crandon International Off-Road Raceway's 40<sup>th</sup> Running Celebration.

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Release by Cheyne Statezny for 3DCS Video