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Contributed by Cindy
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The
Fireworks Extravaganza that nearly wasn't

By Tony
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There were some nervous people gathered at Supercheap Auto Oceanview Family Speedway early on Saturday afternoon. Midday rain had caused the cancellation of the Christmas races at the Wanganui Racecourse, and the Wanganui Stockcar and Speedway Club's committee members were fielding multiple questions as to whether Saturday night's Fireworks Extravaganza would run.

Weather maps and radars were studied and opinions were exchanged. The committee decided it was business as usual, even as another shower blew across Oceanview.

And it was an inspired decision. The weather was cool and windy, but the rain that fell in town bypassed the speedway. A very good crowd poured in, and the best night's racing at Oceanview Family Speedway in some time was the result.

The West Coast Sidecars trophy is headed to Auckland. The 46A pairing of Russell Stewart (rider) and Andrew Parker (swinger) were unstoppable on the night, registering three race wins and a maximum 15 points.

The Palmerston North pair of Josh Lambert and Mikey O'Neill (26P) finished second, two points behind the Aucklanders. In third place was former 1NZ rider John Hannan (19V) with swinger Bryce Rose.

It was a night to forget however for local hopes Aaron Rose and Amelia Stanley (34V). Rose couldn't get the bike off the starting line in the first two heats, succumbing to what he described as "operator error".

Stewart and Parker have now completed five successive race wins at Oceanview this season. With the New Zealand Sidecar Championships at the Wanganui in March, they will be the early title favourites.

Dion Mooney had another dominant night in the Stockcars, winning two heats and the "Trev's Concrete Stockcar Shootout".

Mooney was too quick for Tony Hodge (53V), after Hodge had earlier ended 24V Wayne Wright's bid to win the spoils.

It wasn't all plain sailing for Mooney though. In the feature race newcomer Peter Wapp (51V) slammed the 2NZ car into the wall

A competitive field of Superstocks turned on some brutal racing. Stratford driver Phil Ogle was an early casualty as Asher Rees (126G) piled into the side of his car just short of the finish line.

Ethan Rees took (127G) the first race, Asher the second, and father Peter Rees took out the Superstock Feature in the immaculate Nissan-powered 10G car.

During the Feature Race Asher Rees tried to take Kerry Podjursky (56V) to the wall at the southern end. Podjursky responded with a brutal hit to Rees' left front wheel

ending the race for the young man from Foxton.

The Grand

Slam combined the Stockcars with the Superstocks and there was plenty of action. Jayson Palamountain (28V) stopped Asher Rees in his tracks with a massive hit in front of a crowded southern embankment, whilst Ethan Rees took up his brother's battle with Podjursky. Peter Rees took out the race.

Wins in the

Youth Ministocks were shared between William Hughes (99S), Callum Sturzaker (driving Hughes's car) and Trazarn Ryland-Annabel, who took two wins. Jemma Barnes debuted a brand new 92V car which was absolutely immaculate.

In th Production Saloons John Caird (53V) took two wins, but in the second race had his bonnet fly open obscuring his vision. Somehow he managed to complete five laps at race pace before pulling to the infield, peering through a small gap at the bottom of his windscreen. Jason Pointon (71V) took that race.

At the end

of the racing programme the lights went out, and the team from Kairanga Lions Club turned on a spectacular fireworks display which was visible right across the city.

It was a

fittingly explosive finish to an excellent night of explosive on-track action that very nearly didn't happen.