

MONGO RACING STARTS 2006 BITD SEASON STRONG

The first race of the 2006 Best In The Desert Racing Association's season is the "Blue Water Resort & Casino Parker 425," in Parker, AZ, February 3-6, 2006.

Race events started on Thursday with time trials for top 20 overall starting positions and class starting positions on the line. 75 race vehicles took the green flag for the trials; of the 11 trucks starting in the Full-Stock class 8100, 6 competed in time trials for the first starting position in class. Randy Merritt and Mongo Racing sat out the optional qualifying, opting to save the KC HiLiTES Ford F-150 for race day.

Friday's events were driver registration, contingency, technical inspection and the driver's meeting. Contingency was bustling with fans, vendors, racers and race vehicles from 10:30 am into the darkness of the night. An estimated 194 cars and trucks crossed through the parking lot of the Blue Water Resort & Casino during contingency, the most for a BITD race in Parker, and twice as many manufacture vendors than last year's "BITD Blue Water Resort & Casino Parker 425." The driver's meeting was held in the Blue Water Resort & Casino where, BITD director, Casey Folks gave out instructions and changes that were made since the pre-run three weeks earlier.

Saturday brought the main event, race day! The first vehicle left the stop light in downtown Parker at 7:30 am, with the top twenty starting one minute apart and then the following starting at 30 seconds apart. The KC HiLiTES Mongo Racing Ford F-150 was set to start 9th out of the 11-truck field. At 8:38 am, Randy accelerated off the starting line cautiously due to the dust. Early on the first lap, the dust was an issue, but as the KC HiLiTES Ford F-150 made it's way around the 133-mile course the dust began to lift as the vehicles began to separate. At mile marker 87 the KC HiLiTES Ford F-150 driven by Randy Merritt was in fourth position 10 minutes behind class leader Dave Morrison, who had clean air in front of him. At the end of the first lap, Randy made a scheduled pit stop, but took 8 minutes to fuel and fix a limit strap clevis on the driver side. Leaving the Parker Python, the KC HiLiTES Ford F-150 was in fourth position 15 minutes down to the leader.

On the second lap, Randy continued to pace the truck and race the terrain with 266 miles still to go, it was anybody's race. At mile marker 87 of the second lap the KC HiLiTES Ford F-150 was physically fourth on track but 1 minute behind the Hummer of Chad Hall. The KC HiLiTES Ford F-150 made a second scheduled pit stop, but again made an extended stay for another limit strap repair. Randy was now on the gas and looking to catch the class leader as the truck was working great.

On the third lap, once again the KC HiLiTES Ford F-150 was one minute behind the Hummer. At mile marker 87 of the final lap the class leader was now Greg Foutz, but Randy had made up time on the leaders. With 4 minutes and 45 seconds separating the top four trucks physically, corrected time was as important as Randy was now second in his class with 46 miles to the checkered flag. As the sun was setting fast, it was coming down to who had the best lights and who could see in the dark.

The Mongo Racing crew and fans assembled at the Best In The Desert podium as Greg Foutz crossed the finish line followed by Chad Hall, Dave Morrison and Randy Merritt. The times were too close to call and Chad, Dave and Randy had to wait as BITD officials checked check-point times before declaring Randy Merritt in the KC HiLiTES Ford F-150 had finished in second place by 1 minute and 18 seconds.

For updates and 2006 season schedule check out www.mongoracing.com.

Mongo Racing would like to thank their sponsors: KC HiLiTES, Ford Trucks, F & M Baldenegro Farms, Goodyear Tires, Sway-A-Way, Visteon, Bodyline Auto body and Paint, Borla Exhaust, Race Craft Suspension Seats, TNC Machine & Metal Fab, For You Tire & Auto, NAPA in Parker, Auto Fab, Lincoln Welders, Autometer, and Reno Metal Products.

