

2016 Engine Pro SOD by ARP Banquet Honors Champion Brian Smith



The Engine Pro Sprints On Dirt presented by ARP 2016 Awards Banquet took place at the Battle Creek (MI) Holiday Inn on Saturday, November 5. A night packed with light-hearted fun and heavy-weight awards capped off a great 2016 season with the crowning of Brian Smith as champion.



Merritt Speedway 2016 SOD Championship Trophy

The drivers honored at the banquet will forever be remembered as those who made the new, unlimited Sprints On Dirt one of the most memorable changes in sprint car racing history.

SOD president John Naida served as event host and emcee and opened the festivities by recognizing SOD promoter partners Butler Speedway, Crystal Motor Speedway, Hartford Speedway, I-96 Speedway, Merritt Speedway, Thunderbird Raceway, and Winston Speedway. Lexi Adgate, a competitor in a handful of 2016 SOD events herself, then began the presentation of trophies and awards.

Special Awards

Award	Recipient	Category
Appreciation	Dan McCarron	Sprints On Dirt marketing services

Appreciation	Motor City Racing Promotions	Professional event officials and management services
Appreciation	Steve Smith	Enhanced payout contributions
Appreciation	Robert Flannigan	Enhanced payout contributions
XYZ Machining Sportsman of the Year	Mark Aldrich	Excellence in performance
RockAuto.com Sprint Car Rookie of the Year	Justin Ward	Excellence in performance
RockAuto.com SOD Series Rookie of the Year	Brian Smith	Excellence in performance
XYZ Machining Crew Chief of the Year	Nathan Whitney	Excellence in performance
Dedication to SOD	Roger & Pat Holzinger	12 years as SOD officials
Appreciation	Engine Pro	Long-time professional partnership & support

Appreciation	Hoosier Racing Tire	Long-time professional partnership & support
--------------	------------------------	---

Each year, Engine Pro recognizes the Engine Builder of the Year award for its high level of craftsmanship and dedication to the Sprints On Dirt racing community. The 2016 recipient is Gressman Powersports from Fremont, Ohio. Gressman is the engine builder for SOD Champion Brian Smith.



Engine Pro's Dain Naida presents SOD Engine Builder of the Year Scott Gressman with his award

Rod End Supply and Keizer Aluminum Wheels recognized Brian Smith, Steve Irwin, Mark Aldrich, John Gall, Justin Ward, and Eric Smith for participation in every 2016 SOD event.

The Engine Pro Sprints on Dirt presented by ARP MAHLE/Clevite Beyond Limits Challenge, formerly the MAHLE/Clevite Short Track Challenge, had a very different look for 2016.



The five-race 2016 MAHLE/Clevite Beyond Limits Challenge mini-series gave SOD competitors an opportunity to compete for a separate point fund within the full SOD season series. The final standings for the BLC Championship are:

	Car #	Driver	Total	Amount
1	2+	Brian Smith	677	\$ 1,000.00
2	0	Steve Irwin	663	\$ 600.00
3	1A	Mark Aldrich	601	\$ 400.00
4	81	John Gall	539	\$ 300.00
5	10S	Jay Steinebach	509	\$ 200.00
6	1	Eric Smith	496	\$ 150.00
7	8	Justin Ward	494	\$ 100.00

The top twelve SOD competitor members in points were introduced and presented with trophies and awards by Lexi

Adgate.

Trophy Presentations

	Car #	Driver	Trophy sponsor
1	2+	Brian Smith	Merritt Speedway
2	0	Steve Irwin	Pat & Roger Holzinger
3	1A	Mark Aldrich	Rock-N Promotions
4	81	John Gall	Crystal Motor Speedway
5	8	Justin Ward	Noizee 1 Motorsports
6	1	Eric Smith	Strpko Engineering
7	19	Brett Mann	Butler Speedway
8	4T	Josh Turner	Lane Automotive
9	10S	Jay Steinebach	Hartford Speedway
10	46	Don Wisniewski for Robert Huisken	Sprints On Dirt
11	71H/27	Robert Flannigan for Brad Lamberson	Jim Coffey & Son Plumbing & Heating
12	6	Tyler Bearden	John & Kathie Naida

Contingency Awards

Recipient	Sponsor
Brian Smith	MAHLE/Clevite Hoosier Racing Tire RockAuto.com J&J Auto Racing Keizer Aluminum Wheels Rod End Supply

Steve Irwin	MAHLE/Clevite Hepner Racing Products XYZ Machining Keizer Aluminum Wheels Rod End Supply Allstar Performance/SOD
Mark Aldrich	MAHLE/Clevite XYZ Machining Schoenfeld Headers Maxim Racing Hoosier Racing Tire Keizer Aluminum Wheels Rod End Supply
John Gall	MAHLE/Clevite XYZ Machining Simpson Racing Products Keizer Aluminum Wheels Rod End Supply Allstar Performance/SOD
Justin Ward	MAHLE/Clevite RockAuto.com Hoosier Racing Tire Keizer Aluminum Wheels Rod End Supply Allstar Performance/SOD
Eric Smith	MAHLE/Clevite Simpson Racing Products Maxim Racing Keizer Aluminum Wheels Rod End Supply Allstar Performance/SOD
Brett Mann	Maxim Racing Racing Optics Kistler Racing Products Allstar Performance/SOD

Josh Turner	Racing Optics Keizer Aluminum Wheels Rod End Supply Allstar Performance/SOD
Jay Steinebach	MAHLE/Clevite Racing Optics Allstar Performance/SOD
Robert Huisken	Maxim Racing Rod End Supply Allstar Performance/SOD
Tyler Bearden	Maxim Racing Keizer Aluminum Wheels Allstar Performance/SOD

Hoosier Racing Tire awarded jackets to Champion Brian Smith, RockAuto.com Sprint Car Rookie of the Year Justin Ward, XYZ Machining Sportsman of the Year Mark Aldrich, and XYZ Machining Crew Chief of the Year Nathan Whitney.



Maxim Racing provided Mark Aldrich, Brett Mann, Eric Smith, Robert Huisken, and Tyler Bearden with contingency awards. In addition, birthday boy Josh Turner was presented with a birthday cake during his introduction.

SOD recognized RacingAwareness.com for its efforts. RacingAwareness.com and Racing Awareness Inc. are two separate

entities that were created with the sole intent of providing children and their families from Helen DeVos Children's Hospital, of West Michigan, who are experiencing or have experienced an illness or injury of a child, a diversion from the healthcare process utilizing the sport of auto racing. Banquet trophies and awards presenter Lexi Adgate was one of the original kids that Racing Awareness "adopted."

Attendees were presented with a few facts about the 2016 season. There were five rain outs and threatening weather on five other dates, but the first season under the new unlimited format was still a great success. Car counts were equal to 2015 in spite of several no-shows due to weather. The on-track product was exceptional with only one spin out for every 986 laps run. Seven drivers, Brian Smith (3), Ryan Ruhl (2), Chad Blonde, Stuart Brubaker, Steve Irwin, Max Stambaugh, and Doug Zimmerman, won features.

In spite of only ten events completed, competitors were well rewarded. Brian Smith was awarded \$6,440 in cash and awards. \$1,295 in cash and awards was the least amount awarded to the member drivers present. Engine Pro Sprints On Dirt presented by ARP awarded competitors \$41,110 above and beyond purse payouts in 2016.

Engine Pro Sprints On Dirt presented by ARP would like to thank everyone whose extra effort made the banquet a perfect close to the 2016 season. Thank you to Motor City Racing Promotions Scott Menlen and Laura Tucker for set-up and tear-down. Thank you to Pat Holzinger and Kathie Naida for handling registration. Thank you to Wendy Rominger and the staff of the Battle Creek Holiday Inn for their superb facility and services. Thank you to Thomas Michael for photographing the banquet. A very special thank you also goes out to Lexi Adgate for her hard work in distributing the cash and contingency awards.

To see two great photo albums of the historic banquet, click

[here](#) and [here](#).

2016 race event sponsor partners were Engine Pro (Title Sponsor), ARP (Title Sponsor), Hoosier Racing Tire (Official SOD Tire), MAHLE/Clevite (Beyond Limits Challenge Sponsor), Engine Pro (Lucky Dog Sponsor), Lane Automotive (Primary Heat Race Sponsor), Engler Machine & Tool (Primary Heat Race Sponsor), COMP Cams (Primary Heat Race Sponsor), RockAuto.com (SOD Series Rookie of the Year Sponsor & SOD Sprint Car Rookie of the Year Sponsor), XYZ Machining (Sportsman of the Year Sponsor & Crew Chief of the Year Sponsor), KSE Racing Products (Hard Charger Sponsor). In addition, SOD event contingency sponsors included: Allstar Performance, ATL Racing Fuel Cells, BR Motorsports, Diversified Machine Inc. (DMI), Keizer Aluminum Wheels, King Racing Products, Kistler Racing Products, License 2 Play, Racing Optics, Rod End Supply, Schoenfeld Headers, and Ti22 Performance.