



Soper, 16, finds Victory Lane

BY EVAN KORN

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For Kyle Soper, it was about time.

The 16-year-old sophomore at Eastport-South Manor High School, now in his third summer racing at Riverhead Raceway, had yet to win a race.

But last Saturday, Soper won the 20-lap Legends feature event.

"It was pretty cool winning my first race and also racing my friends for it," Soper said. "Afterward, they all came around and congratulated me."

The race featured multiple lead changes, with 17-year-old Kyle Ellwood (second in the Legends standings) coming up on Soper's heels with about two laps to go.

"The last couple of laps, there was about five or six of us all bunched up," said Soper, third in the Legends standings. "Kyle slipped up, so I just shot right past him for the lead. And I just held him off for the last two laps."

Like most young drivers, Soper started with go-karts at a young age. His father bought his 7-year-old son his first go-kart, and Soper honed his craft with the East End Racing Club.

Nine years later, Soper's life revolves around racing. After school, he will either work on his race car or ride quads and dirt bikes with his friends. He is an unabashed adrenaline junkie who relishes the freedom racing provides.

"I just feel the rush, and I'm the only one who controls what I do," Soper said. "There is nobody who can tell me what to do when I'm out there."

Now that his first win is out of the way, Soper hopes to make a few more trips to Victory Lane. "For a while, I was wondering when I was going to get my first one," he said. "The first one is the hardest, so I should be able to win some more."

MODIFIED STANDINGS

1. Howie Brode , East Islip	132
2. David H. Brigati , Calverton	120
2. Tom Rogers Jr. , Patchogue	120
4. Shawn Solomito , Islip	104
5. John Fortin , Holtsville	102

Saturday

Races start at 5:30 p.m.: Twin 30's Modifieds (time trials), Late Models, 30-lap Blunderbusts (time trials), Super Pro Trucks, Legends, 4/6 Cylinder Enduro (no Figure 8s or Chargers).