2026 Oxford 250 Preview: A Deep Field Prepares for the 53rd Edition

August 25, 2026 — Oxford, Maine — Over 50 drivers have already put their name into the mix for the 53rd Annual Nitro Trailers Oxford 250 on Sunday, August 30. With the caliber of talent on the entry list already, one of the nation's biggest and most popular short track races promises to be another exciting, unpredictable affair. The question becomes which drivers are the favorites to hold the trophy, the big check, and the immortality that comes with being an Oxford 250 winner.

Thirty-eight different drivers have triumphed in the 52 editions of the Oxford 250 since the inaugural event in 1974. The historic race has proven a difficult conquest for many, and through the first 52 rounds, no driver has won more than three times. Nevertheless, former winners should be given high consideration when making predictions for the 53rd running of the one-day extravaganza.

Six former winners are currently on the entry list, accounting for ten 250 championships, including father-son duo Mike and Ben Rowe. It's not every day that a 76-year-old driver is considered a favorite, but most 76-year-olds aren't Mike Rowe. Rowe has been competing weekly at OPS in 2026, and as of this writing, has scored a win and is in a multi-way championship battle. Ben Rowe is a two-time champion of the race and has showed no signs of slowing on the track when he comes to race.

The same can be said for Johnny Clark, Scott Robbins, and two-time winner Eddie Macdonald. Bubba Pollard, the 2018 champion, recently filed his entry and will chase a second crown. All six of these drivers can win on August 30.

Among drivers who have yet to win the Oxford 250 is a quartet of drivers universally acknowledged to be in their prime. D.J. Shaw, Derek Griffith, Joey Doiron, and Garrett Hall are on the short list of favorites. As a nine-time PASS champion, there's no question D.J. Shaw is one of the great modern Super Late Model racers. Yet the Oxford 250 has escaped him in 15 previous attempts. His three straight third-place finishes have been a textbook case of "close but no cigar." However, Shaw scored a thrilling win in this year's Celebration of America 300, potentially setting him up to finally break through.

Derek Griffith is also among the contemporary Super Late Model greats with two PASS National championships and 23 PASS wins, including three at Oxford. In 11 Oxford 250 tries, his best result is a second in 2019, and he is trying to do one better this year. Garrett Hall has had a bit of a resurgence in the last two years after snapping a three-year winless drought about 18 months ago.

Joey Doiron, who was the inaugural Celebration of America 300 winner, is another driver who has come oh so close but has not yet crossed the line P1. Trevor Sanborn, Mike Hopkins, Travis Stearns, Dennis Spencer Jr. and Dave Farrington Jr. have all had success at the tricky 3/8 mile oval and could land in Nitro Trailers Oxford 250 victory lane.

The group that has been a force in the last few years is the under-30 contingent. Many these drivers started racing karts as kids and participate in IRacing on a regular basis. Many in this group have had their learning curve accelerated dramatically, so by the time they ascend to compete in the Oxford 250, they have enough "seat time" to be considered threats to win.

Jimmy Renfrew Jr. leads this list of drivers. With success up and down the eastern seaboard, Renfrew has four wins in 2026 between PASS and Oxford Super Late Model action. Gabe Brown and Alexandre Tardif are two other perennial front-runners no matter what kind of car they wheel. Sylas Ripley and Cole Robie are not yet old enough to vote, but have both proven they can run near the front on a big stage. Add drivers like Ryan Kuhn, Kate Re, and Kaiden Fisher, and it's entirely possible someone from this group will stand atop the podium at the end of the night.

Among weekly Oxford Super Late Model racers, plenty of contenders should be given serious thought. Brandon Barker is the point leader at post time and has scored a league-leading three wins in weekly competition. Add a PASS triumph at Lee USA Speedway early in the year, and the #88 is a driver to keep an eye on. Brandon Varney spent 2025 on the PASS tour and came home as the Rookie of the Year and PASS National Champion. The year 2026 has seen him concentrate on weekly racing at Oxford, garnering a pair of wins and a multitude of top-fives. Scott McDaniel is the defending champion and is always a threat to win while Tom Abele Jr. has been a model of consistency throughout his campaign.

But you don't have to be a full-timer with PASS or Oxford Plains Speedway to upset the apple cart. Several outsiders have entered the fray for the 53rd annual Nitro Trailers Oxford 250. Southern star Caden Kvapil, the current CARS Tour Late Model Stock point leader based out of North Carolina, will be at the helm of Archie St. Hilaire's GoFas Racing #32.

Joining him will be Georgia's Casey Roderick, a former All-American 400 and Rattler winner, who will be behind the wheel of a Kate Re Motorsports machine. Northern transplant and modified driver John-Michael Shenette has leased a car from Tom Abele Jr. and looks to make his first SLM start at OPS. Another invader, New Brunswick's Cory Hall, is always a threat to win and will drive a machine prepared by former Oxford 250 winner Jeremie

Whorff. Part-time NASCAR O'Reilly Auto Parts Series competitor Alex Labbe is another late entry and will try, along with Tardif, to become the first Quebeois to win the Oxford 250.

The one thing we know is that anything can happen at the Oxford 250. We have seen it before and could see it again. There are another 25-plus names that could surprise everyone and wear the victory wreath at the end of the night. From Southern interlopers to established track and touring champions, massive upsets, utter domination, and more, fans have seen a lot of names on top in the 52-year history of this event. We're certain the 53rd Nitro Trailers Oxford 250 has plenty of storylines and surprises in store, and we can't wait for the green flag to fly!

For more information on Oxford Plains Speedway, visit www.oxfordplains.com.

For more information on the Pro All Stars Series, visit www.proallstarsseries.com.

To take advantage of marketing opportunities with the Pro All Stars Series or Oxford Plains Speedway, or to purchase lap sponsorships for the Oxford 250, please call 207-577-1836 or inquire at OPSmarketing50@gmail.com.

For technical information concerning all PASS divisions, please contact passracing@roadrunner.com or call Jason Ricker at 704-881-4429.

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