

Sioux Chief Showdown Preview: Sioux Chief PowerPEX 200 at Memphis Int'l Raceway



Over six months after the Sioux Chief Showdown kicked off with the debut of the ARCA Menards Series at Phoenix Raceway, the ten-race chase is set to conclude at Memphis International Raceway with the Sioux Chief PowerPEX 200. The inaugural champion under the Showdown banner will be crowned when the checkered flag waves on Saturday evening, closing out the first AMS race at Memphis since 2001.

Formerly known as the Sioux Chief Short Track Challenge, an expanded partnership with Sioux Chief will increase the event purse and point fund significantly, as well as add prestige and a variety of venues to the in-season championship. New guidelines and common rule packages are aimed at drawing AMSE and AMSW teams and drivers as well, having previously been run as distinct separate entities from the ARCA Menards Series. **Christian Eckes**, now a challenger for rookie of the year honors in the NASCAR Gander RV & Outdoors Truck Series, won both the Sioux Chief Short Track Challenge and the ARCA Menards Series overall championship in 2019, clinching both titles in the final race of each championship.

In the penultimate Sioux Chief Showdown race at Bristol, **Sam Mayer** took his fifth ARCA Menards Series win of 2020 and his fourth in a Showdown event just hours after winning his first-ever NASCAR Gander RV & Outdoors Truck Series race. Mayer started the Showdown in a deep hole when his car overheated in the first race at Phoenix, leaving him 20th at the finish with a lot of ground to make up over the next nine races. Mayer leads the standings with 362 points, an advantage of six points over second-place **Ty Gibbs'** 356 – likely the only competitor with a shot at leapfrogging Mayer for the title, barring something drastic.

So how did we get here? In the ARCA Menards Series' maiden voyage to Phoenix in March, Ty Gibbs dominated the show but **Chandler Smith** swooped in with 11 laps to go and stole the win. Smith made it two in a row when he won the second round at Lucas Oil Raceway in Indianapolis, though it was in a much more comfortable manner as Gibbs dropped out halfway through with an engine failure. Gibbs was finally able to close the deal at Iowa with a win before the series moved to ARCA's backyard of Toledo for a doubleheader weekend. Sam Mayer finally broke through to win both contests, benefitting from Smith dropping out late in the first race and Gibbs spinning while racing with Mayer for the lead as rain closed in on the track. Smith still led the Sioux Chief Showdown standings at its halfway point, but a shakeup would be in order with a wild card looming: the Daytona road course.

Smith had no road racing background and struggled at times during the night, finishing back in ninth while Venturini teammate **Michael Self** pulled away from Gibbs at the end to win the race. The win propelled Self to the top of the Sioux Chief Showdown standings after six races, marking the first occasion that the point leader was someone other than Chandler Smith. Self's time on top was short-lived when he had a single-car crash in the closing stages of race seven at WWT Raceway at Gateway, though Self and his #25 team made a commendable effort to keep Self on the track and minimize his loss of points. Self limped to a 15th-place finish, five laps down, while Gibbs and Smith crossed the stripe 1-2 and allowed Smith to regain his Showdown points lead.

Another first for the ARCA Menards Series was on tap with the first-ever race at Lebanon I-44 Speedway, and the race was not short on drama by any means. A classic beat-and-bang short track affair saw Smith spin out four times after bumps from behind, and the rest of the leaders were not spared from incidents themselves during the night. Sam Mayer pulled his lightly-damaged Chevrolet into victory lane and took over the top spot in the Sioux Chief Showdown standings as well, completing his comeback after just eight races. Mayer led the standings by five points over Ty Gibbs and Smith entering Bristol and came out on the other side with his current six-point cushion over Gibbs, the second-place finisher. Swaybar issues plagued Smith all night and he eventually found the outside wall when it broke on lap 71, leaving him 23rd and all but out of the Showdown hunt.

The six-point deficit for Gibbs is far from insurmountable in the final race, but he will need some help in the form of a miscue from Sam Mayer. Mayer has not finished any worse than third in the eight Showdown races since his DNF at Phoenix, and a win alone at Memphis won't be enough for Gibbs to swipe the crown away from Mayer. Michael Self and **Bret Holmes** may be longshot contenders should the starting field be large enough, but they too would need Mayer – and Gibbs as well – to find misfortune early on. For 2019 AMSE champion Mayer, the Sioux Chief Showdown trophy would make a fine addition to his collection.

2020 Sioux Chief Showdown Schedule & Current Top 25 Standings



DRIVER	CAR OWNER	PHX	LOR	IOW	TOL	TOL	DIS	GAT	I44	BRI	TOTAL
#21 Sam Mayer	Maury Gallagher	24	42	42	43	43	41	41	43	43	362
#18 Ty Gibbs	Coy Gibbs	41	29	43	42	34	42	43	40	42	356
#25 Michael Self	Cathy Venturini	42	36	38	39	40	43	29	38	39	344
#23 Bret Holmes	Stacy Holmes	29	37	41	40	41	36	38	42	36	340
#20 Chandler Smith	Billy Venturini	43	43	40	33	42	35	42	36	21	335
#4 Hailie Deegan	David Gilliland	37	41	26	36	38	38	35	39	38	328
#17 Taylor Gray	David Gilliland		40	39	41	33	40	36	41	37	307
#15 Drew Dollar	Bill Venturini	30	30	27	38	35	32	37	35	26	290
#11 Mike Basham	Andy Hillenburg		25	24	30	29	29	24	34	20	215
#48 Brad Smith	Brad Smith		27	25	31	30	25	25	31	19	213
#46 Thad Moffitt	Bo LeMastus	26	39	34	32	36	33				200
#1 Max McLaughlin	Shigeaki Hattori		38	37			37	40		41	193
#06 Tim Richmond	Wayne Peterson	21	3	31	35	32		28	33		183
#22 Derek Griffith	Chad Bryant		32		37	39				35	143
#11 Owen Smith	Andy Hillenburg				28	28		23	32	22	133
#6 Nick Sanchez	Max Siegel	38						30		33	101
#19 Jesse Love	Alex McAnally	28		32				39			99
#16 Gio Scelzi	Mike Curb	34		33				31			98
#10 Rick Clifton	Andy Hillenburg			30	34	31					95
#41 Kyle Sieg	Bruce Cook		34					33		27	94
#4 Chase Cabre	Max Siegel	36						34		23	93
#22 Kris Wright	Chad Bryant							26	37	29	92
#99 Gracie Trotter	Bill McAnally	22		35				32			89
#32 Howie DiSavino III	Kevin Cywinski	23	35	28							86
#91 Justin Carroll	Terry Carroll		31							34	65

March 6	Phoenix Raceway – Avondale, AZ	Chandler Smith
July 3	Lucas Oil Raceway – Brownsburg, IN	Chandler Smith
July 18	Iowa Speedway – Newton, IA	Ty Gibbs
July 31	Toledo Speedway – Toledo, OH	Sam Mayer
August 1	Toledo Speedway – Toledo, OH	Sam Mayer
August 14	Daytona International Speedway Road Course – Daytona Beach, FL	Michael Self
August 29	World Wide Technology Raceway at Gateway – Madison, IL	Ty Gibbs
September 5	Lebanon I-44 Speedway – Lebanon, MO	Sam Mayer
September 17	Bristol Motor Speedway – Bristol, TN	Sam Mayer
September 26	Memphis International Raceway – Memphis, TN	.750 Mile Oval