**Champions Crowned at UPIR Final Points Night**

 The checkered flag has flown on the UPIR track championship battles. Saturday night’s race sponsored by EMP saw the finale to several close points battles, and a few that were clinched with ease.

 It didn’t take long for the action to take a wrong turn, as a huge crash took out Tristan Kostreva (Crivitz, WI.) and Joey Stankowicz on the opening lap of the Riverside Auto Junior Micro Sprint heat. The two cars came together in turn one, sending them rolling side over side in the worst crash in the history of the Junior Micro Sprints division. Both drivers climbed out under their own power, and would race again later in the feature. Elliot Corrigan won the heat, in second was Haden Frazer, with Avry Corrigan clinching the title with a third place run. Brett Labre finished fourth. Tristan Kostreva and Joey Stankowicz rounded out the field.

 Overall, the closest points battle was for the Sportsmen Micro Sprint division with the top three of Gabriel Zellner (New Franken, WI.), Jesse Liss, and Logan Getzloff separated by less than 10 points at the beginning of the night. The top three finishers for heat one for the Sportsmen were Gabriel Zellner, Dave Hosking, and Jesse Liss. Heat two was won by Jacob Zellner (New Franken, WI.), with second place going to Logan Getzloff, and third to Kyle Getchell.

 Matt Peterson came into the night leading the 600 Micro Sprint division. All Matt really would have to do to clinch the title is finish the heat, and the feature. Heat one was won by Jeff Ives, with Matt Peterson mathematically clinching the title in second. Third place was Jamie St. Jacques. Heat two’s top three finishers were Christian Groleau, Bart Kostreva (Crivitz, WI.), and Jim Groleau. Heat three was won by Scott Ruleau (Menominee, MI.) followed by Brent Smith and Paul Hosking.

Heats for the Modified division were run next. The first was claimed by Randy Theys (Algoma, WI.). Following Theys in second and third were Darrell Gagnon and Fran Berube. Heat two was won by Kody Peterson, who held a sizable gap over Pat Richer in second. Third place was Austin Cayer. Lonnie Dalgord, the points ;leader entering the night, finished in a strong fourth place in heat two.

Another division that came into the night with a tight points battle was the Street Stocks. The top two drivers, Jon Pepin and Greg Bruce, came into the night with an eleven point difference between them, so every position would matter. Bruce closed the gap by winning heat one, while Pepin would finish fourth in heat two. Second and third in heat one were Ron Jenshak and Paul Wagner. The second heat would be taken by Max Constantino, with the podium rounded out by Matt Adams and Steve Constantino.

Rounding out the heats for the night were the Bink’s Coca-Cola Sport Fours. Tyler Corwin, Randy DeGrave and Craig Klotz all had a shot at winning the title, with Corwin leading the points. Heat one saw issues for one of the title contenders, as Randy DeGrave blew a tire, and went back to the pits. DeGrave would need to race later in the LCQ to have a shot at the title. Dan Mathieson would take the checkered flag in the heat. Second was Tyler Tousignant, with Cory Corwin third. Heat two was won by Nick Leisner, with Tyler Corwin and Craig Klotz close behind in second and third. The final heat podium finishers, in order, were Elliott Reid (Faithorn, MI.), Issac Bray (Vulcan, MI.) and Robert Bridges.

Intermission followed the heats as usual. During the festivities, tickets from long time sponsor, the Island Resort and Casino were given away with hula hoop contests determining the winners. The tickets were for the upcoming Ballroom Twist event. Also given away were two bikes donated by Street Stock driver Jon Pepin.

The features would get underway after the intermission with the Riverside Auto Junior Micro Sprints kicking things off., Once again, it wasn’t long before the action slowed right back down. On the opening lap, Haden Frazer was tagged from behind by Joey Stankowicz and spun to the inside. Frazer then impacted one of the many infield tires. The car spun and twisted around several times before landing on its side. Haden climbed out ok. To wrap up the season, and his championship run, Avry Corrigan took the win in the feature. Avry has shown great talent this year, winning more races than any other driver in his division, it was truly a championship well deserved. Second place was Elliot Corrigan, with Brett Labre rounding out the top three. Coming home in fourth was Joey Stankowicz, Tristan Kostreva came in fifth and Haden Frazer was sixth.

 The Riverside Auto Junior Micro Sprints are an inspiring group of young racers. Even after rolling over, Kostreva and Stankowicz came back to run their feature race. At their young ages, these racers show what it takes to be a successful racer and persevere. Adversity does not deter their efforts and they are friends with each other in the pits.

The closest championship battle came out on the track next in the Sportsmen Micro Sprint division. Points leader Gabriel Zellner looked to have the win in the bag, but suddenly the car turned around, spinning and coming to a stop facing traffic. Despite the efforts of Zellner and track crews, the car could not be refired. This threw the championship back into the air. When the dust settled, Dave Hosking claimed the feature win. Kyle Getchell would finish second, with Jesse Liss in third. However, third place was one too short for Jesse, as was fourth for Logan Getzloff. Gabriel Zellner held off both drivers after all was said and done. The points came down to a tiebreaker decided by feature wins between Getzloff and Zellner, with the results favoring Zellner. Jesse Liss was only one point back in third. Zellner, like Avry Corrigan, was seen in victory lane more often than not this year. Although mechanical issues popped up occasionally throughout the season, at no point did Zellner lose his composure, showing true maturity beyond his years holding everything together on track, and earning himself a championship in the process.

Up next were the 600 Micro Sprints. Although it was already known that Matt Peterson had virtually clinched the title, there was still a race to be run. The feature ran by without any major incidents, with most laps being run under green. Lap after lap, Christian Groleau and Matt Peterson battled wheel to wheel. In the end, Matt Peterson would win the feature, solidifying his championship run. Groleau would finish runner up to Peterson both on track, and in the points. Third place was Jeff Ives. It isn’t hard to see why Matt Peterson was able to claim the championship. Throughout the year, Peterson has consistently run in the top three, earning a few victories along the way. No victories, however, were more important than the wins Matt earned in the final weeks of the season. Peterson turned on the switch and rallied to win the last three feature races of the season. Matt ran consistent through the year, winning the races he could, and in doing so won the championship.

Up next on the agenda were the Modifieds, another division with a foregone conclusion as it pertained to the points race. Going into the feature, it was well known Lonnie Dalgord had pretty much gathered up the championship. If there was any question about this, it was answered around the midpoint of the race. Dalgord’s closest competition, Fran Berube clipped a tire resulting in him being unable to finish the race.. At this point, all Dalgord had to do was finish. Randy Theys would once again go to victory lane. Following him in second was Pat Richer, with the returning Bobby Rose finishing third. Recovering to fourth from an early spin was Kody Peterson. Kody ran a great 2015 season, taking over for father Dale who passed away in June. Without a doubt, Dale would have been proud of Kody for stepping in to drive the blue 17 modified. But like his dad, Kody showed immense talent behind the wheel, using lessons learned from his father to visit victory lane not just once, but on three separate occasions, including two heats and a feature win. Finishing in sixth, and winning the championship, was Lonnie Dalgord. Although Lonnie did not visit victory lane as many times as his adversaries, he ran very consistently, never pushing his car past the limit. Dalgord won the championship in a very quiet manner, always finishing well, but never drawing much attention to himself. It was that quiet consistency that proved key in winning the championship for Dalgord.

Before features could be ran to finish out the night, an LCQ was run for drivers trying to get into the Bink’s Coca-Cola Sport Fours feature. Randy DeGrave was in a must make it to the feature scenario to have any chance at the title. Unfortunately, DeGrave came up two positions short. The two transfer positions went to Reid DeVoe (Faithhorn, MI.) and Maggie Martin. This was DeVoe’s first time racing on dirt.

The Street Stock feature would be run next, with only seven points separating the top two, Pepin still holding the lead over Bruce. A slew of O’Reilley Auto Parts Caution flags slowed the field several times, all of these were for either spins, or debris on the track. At the end of the night, Greg Bruce was able to take the feature win. Second place was Ron Jenshak, with Jon Pepin third. First, however, was not enough for Bruce as Jon Pepin held onto the points lead by three points. Jon Pepin is another driver that showed great consistency throughout the year, earning as many points as possible. However, unlike Dalgord in the Modifieds, Pepin’s consistency was also met with a hard driving style, which won Pepin several races throughout the season. If there was room, Jon would make a move to pass. If he felt he was faster, he might give another driver a little bump. At no point, though, was Jon ever a rough or dirty driver. At no point would he take out competition, or push too hard and cause an issue. Pepin’s hard charging ability, and ability to finish well week in and week out was a major factor in his championship win. After bending a control arm in the heat race, fellow racers Ron Jenshak and Paul Wagner, along with Nathan Winling, helped repair the car enabling Jon to race in the feature. The championship was bittersweet for Jon as his goal was to win the championship in honor of his grandmother, Eileen Boerschinger, who passed away recently and was his number one fan. Jon’s paint scheme matched that of his late grandfather and racer, Roy Boerschinger. Jon also gave up his usual number and raced with his grandfather’s number V2 this season.

The final feature of the night was for the Bink’s Coca-Cola Sport Fours. This feature continued the trend of the past few features in the division of an uninterrupted green flag race. Elliott Reid would run away from the field, taking the win in dominant fashion as he did earlier in the night. Second place was taken by Justin Lauscher, with third going to Dan Mathieson. Championship contenders Craig Klotz and Tyler Corwin finished fourth and eighth respectively. Corwin’s eighth place run was enough to win him the track championship. For Corwin, the 2015 season can be defined in one word, perseverance. Days before the first race weekend, Corwin’s grandfather Alex passed away. That weekend, Tyler won the feature, as he would several times throughout the season. But as he’d win one race, trouble would plague him the next. In fact, Tyler experienced a terrifying rollover crash, one of the worst in track history. But came back the next race to finish third. Another time, running second, the rear axle broke, sending Corwin spinning out of the race. After fixing the car for the next race, Corwin went on to finish second in the feature. It was this persistent and never give up attitude that would help Tyler win the championship

 Although the championships are settled, we still have racing left this year! The annual UPIR Fall Classic is only weeks away. UPIR is proud to introduce Valley Med Flight as the title sponsor for the Fall Classic. Running both Friday and Saturday, the Fall Classic takes place September 18 and 19. Friday gates open at 5 PM EST with racing at 7 PM EST. Saturday gates open at 4 PM EST with racing at 6 PM EST. With big payouts for each division, the racing action should be wild! For more information and final point standings, visit [www.upirtrack.com](http://www.upirtrack.com), or Upper Peninsula International Raceway on Facebook. UPIR would like to thank EMP for sponsoring Saturday’s racing, along with all of the other track sponsors, fans, volunteers, and drivers, without them, there would be no racing in Escanaba!

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