**The 2018 Racing Season is Wheels Up at UPIR 906 Raceway**

 After rain canceled the official season opener last week at UPIR 906 Raceway, Saturday night’s Bink’s Coca-Cola sponsored event served as the racetrack’s inaugural event for the 2018 season.

 Heat races for each division ran smoothly, with the yellow flag only slowing the action once in the second Island Resort & Casino Sport Compact heat race. The drivers, however, would not be as patient with one another in the features following intermission.

 Dayton Rein out of would take the first feature race win of the night in the Riverside Auto Group Youth Micro Sprint division. Behind him were Cole Constantino and Brennan Swanson in second and third respectively.

 In the second feature, which Michael Ault was victorious leading second place Robert Buttry and third place Drake Degnan across the line in the Sportsman Micro Sprint division’s main race.

 Both of these races followed the pattern of the night with no major incidents. That pattern would change in the 600 Micro Sprint feature race.

 Up front, a three car battle raged on between Christian Groleau, Matt Peterson, and Jared Cech during the majority of the race. A late race spin by Logan Getzloff, however, would set off the race’s biggest moment. As Getzloff spun 180 degrees, drivers took evasive to miss the backwards machine. Scott Richer was the unlucky victim who was collected. Richer clipped Getzloff’s tire and was sent into a series of flips. Richer climbed out uninjured, while Getloff was able to salvage an eighth place finish. Christian Groleau would take the win, holding off the hard chargers Jared Cech and Matt Peterson in second and third.

 In the Vintage Modified feature race, trouble would strike the front running cars. First, it was Dan Lambert who ran into issues while leading. Lambert’s right rear wheel would come flying off in turn one, sending the car airborne and almost upside down. Lambert was ok, but the car was not. The next driver to drop out was Bob Iverson, who spun in reaction to another car spinning in front of him. Terry Royer would avoid any issues and went on to win. Behind him in second was Herb Iverson, with Charles Peterson in third.

 The Street Stock feature would see a few minor spins, but not much else from an incident perspective. The race for the win, though, will be one remembered for years to come. With just two laps to go, Eric Mathieson led Max Constantino in second, and Paul Wagner in third with a snarling pack of cars from Wagner back. Coming out of turn two, Constantino made a move to the inside of Mathieson. The drivers ran side by side in to turn three fighting for the lead. Neither driver would exit the turn in the lead. Constantino drove hard into the corner, sliding up the track into Mathieson. As the first and second place cars slid out of his way, Paul Wagner slipped his way into the lead. Max Constatino would cling to fourth position while Eric Mathieson would come home sixth. At the front, Paul Wagner would hold on for the win. Behind him Ron Jenshak would be second, with Jeff Sullivan third.

 Coming out on to the track next for their feature would be the Sport Modifieds, and for the third race in a row, the driver who led a large segment of the race would not finish leading. Matt Valiquette would experience a mechanical failure around the midway point of the race, handing the lead to Russ Franks. Franks would maintain the lead through to the checkered flag as drivers such as Valiquette and Fran Berube would watch the finish from the pits with damaged cars. While Russ Franks captured victory, Lonnie Dalgord and Mike Richer battled for second after a late race restart. Dalgord would claim second and Richer would end up in third.

 The final race of the night was for the Island Resort & Casino Sport Compacts, and it was a wild one. Two separate frightening accidents brought out the red flag in the opening stages of the race. The first saw Ryan Mathieson break a wheel and tumble down the back straightaway before getting hit square in the roof by another car. Thankfully, Ryan climbed out of his car and waved to the fans as he walked to the ambulance for a mandatory check up. On the following restart, Tony Begovac tumbled side over side three multiple out of the fourth turn right in front of the grandstand. Begovac was also able to clamber out of his mangled vehicle. It is a true testament to the safety measurements taken by the track, drivers, and crews that both Ryan Mathieson and Tony Begovac were able to walk away.

 After the accidents were cleaned up, Elliot Reid and Brian Johnson swapped the lead back and forth for a number of laps. It was Johnson who would end up winning the race, followed by Reid. Tyler Corwin would come home in third place.

 Drivers take to the track next Saturday, June 16, for what is sure to be another great night of action. Gates open at 4 PM EST with pre-race ceremonies followed by the green flag at 6 PM EST.

By UPIR 906 Raceway Race Reporter & Co-Announcer Todd Rose