**UPIR Races Like a Girl**

**Third Annual Event Packed with Action**

The Upper Peninsula International Raceway held its third annual Race Like a Girl event with local Girl Scouts Saturday evening. The event, the seventh of the 2014 Season sponsored by the Bays de Noc Convention and Visitors Bureau, saw great racing action, along with the appearance of Reagan May, racing on dirt for the first time in six years.

 The racing slate began with the Street Stock division running a make-up feature from the rained-out June 21st event. When the checkered flag fell, Tyler Winling, driving the number 5 car usually wheeled by Paul Wagner, won the 20 lap feature. Behind Winling was Ron Jenshak in second and Kurt Schwalbach in third.

 The night’s showcase division, the 500 Micro Sprints, ran their heat race next. The top two in points coming into the night, Kristy Peterson and Jesse Liss, finished in that order after 10 laps were run. Third place went to Kyle Getchell. Peterson escaped disaster early in the race when she made contact with a spinning lapped car, recovering very nicely to claim the win.

 Next up on the agenda were the 600 Sprints to run two heat races. Heat 1 was won by Christian Groleau, followed by points leader Josh Bartel in second, and Jim Groleau in third. Heat 2 went to Jeff Ives, with second place being taken by Gregg Brayak and third going to Scott Ruleau.

 The Street Stocks came back out onto the track for the second time in the evening to run two heat races. The first heat was won by Tyler Winling, making his record for the night 2-0. Rob Kirkpatrick came across the line in second, with Zach Wennesheimer third. Oddly enough, none of these drivers took the white flag in the top three, however, the top two cars of Jeff Sullivan and Kurt Schalbach spun, opening up the top two positions. Heat 2 featured a duel to the finish between the top two in points Ron Jenshak and Rob Willis. Jenshak edged out Willis to win. Third place in the Heat was Corey DeGrave.

The kids came out next in the Junior Micro Sprint Division. Points leader Ty Springer was not in attendance, leading to a guaranteed new points leader. After a heated battle, Avry Corrigan took the checkered flag, followed by Logan Getzloff in second and Joey Stankowitz in third.

Making their way out next were the Modifieds for two heat races. Asphalt and TUNDRA Series racer from Depere, WI., Reagan May made her return to dirt track racing after a six year long hiatus in the second Heat, racing in a car that NASCAR driver Kenny Wallace raced in last month. Heat 1 was won by Lonnie Dalgord, with John Ostermann second and Pat Richer third. Heat 2 was taken by Matt Valiquette. Second was Points Leader and 2013 Track Champion Dale Peterson, and third was Reagan May who recovered from an early spin.

The final heats of the night were run by the Sport Fours. Heat 1 was captured by Randy DeGrave, Bryon Stemick was second, and Nathan Winling finished third racing his brother Tyler’s car. Heat 2 was won by Tyler Corwin, behind him were Nick Leisner and father Cory Corwin in second and third. The third and final heat was won by Kirk Millette, second went to Shaun Olson, with Chris Olson right behind him.

After on-track introductions of all of the girl racers and the 500 Micro Sprint drivers, the Showcase Feature for the 500 Sprints went green. When all was said and done, Kristy Peterson went to Victory Lane for the fifth time this year. Behind her in second was Paul Hosking, and in third, a great performance by young Justina Liss.

A last chance qualifying race for the Sport Fours saw a familiar face in Victory Lane with Justin Lauscher, qualifying him for the feature. Coming across the line with a great run in second holding off all challengers was Hattie Bourdeau, awarding her the second transfer spot.

Jeff Ives went undefeated in the night, winning both his heat, and the 600 Micro Sprint Feature. The feature ran without any major incidents until the last lap. Points leader Josh Bartel’s car broke down and spun to the infield as he ran in second place. Bartel was credited with last place, making for a major shake up in the points. Christian Groleau, and Jim Groleau, both passed Bartel and ended up in second and third in that order.

For the third time in the night, two separate things happened, the Street Stocks came back out and Tyler Winling visited UPIR Victory Lane. Undefeated at 3-0 for the night, and in Street Stocks this season, Winling took the win holding off Rob Willis in second and Ron Jenshak in third.

The Junior Micro Sprints ran their feature next. Dylan Larsen claimed the checkered flag after a battle with both Avry Corrigan and Logan Getzloff. Corrigan and Getzloff came home in second and third respectively.

In the Mighty Modifieds rffeature, Reagan Maya an into an early issue as her right front tire blew, sending her to the pits. After being behind the wall for several laps, Reagan came back out and finished the race. Winning the Feature was Matt Valiquette, with Dale Peterson in second with a bent in left front tire that caused no issue. Third place with another great run was Lonnie Dalgord.

The final Feature to be run was the Sport Fours’ Feature race. The transfer drivers, Justin Lauscher and Hattie Bourdeau, both worked their way through the field fighting for top five positions throughout the race. Lauscher, however was able to work his way to the front and win the Feature. Second place was Kirk Millette, and third was claimed by Nick Leisner.

UPIR’s Race Like a Girl Night was packed full of action, and also showcased the talent of all the girl drivers at UPIR. UPIR would like to thank Reagan May for her appearance, along with Bays de Noc Convention and Visitors’ Bureau for sponsoring Reagan’s appearance and for their continued support. UPIR would also like to thank all of its other sponsors for their ongoing support, and you, the race fans for supporting local racing in Escanaba. UPIR goes back to racing August 17th during the UP State Fair, there is no extra fee to get into the stands, as it is general admission during the fair. Gates open at 5 PM EST, with racing beginning at 6 PM EST.

By Todd Rose