**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**RE: 23RD SOUTHERN TIER OPEN**

**DAN CREEDEN WINS 23RD EDITION OF THE SOUTHERN TIER OPEN ON SATURDAY AT FIVE MILE POINT SPEEDWAY. EMPIRE STATE/STAR SERIES IMCA WINNER MATT COLE.**

**KIRKWOOD, NY…**Five Mile Point Speedway opened the gates for the 66th consecutive season on Saturday night with the running of the 23rd Southern Tier Open for Modifieds. Dan Creeden became a first time winner of the event with the $2,000 victory in the 40 lapper by just edging out Danny Johnson at the line. The Crate Sportsman division made their debut as a weekly division with Kyle Rohner grabbing the top honors. Matt Cole was the IMCA Modified Empire State Series race winner.

Nick Petrilak and Joey Colsten sat on the front row for the start of the 40 lap Southern Tier Open for Modifieds. The event provided Modified teams to run any American Racer Tire compound and bolt on the “sail panels”. The race also served as the first STAR Series event of 2016 between Five Mile Point Speedway and Penn Can Speedway. At the drop of the green Petrilak quickly emerged out front as he looked like the guy to beat during the early stages. Petrilak and Colsten ran one and two during the first quarter of the race with Anthony Perrego in tow of the duo. Defending race winner Danny Johnson started 17th in the field and was immediately one to watch as he began to advance through the field.

Petrilak continued his strong pace out front as seventh place starter Shaun Walker began his advance. Out front Petrilak now had to contend with Perrego while Walker slipped in to third place. As the race hit the halfway mark Petrilak still held the point with Walker now second and Dan Creeden now up to third from his twelfth starting spot. A tremendous three car battle took place for the lead as Walker and Creeden split Petrilak for the top spot. Walker, the defending track champion worked in to the lead on lap 21 and Creeden quickly followed his lead pulling to second one lap later. Petrilak and Perrego now began to battle for third and fourth as Johnson had moved up to fifth place.

On lap 27 Creeden made his way past Walker for the race lead with a timely caution falling on lap 29. During the caution Creeden was put back one position by race officials for contact made on Walker as he took over the race lead. When racing resumed Creeden wasted no time in showing his hand by working back past Walker only one lap later. Johnson pulled in to second on lap 31 and the final ten laps would go caution free. Johnson would use this to his advantage as he quickly closed the gap on Creeden in lapped traffic. On lap 39 Creeden was now in to heavy lapped traffic and Johnson made his move. As the two came off of turn 4 they split Chris Ostrowsky as they raced to the checkers. Creeden just edged out Johnson for the victory. Walker would finish third with Perrego fourth and Rusty Smith making an impressive late race charge to claim fifth.

Tim Howell and Marty Bunker led the Crate Sportsman teams to the green flag in their first ever weekly point race at the quarter mile oval. Howell pulled ahead at the start with Bunker in second during the early going. Kyle Rohner advanced from his seventh starting spot to take over second on lap 7. Howell and Rohner quickly had a great battle for the race lead despite several cautions slowing the pace. On lap 12 Rohner was able to work past Howell for the lead and he would never look back. Rohner would collect the win with Howell chasing him down at the finish and claiming second. Bunker had a great run coming home in third with Mike Schane and Nick Nye rounding out the top five. Nye was disqualified for being underweight at the scales awarding fifth place to Brad Weaver.

Race number one for the IMCA Empire State Series also served as the opening round of the STAR Series and the first night of point racing at Five Mile Point Speedway. Drue Perrault looked impressive as he jumped out to the race lead at the green. Perrault had to contend with two-time track champion Matt Cole as he applied the pressure throughout the 25 lapper. Perrault held the lead until lap 17 when Cole was able to slip past for the point. Cole would go on for the popular win with Perrault having his career best FMP finish in second. Eddie Sites finished third after making a late race effort from his twelfth starting spot. Veteran campaigners Gary Roberts and James Cornell rounded out the top five.

In the Lightning Cat Expert division Andy Brigham led wire to wire to claim the top honors in the 15 lap feature event. For Brigham it wasn’t easy though as heavy hitters Kenny Underwood and Nick Kennedy applied serious late race pressure. Underwood would finish second with Kennedy, Adam Gilbert and Matt McKernan rounding out the top five.

Jason Thomas led the distance in the 15 lap Factory Stock feature event. Thomas was dominant in his victory. Defending track champion Chuck Culbertson wound up second with Buck Mills Jr., Joe Donahue III and Jason Neyra rounding out the top five.

Slingshot feature action was won by Vermont driver Marty Kelly, III. Meckenzie Marsh darted out to the early race lead but on lap 8 drifted wide out of turn 4. This was the only opportunity Kelly needed as he moved past and would lead the duration of the 15 lapper. Marsh finished second with defending Track Champion Dalton Maynard third. Blaine Klinger and Bob Boughton rounded out the top five.

Amanda Brigham moved up from the “A League of Their Own” division a few years ago on the inner loop to the Lightning Cat Novice class. Brigham showed the way by leading all 12 laps of the feature event and scoring the win. Randy Lane, Charlie Towner, Jason Colwell Jr. and Lynda Lawrence rounded out the top five.

**Counter Points…**An impressive opening night took place at the quarter mile oval on a picture perfect weather evening…138 teams jammed in to the pit area for the 66th season opening event…The 23rd Southern Tier Open field was loaded with talent from all over the Southern Tier…The top five finishers in the feature all have great history at the speedway…Race winner Danny Creeden won the most Modified features last season…Second place finisher Danny Johnson is one of the All-Time 65 Greatest Drivers in FMP History and was last year’s Southern Tier Open Winner…Shaun Walker won the fall Southern Tier 66 event over all the invaders in the same year he won his first ever FMP Modified Track Championship…Anthony Perrego won the Southern Tier 100 two years prior and collected the most Modified wins in 2014…Rusty Smith, who finished fifth always runs strong at the speedway and his father was one of the original “Greatest 50 Drivers” in speedway history…A number of weekly Modified teams sat out the opening night event as they were preparing for this Saturday’s upcoming season point opener worth $1,500 to win…The IMCA Modified teams will have a new pay structure beginning this Saturday…The Crate Sportsman class opened their first weekly point race with an impressive field on hand and some great looking designs…25 show up points were awarded to the Factory Stock, Lightning Cats and Slingshots as they were racing on Sunday as well.

**23RD MODIFIED SOUTHERN TIER OPEN OFFICIAL FEATURE FINISH (40): DAN CREEDEN,** Danny Johnson, Shaun Walker, Anthony Perrego, Rusty Smith, Nick Petrilak, Joey Grammes, Brett Tonkin, Joey Colsten, Chad Phelps, Brian Malcolm, Brad Szulewski, Mike Clapperton, Jeff Crambo, P.J. Goodwin, Richard Smith, Randy Green, Mike Bills, Bryan Batzel, Chris Ostrowsky, Brett Graham, Chris Wood, Tyler Siri, Danny Tyler. **Open Sportsman Bonus Winners:** Randy Green ($150), Brett Graham ($125). DNQ – Don Hart, Glenn Knapp, Frank Porreca, Cory Costa, Brad Knapp, Ken Titus, Barry White, Joe Krum.

**CRATE SPORTSMAN OFFICIAL FEATURE FINISH (20): KYLE ROHNER,** Tim Howell, Marty Bunker, Mike Schane, Brad Weaver, Matt Roberts, Gregg McCloskey, Randy Fox, Tom Collins, Eric Bonham, Dylan Zacharias, Kyle Pierce, Tanner Harpell, Moose Gulley, Devon Zona, Gregg Turner, Tom Hampton, Cliff Pierce, Ryan Alsdorf, David Doig Jr., Gary Card Jr., Matt Hynds, Tyler Singleton, Brad Cicio, Mike Austin. DQ – Nick Nye (underweight at scales).

**EMPIRE STATE/STAR SERIES IMCA MODIFIED OFFICIAL FEATURE FINISH (25): MATT COLE,** Drue Perrault, Edward Sites, Gary Roberts, James Cornell, Brad Sites, Tyler Stoddard, Keith Lamphere, Beau Ballard, Brian Steigerwald, Mike Stoddard, Robert Maynard, J.J. Courcy, Mike Butler, Jessy Velez, Will Ward, Bill Ward, Brad Smith, Ray McClure, Brendon Shepard.

**LIGHTNING CAT EXPERT OFFICIAL FEATURE FINISH (15): ANDY BRIGHAM,** Ken Underwood, Nick Kennedy, Adam Gilbert, Matt McKernan, Bill Titus, Josh Wilder, Dennis Keesler, Frank Smith, Jeremy Warren, Kyle Rogers, Dave Bainbridge, Tucker Harpell, Mat Mather, Ronnie Welch, Sheldon Whitman, Dave Simms, Colby Herzog.

**LIGHTNING CAT NOVICE OFFICIAL FEATURE FINISH (12): AMANDA BRIGHAM,** Randy Lane, Charlie Towner, Jason Colwell Jr., Lynda Lawrence, Jimmy DiFulvio.

**FACTORY STOCK OFFICIAL FEATURE FINISH (15): JASON THOMAS,** Chuck Culbertson, Buck Mills Jr., Joe Donahue III, Jason Neyra, Ned Fitch, Rob Snow, Ryan Brockner, Josh Towner, Ted Mills.

**TOBIAS SLINGSHOT OFFICIAL FEATURE FINISH (15): MARTY KELLY III,** Punkie Marsh, Dalton Maynard, Blaine Klinger, Bob Boughton, Spencer Cherko, Bryce Cherko, Kyle Button. DNS – Shane Lewis, Jim Pollard, Alex Boughton.