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First-Ever Mopar Twin 25's Provides Night of Great Fun & Great Racing For 5,500 at Irwindale Speedway

IRWINDALE, CA — It was a night of great fun and great racing for the 5,500 Southern California race fans who attended the first-ever Mopar Twin 25's USAC Midget race at Irwindale Speedway, Saturday night, April 26.

Short track racing at its best was on display. The USAC stars made three-wide racing a common sight throughout the evening, as the whoops and screams of the crowd signaled the delight of everyone in the grandstands of the half-mile, paved oval.

Presented by Mission Foods, the event offered two 25-lap feature races, with the chance for a \$50,000 bonus prize for any driver who won both. Tracy Hines, the reigning USAC Sprint Car Champion, won the first feature, and according to the unique Twin 25's format, started last in the second feature. He would have to pass 23 cars in 25 laps to win the big money.

However, Michael Lewis was too tough, and took the second feature, denying Hines the chance to take home the grand prize. Lewis, of Noblesville, Indiana, won last year's Turkey night Grand Prix at Irwindale Speedway, a USAC Midget race that's been a Southern California tradition for decades.

Hines' winning Midget was a Beast chassis, powered by a Mopar engine, while Lewis drove a Beast chassis with an engine by Fontana Automotive.

"These are great racers, great race teams and great fans," said Steve Lewis, of Premier Racing Entertainment, Laguna Beach, California, producers of the event. "Tonight, it was the pure passion for auto racing on display. You could see it on the track. And you could feel it in the grandstands."

Associate sponsors for the race were Team ASE, Edelbrock, Racer Magazine, K&N Engineering and Superior Super Warehouse.

For the first 25-lap event, Hines was first, followed by Michael Lewis and Kasey Kahne. Kahne did double duty that day, having finished fourth in the NASCAR Busch Grand National race at nearby California Speedway in Fontana. Driving the third Lewis Racing car, alongside teammates J.J. Yeley, the

USAC Midget points leader, and Bobby East, Kahne, a former National Midget champion, scored the pole for the race.

Hines drove aggressively in the second feature to move through the field as soon as the green flag dropped, reaching 17th position before he said he “got pinched” out of turn two on lap 20 and spun. He was forced to start again from the rear when the race went green, and managed to finish sixth. Michael Lewis took the second win, followed by A.J. Fike in second and Dave Steele for third.

Everyone was so close, it was hard to make up 23 spots,” Hines said following the second race. “The car was sticking well, but the speeds were up for everyone.”

Lewis, the winner of last year’s Turkey Night, knows his way around Irwindale. But he was modest when asked what his racing strategy was post-event: “Things just fell our way tonight.”

No one won the \$50,000 bonus that evening, but that was not the case last year when the first Twin 25’s, held at Indianapolis Raceway Park, netted Dave Steele more than \$62,000 in total prize money. Hines and Lewis will split a purse of approximately \$22,000, plus up to \$10,000 in lap money provided by Racer magazine.

“This was a truly great day—and evening—of racing activities,” said Lewis. “We had a lot of fun before the race even started, with quarter midget racing all day, the Mission Foods Taqueria, the vintage Midgets on display, a fabulous Midway, on-track autograph sessions and much more. In the feature races, the racing was spectacular, and capped off a perfect night for Southern California race fans.”

The next Twin 25’s event is the second annual Indianapolis Twin 25’s, which will be held September 26, 2003, at Indianapolis Raceway Park, Indianapolis. Keep updated on everything that is happening in preparation for this event by logging onto www.twin25s.com.