

EVENT REPORT



WELCOME TO NOLA MOTORSPORTS PARK- GRAND FINAL DAY 5

New Orleans, Louisiana, November 14, 2013 – Welcome to the first day of heat races, in the 2013 Rotax MAX Challenge Grand Finals! The four main categories will be seeing wheel-to-wheel action as competitors vie for the victory. Read our posts to find out what has been happening.

First and foremost- today's weather update: Winds are expected at 13 mph, with a 0% chance precipitation, and temperatures estimated with a high of 63°F (17.2°C) and a low of 59°F (15°C).

The day will start out with one un-official practice session for all classes to test out the track conditions. Remember- since there was no action on the track the previous night, grip levels have decreased, changing track conditions. As a result, drivers and mechanics must alter chassis set-ups to adapt to the new track environment.

At the end of the heat races, Micro and Mini MAX will also have one 15-minute non-qualifying practice session to test out their new Haase (Micro MAX) and OK1 (Mini MAX) chassis.

Now, let us get down to the action of the day!

Junior Heat 1- Group A + B

The first Junior heat race saw Kirkwood with the hole-shot, leading the Junior pack into turn one. However, Estonian Jüri Vips proved to be slightly faster, passing Kirkwood for the top position a few laps into the race. Although Kirkwood kept up with Vips and prepared to pass the Estonian, Vips blocked Kirkwood's attempt. The Estonian finished the race with a 56.971 followed by Kirkwood with a 57.036 and Austrian Max Hofer rounded out the top 3 with a 56.874. The fastest laptime, though, was driven by France's Bastien Leguay, with a 56.795.



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Junior Heat 1- Group C +D

One could feel the intensity of the second Junior race, as the 36 Energy karts stormed the track, ready for action. This junior heat saw the Canadian, Kingsley start form P1. However, at the start of the race, American, Luke Selliken jumped out front, with Kingsley in second and British Brett Ward in third. In the 3rd lap, Ward took the lead, dropping Selliken to third, as Kingsley slipped into second. Separated by less than 3 tenths of a second, the top 3 battled until halfway through the last lap. The last few corners however, was where the most wheel-to-wheel action occurred: Japanese, Sena Sakaguchi passed Selliken in the last corner, pushing the American down to 7th position, allowing American-native Juan Correa, Spaniard Jon Del Valle and American Blaine Rocha to slip past, respectively. What an exciting event- especially within the Junior class, karts are racing within tenths of each other. In just one minute, for instance, around 15 drivers were able to score lap times within the same 3 tenths of a second, highlighting how extreme this sport really is, and how determined drivers must be in order to race the RMCGF events.

Senior Heat 1- Group A + B

Although the sky was very cloudy, the Sodi-kart sponsored 125 MAX (Senior) karts were race ready. Spaniard Carlos Gil and Estonian, Aavo Talvar stormed away, with over half a second gap to third placed Kyle Fowlie. But, with 2 laps into the heat race, Talvar passed Gil, only to be passed by Gil three corners later. Since the two were battling it out, third, fourth and fifth place caught up to the front pack. Nevertheless, Gil demonstrated his race craft, passing for the lead again. As it is so common in these competitive classes, the top 3 continued to switch positions throughout the last few laps of the race. Fowlie passed Gil for first place, and Brand-Fowlie's teammate- initiated a pass on Gil but was blocked. The top 7 competitors of the heat were all racing within one second of each other. The last lap saw much action as well; Gil passed Fowlie again for the lead, opening the door for Brand, who was able to slip past Fowlie and pass Gil for the ultimate win. What a great race!

Senior Heat 1- Group C + D

The start of the race saw the UK's driver, Oliver Hodgson with the hole shot, followed by American Sam Beasley and the Canadian, Zachary Claman-Demelo. However, in lap 4, Beasley dropped down to fourth position. Meanwhile, Claman-Demelo pulled a clean pass on Hodgson for the lead. Just a few laps later, however, the Swede, Philip Morin passed the Canadian and Hodgson for the lead. The current Senior MAX World Champion, Eastwood, also was able to work his way up, to 5th position. The last corner on the last lap, again, proved to be very exciting- a three way, side-by-side kart battle ensued, with Morin scoring the victory, followed by Hodgson and Czech Republic native, Petr Bezel rounding out the top three positions.

DD2 Masters Heat 1- Group A + B

The clouds continued to hang deep in the sky as those on the grid for the first DD2 Master heat revved their engines. Alan Rudolph led the field to receive the green flag. France's Michael Dauphin passed Rudolph at the start. Australian Adam Hunter pursued the top two closely, driving one tenth of a second faster than the leaders. However, Rudolph passed Dauphin for the top spot, once again. Hunter also was able to slip past Dauphin, who was pushed back to third. The top four drivers, with just 5 laps to go, were racing within 5 tenths of a second- and consequently, Hunter passed Rudolph for the lead, gaining over half a second. However, Rudolph was able to win the heat, passing and gaining over 3 tenths of a second over the second placed Portuguese Tiago Ribeiro and third-placed Dauphin.

DD2 Masters Heat 1- Group C + D

What an incredible start- a big crash at the beginning of the race, and all of a sudden, Morgado raced to the top of the charts, followed by Christoph Adams of Team France and Shintaro Tomomura of Japan. In fact, Morgado was able to pull out an incredible 7-second gap from Adams. Although there was little change in positions, the race was still very exciting to watch!

DD2 Heat 1- Group A + B

The first DD2 heat race saw all 36 karts storm into turn one, with Formal taking the lead by over 1.2 seconds to Cooper. However, in just 3 laps, Cooper reeled in Formal, and passed him for the lead. Third placed Austrian Simon Wagner, was over a second away from the action on the track. As the laps began winding down, Cooper still managed to stay in the lead, with Formal in hot pursuit- only one tenth of a second behind the 3-time World Champion. However, after incorrectly hitting a curb, Formal lost 0.7 tenths of a second to Cooper, who ultimately won the heat race and ran the fastest lap time of a 54.313. Formal finished in second and Wagner in third.

DD2 Heat 1- Group C + D

The clouds were still thick and the wind blowing as the second group of DD2 started their engines. Pier-Luc Ouellette led the field to turn one, with Australian Brendan Nelson just 0.097 seconds behind. By the second lap, Belgian Xen de Ruwe was able to make his way up to third place- over 6 tenths of a second behind Ouellette. De Ruwe passed Nelson in lap 3, beginning to reel in the Canadian and even attempted to pass him in lap four. Ouellette, however, was able to block and keep first place. De Ruwe and Ouellette began trading places as the race progressed. UK's Shaun Slavin caught up to third place- one-tenth behind the Belgian- but was unable to pass, costing him a few tenths of second. The last lap saw intense action, as de Ruwe, Ouellette and Slavin fought for first place. De Ruwe, however, was able to keep his position, just over a tenth from Ouellette who finished in second and Slavin, who finished in third position.

Junior Heat 2- Group A + C

What a start to a race! Vips jumped to the lead, followed by Ward and Hofer. Pole sitter, Kirkwood was pushed to 5th place, in the tangle of karts. However, Ward and Vips continued to switch positions throughout the race, as Kirkwood made his way up front. The last corner on the last lap saw the top 3 drivers race side by side, with Kingsley jumping to the front and winning the race just 0.061 seconds over Kirkwood and Ward, who finished in third. The juniors sure know how to make races exciting to watch!

Junior Heat 2- Group B + D

The Juniors had a clean start, with UK driver Tom Harvey jumping into the lead, pulling a 1.3 second gap over second placed American Blaine Rocha. Although the top 2 drivers did not battle hard, third placed Jamaican, Thomas Issa and Japanese driver, Shogo Endo battled for third position, shifting places throughout the race. In the last lap, however, Endo finished in third, place, with Issa in fourth. Harvey took the win followed by Rocha and Endo.

Senior Heat 2- Group A + C

As the seniors prepared to race, the sun slowly started shining. Gil took the lead from the start of the race, however, by the beginning of lap 2, he steadily fell back to 4th position, while Eastwood stormed to take the lead. Brand followed to capture 2nd place and Hodgson drove up to third. In lap 3, on the backstretch, Brand passed Eastwood. Working together as a team, both drivers distanced themselves from the field. Gil was able to drive up to second position again, while at the same time, reeling in the leader, Hodgson. After passing Hodgson for the lead, however, Gil was only able to maintain the top spot for a few corners, until Bezel jumped to the top of the sheets. After making wheel-to-wheel contact with Hodgson, steam smoking, Bezel was pushed to second, where he would finish, Hodgson coming in first and Canadian Claman-Demelo rounding out the top three. The fastest lap time, however, was driven by Brand, who finished in 15th. What an incredible race!

Senior Heat 2- Group B + D

So far, our spectators have been experiencing action with no end. In the second senior heat race, American Oliver Askew was able to fight his way to finish in third position, just one tenth behind the second placed Spaniard, Albert Gil. However, one of the events' top drivers, Aavo Talvar, once again conquered the top of the sheets, with over a one-second gap to second place. UK's Max Aitken who finished in 12th place ran the fastest lap time of a 55.524.

DD2 Masters Heat 2- Group A + C

Rudolph, once again, lead the field of DD2 Masters to the start of the race. Rudolph immediately took the lead from the start, with Morgado following in hot pursuit. With the commencement of the second lap, though, Rudolph already had a 1.6 second gap over second placed Morgado. Nevertheless, Martin Pierce of Ireland was able

to catch up and pass the South African for second place. Meanwhile, Rudolph continued to pull out an even larger gap- of 2.86 seconds over Morgado who had worked his way back up to second position. With just 5 laps to go, Morgado posted the fastest lap time of 55.065- 4 tenths faster than the leader's time. On the last lap, Morgado once again demonstrated he was the quickest driver on the track, posting a record time of a 54.864. However, the fast times were not enough for Morgado to capture the win, as Rudolph celebrated victory with over 1.6 seconds to second placed Morgado, and about 3 seconds to third placed American, Mike Jones.

DD2 Masters Heat 2- Group B + D

The second DD2 Masters group had a clean start, with Adam Hunter leading the field into the first few laps. By lap 4, Hunter had already gained a 1.9 second gap over second placed Tiago Ribeiro. Fernando Guzzi of Brazil, in third place, was another 3.2 seconds behind Ribeiro. As the laps continued to wind down, Hunter posted the fastest times lap after lap, with the fastest being a 55.134. At the close of the race, Hunter finished in first, with Ribeiro in second and Guzzi rounding out the top 3.

DD2 Heat 2- Group A + C

As the sun started setting, the first DD2 senior group was lead by Formal and Pier-Luc Ouellette to the start of the race. Formal had a great start, pulling out a 5 tenths of a second gap to Ouellette. By lap 3, the top 3 drivers, Formal, Ouellette and UK driver Sean Babington, respectively, pulled away from the rest of the pack. On the back straight, in lap 4, Ouellette pulled a daring move on Formal to become the leader of the race. In lap 6, Babington passed Formal for second, allowing Ouellette to pull out a 4 tenths gap. Although Ferenc Kancsar, who was posting top times throughout the week, finished in 12th, once again ran the fastest time of the race with a 54.109. Meanwhile, in turn 2 with only a few laps to go, Babington took the top spot from Ouellette. While setting up for a pass on Babington, however, Ouellette opened the door, allowing for Formal to slip into second and Lithuanian driver Simas Juodvirsis into third. DD2 seniors always provide a great racing spectacle for the spectators.

DD2 Heat 2- Group B + D

And finally, the last group of the day saw Ben Cooper leading the pack into turn 1. However, in lap 2, without notice, Ben Cooper surprisingly pulled into the pit lane, handing over the lead to Miika Laiho of Finland. Due to jumping over the curbs, a king pin of Cooper's kart was sheered off, prohibiting the 3-time World Champion from driving. Lithuanian Kazimiera Vasiliauskas was running in second and Belgian Mathias Detige rounded out the top 3. However, Detige fell back to fifth place, with Australian Jason Pringle slipping into fourth position and Laiho into third. Meanwhile, Vasiliauskas and Slavin began fighting for the lead, pulling a half-second gap on third place. By the last lap, Slavin had pulled out a 4 tenth gap over Vasiliauskas, and posted the fastest lap time of a 54.062, winning the heat race, followed by Vasiliauskas and Laiho.

Just like the in previous days, at the close of the day, drivers must attend another mandatory briefing for the following day.

Remember to stay alert for our next few posts, keeping you up to date with the intense action of the 2013 Rotax MAX Challenge Grand Finals.

The Rotax MAX Challenge (RMC) is a professional kart racing series established, owned and organized by BRP and its Rotax kart engine distributors. Approved by and in compliance with CIK / FIA, the RMC is a "one-make-engine" formula: only Rotax kart engines that are checked and sealed (for equal performance) are allowed. The success in the competition is mainly up to the skills of the driver.

The Grand Finals is the annual event gathering qualifiers from each participating country. The event is open to the public; tickets can be purchased on-site or via the website of NOLA Motorsports Park: www.nolamotor.com. You can also watch the Rotax MAX Challenge Grand Finals live on the web starting with the qualifying rounds at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, November 13 right up to the finals on Saturday, November 16 by following this link: <http://rgf-2013.kart-data.com>.

About BRP

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