



## WELCOME TO KARTÓDROMO INTERNACIONAL DO ALGARVE – GRAND FINAL DAY 4

*Portimão, Portugal – Thursday, November 12, 2015* – Welcome to the first official day of racing at the Kartódromo Internacional do Algarve! \*

Today showed the high level of talent at the Rotax MAX Challenge Grand Finals, as 72 pilots battled during four heat races per class to drive to the front of the pack.

Mechanics and drivers hastily ran through the pit area today, to make any last minute chassis or engine adjustments before their drivers headed out for the first of three heat races.

Looking around the paddock, one could notice the focused and determined expressions of the pilots. Now more than ever is the time for competitors to concentrate, center, and mentally prepare for the challenges they will face during today's heat races.

The better the competitors finish, the more likely they will be admitted into the pre-final round. Although there are 72 drivers per class, the pre-final will only permit 34 of the top ranking competitors to advance, which is why it is doubly important for drivers to finish well.

The newest addition of drivers to the RMCGF – the 72 Portuguese and Spanish drivers partaking in the Rotax Grand Festival event in the Micro and Mini MAX classes - participated in three practice sessions today to prepare for their heat races tomorrow.

Thursday's weather forecast thankfully was similar to that of Wednesday's, calling for clear skies and 22°C.

### 125 Junior MAX Heat Race - Group A + B

The Junior Rotax field saw a tight-knit, competitive field exit onto track for the Group A and B heat race. In fact, the field saw intensive action from the front all the way toward the back. It took two starts to launch the begin of Junior MAX Group A + B. Ropanen was passed by Symons in turn one, and tactfully stayed behind the UK driver until the very end of the race, when Ropanen suddenly made a pass on Symons with aggression and finesse. Ultimately, it was Ropanen who won, Symons who finished in second, and Manuel Sulaiman of Mexico who finished in third.

### 125 Junior MAX Heat Race - Group C + D

The C and D heat race also proved to be filled with on-track battles and fair passing. In fact, the start of this race was very clean in comparison to the Junior MAX Group A + B start. Harrison Thomas of the UK immediately took the lead and ultimately won the race with a three-tenth gap over the second placed American, Trenton Estep. An intensive battle ensued for third place throughout the remainder of the last two laps, but Jakub Bezel of the Czech Republic clinched the third spot, one-tenth behind Estep. What great racing so far!

### **125 Junior MAX Heat Race - Group A + C**

The A and C Junior MAX heat races also proved to be extremely competitive, as the first lap saw 36 drivers dive into turn one! Battles took place throughout the entire race with drivers trying to prove their talent and skills. Although Roope Ropanen started on pole, the Fin was soon overtaken by Frenchman Florian Venturi. Venturi finished in the first position, more than four-tenths of a second over the Fin. The Australian Aaron Cameron finished in third, eight-tenths of a second behind Venturi.

### **125 Junior MAX Heat Race - Group B + D**

What a great way to end the day for Junior MAX heat racing! The group B and D start was relatively clean, minus a flipped kart in the beginning of the race at turn three. Group B and D saw intensive battles between the top three drivers lap after lap. The battle did not stop until the last corner of the last lap, keeping the 2015 RMCGF viewers on their toes until the end. However, Harrison Thomas of the UK ultimately clinched the top spot, followed by fellow United Kingdom competitor Scott Symons and Dylan Drysdale from New Zealand.

### **125 MAX Heat Race - Group A + B**

Similar to the previous Junior heat races, the 125 MAX A and B race proved to be exceptionally competitive and eventful! In fact, the start of the race saw intensive action when UK driver Ed Brand took the lead away from pole sitter, Berkay Besler of Turkey. Besler stayed right on Brand's Bumper, until lap 7 of 9, when he made the move for the win. Brand fell back a few spots and out of the top three. Meanwhile, the American Lucas Selliken steadily worked his way up to second place, finishing one-tenth behind Besler. The German Christopher Dreyspring rounded out the top 3, about three-tenths of a second behind Selliken.

### **125 MAX Heat Race - Group C + D**

The top three drivers were battling from the beginning to the finish of the race, pushing each other to the maximum limits, yet never passing unfairly. Ultimately, it was Luc Willemse of the Netherlands who finished in first, gapping second placed Australian Pierce Lehane by two-tenths, and Hirotaka Sasaki of Japan by more than five-tenths. It truly was a nail-biting race to the end!

### **125 MAX Heat Race - Group A + C**

The Rotax 125 MAX Group A and C race did not disappoint, as the top competitors of the pack battled for the win! At this point, the sun was already setting, and the weather started cooling down, presenting drivers and mechanics with a new challenge to find grip on a track they only have been testing on during warm conditions. Brand had better luck this time than in the previous heat race, as he finished just one-tenth ahead of Berkay Besler of Turkey, and more than eight-tenths of a second over Luc Willemse of the Netherlands.

### **125 MAX Heat Race - Group B + D**

Group B and D demonstrated their competitive spirit as the race started. The Italian driver ALEX put his skills to the test and finished in first by almost seven-tenths of a second over the Estonian Sten Dorian Piirmaegi. The German, Christopher Dreyspring rounded out the top 3. Leonard Hoogenboom of the Netherlands posted the fastest lap time with a 1.00.764.



### **125 MAX DD2 Masters Heat Race - Group A + B**

Don't get fooled by the name – although DD2 Masters drivers are 32 and older, the class is not slow and the drivers are not afraid to pass. In fact, today proved the opposite is true. The race start saw an immediate pile-up following the small bend on the straight. Wang took the lead early on in the race, leading over Brazilian Fernando Guzzi. The American lead every lap of the race, up until lap 9 of 9. That was when Guzzi dove into the inside Wang to make a pass for the win. Ultimately, Guzzi won over Wang by two-tenths. The South African Michael Stephen finished in third place and posted the fastest lap time of the race.

### **125 MAX DD2 Masters Heat Race - Group C + D**

Track action heated up, as the DD2 Masters' competitive spirit was shown in today's Group C and D race. Tomokazu Kawase of Japan lead the race a little over halfway. Then, the Fin Antti Ollikainen took over the lead. It was Ollikainen who finished on top, pulling almost a 1.5 second gap over second placed Robert Schluenssen of Germany. The Canadian Scott Campbell, a former RMCGF Champion, rounded out the top 3, more than 5 seconds behind the Fin. Kawase dropped down to position No. 35 in the last couple of laps. Although some may have seen success during this race, others may have been disappointed. Nevertheless, there still remain two more chances for the DD2 Masters drivers to make up lost positions.

### **125 MAX DD2 Masters Heat Race - Group A + C**

Although the start saw some bumping and pushing among the front and mid-pack drivers, for the majority, the racers got off to a good start, and proceeded to battle, especially toward the front of the pack. Although Kawase did not have much luck last heat race, this time around, he was able to demonstrate his talent, as he grasped first place with just four one-hundredths of a second in front of the American Luis Schiavo. Renato Russo from Brazil fought hard and finished in third place with a gap of two-tenths back from Kawase.

### **125 MAX DD2 Masters Heat Race - Group B + D**

The DD2 Masters heat B and D saw Michael Stephen clinch the top spot of the race, with more than three-tenths of a second gap over Ryan Urban of New Zealand. Although Ollikainen fought well and hard throughout the race, he did not see the top spot, but was able to finish in third.

### **125 MAX DD2 Heat Race - Group A+B**

Predictably, the DD2 heat races did not disappoint. Ferenc Kancsar took off from the start of the race without looking back. In fact, the Hungarian driver pulled out a six-tenths of a second gap over Luke Varley, even though Varley posted the fastest lap time of the race. The Swede, Andreas Backman, finished in a solid 3<sup>rd</sup> place, 1.5 seconds back from Kancsar. With no doubt, Kancsar could be one of the RMCGF title contenders for the challenging DD2 class!

### **125 MAX DD2 Heat Race - Group C+D**

The DD2 competitors showed off their talent and skill, as they headed into turn one after the track went green. The Polish driver, Lukasz Bartoszuk lead the pack to the finish line, finishing more than three-tenths in front of Luka Kamali of Germany. Martins Steinerts of Latvia rounded out the top 3 positions.

### **125 MAX DD2 Heat Race - Group A + C**

One of the most exciting battles to watch during this race proved to be between Backman and Kancsar. The Hungarian and the Swede battled from the begin to the end of the race, driving bumper-to-bumper, lap after lap. Many times Backman and Kancsar tried to pass each other fairly but aggressively. However, Kancsar came out on top. Backman fell behind the last couple of laps and finished the race with more than 1.2 seconds back to Kancsar. Bradley Liebenberg of



South Africa rounded out the top three finishers, just eight one-hundredths of a second behind Backman. What an exciting race!

### **125 MAX DD2 Heat Race - Group B + D**

What a race! The German Luka Kamali got the jump on pole sitter Luke Varley, and lead the pack into turn one. This heat race proved to be thrilling until the end. In lap 1 a red flag briefly made the race come to a halt before drivers restarted in a single-file format. Varley fell back and out of the top three positions during the majority of the race, however was able to make his way back up to third, four-tenths behind Kamali. Lukasz Bartoszek of Poland finished in a close second place, about one-tenth behind Kamali.

**Live timing** will be **available** on the RMCGF homepage, at <http://www.rotax-kart.com/en/Max-Challenge/Grand-Finals/Grand-Finals-2015/LIVESTREAM>.

Stay tuned for our upcoming daily reports, which bring the intense action of the RMCGF to you!

\*Please note some of the results are not yet official.

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) will be used. The success in the competition is mainly up to the skills of the driver.

### **About BRP**

BRP (TSX:DOO) is a global leader in the design, development, manufacturing, distribution and marketing of powersports vehicles and propulsion systems. Its portfolio includes Ski-Doo and Lynx snowmobiles, Sea-Doo watercraft, Can-Am all-terrain and side-by-side vehicles, Can-Am Spyder roadsters, Evinrude and Rotax marine propulsion systems as well as Rotax engines for karts, motorcycles and recreational aircraft. BRP supports its line of products with a dedicated parts, accessories and clothing business. With annual sales of over CA\$3.5 billion from 107 countries, the Company employs approximately 7,600 people worldwide.

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