

BY RUSSELL HAYES

Organisers of the Rotax Max Challenge Grand Finals have announced that the 2013 event will take place in November at the karting facility at the NOLA Motorsports Park near New Orleans, Louisiana. "This event has been our primary focus ever since we started handling the distribution of Rotax products in the United States of America," said MAXSpeed president Richard Boisclair. "Everyone has been working really very hard for the last two years to make this happen."

Graham might twin karting with cars

Former Under-18 world champion Matthew Graham says he could look at combining competing in karting alongside a single-seater's campaign next year. Graham, who took the 2011 world title, is hoping to take to a drive in Formula Renault BARC or the new F4 championship next year (see *Racing News*).

Graham says despite racing in single-seaters next year, he would like to take part in gearbox competition. "After a while you start to miss karting," he said. "Depending on where I end up in single-seaters, I think a deal could possibly be done with Tonykart, Energy or Sod to drive in KF2 or in a KZ class. Gearbox is something I've not competed in before and would be exciting to test myself in."

Graham endured a torrid 2012 season after struggling with a Chelsea Corse chassis. He took part in the World Championship in Bahrain with Kieran Crawley's M-Sport team.

THE FUTURE OF INTERNATIONAL KARTING WILL BECOME CLEARER AS THE CIK-FIA NEARS THE END OF A SEARCH FOR THE FIRST OUTSIDE PROMOTER AND ORGANISER OF THE EUROPEAN AND WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS.

According to a *Motorsport News* source, the CIK-FIA has been in talks with organisers over recent months. WSK Promotions is believed to be the preferred choice of the CIK-FIA

Commission which gathered in Paris last week for an extraordinary meeting to discuss the future of the category. WSK runs its own popular European series alongside the CIK championships, with top British drivers regularly competing.

"This would be an agreement which would come into effect immediately from 2013," the CIK source said. "It's been a surprise to people within the CIK over the last six months. The hierarchy apparently believe that

It has certain people who have been organising events who are not totally committed to the sport. There are some FIA personnel who have been pushed down into the CIK."

At the same meeting in Paris, the CIK-FIA Commission officially drew up the 2013 calendar which adds the Bahrain circuit as a second date to the World KF Senior and Junior Championships. An additional title known as the Karting Talon Trophy has been created to run alongside the Academy Trophy.

in place of the Under-18 world championship contest.

"The sport has moved on and the organisation feels that it should have a smaller nucleus of people who are more focused and professional," the source added. "At European events last year, there were up to 14 officials from the CIK alone. There is also an element of cost cutting involved which is only normal in these economic times."

WSK Promotions declined to comment when approached by *M/N*.

IRISH EYES ARE SMILING ON EASTWOOD AFTER MAX CHALLENGE FINAL WIN

Rotax Max Challenge Grand Finals: Portugalão

By Graham Smith

When: November 28-December 1 Where: Portugal, Algarve, Portugal Championships: Rotax Max Challenge Grand Final Classes: Senior, Junior, DD2, DD2 Masters Organiser: RPR Rotax Starters: 276

Charlie Eastwood became the first Irish champion in the history of the Max Challenge Grand Finals at his first attempt, and was joined on the Senior Max podium by British racers Ed Brand and Oliver Hodgson. Harry Webb hammered through the Junior field to win, clinching the Nations Cup for Britain over Canada and Australia. Some 276 drivers from 60 nations contested the event, with almost two-dozen Brits and Irish included from Super One, EuroMax and the International Open.

Eastwood slotted into third at the start after his pre-final second place, watching former junior champion Ukyo Sasahara and Pierre Lehaene battle ahead. Oliver Hodgson stormed up from

fifth to second, putting Eastwood down to fourth, but the latter fought back and reeled in leader Lehaene. A shuffle around at the second corner had Eastwood ahead, only to trade with Brand, saved when Oliver Hodgson snatched second. Although Brand managed to retrieve the position, it left Eastwood clear for victory. "I got the cutback on Ed and then it all happened behind me," said Eastwood.

"The event was a totally new experience for me."

In Junior Max, Webb had one bad heat and from his ninth spot on the grid in the pre-final, he fell to 22nd after two crashes. But tremendous pace meant he sliced through the field, relieving fellow Brit Ross Gunn of the lead and pulling out a gap. "The top four started battling after I caught them and I did them all in one corner," Webb explained. Gunn had to settle for fourth after a massive battle with Janneau Esmeijer of Holland and Parker Thompson of

Canada. "I slightly damaged the kart with Esmeijer and lost a little pace," said Gunn, still happy with his result.

Josh White was only called up as reserve with less than a week's notice, but put his kart second on the pre-final grid, only to fall back in both finals.

Driving for Canada, Ben Cooper dominated the DD2 heats, but after losing a big lead found himself just hanging on for the pre-final win. Kyle Ensley and Konstantinos Calko relegated him from a large initial lead in the final to third, but Cooper fought back to win his third title. "I had to make a move in the hairpin and make the other two fight," he said. David Griffiths made a blinding start from the outside front row to lead the DD2 Masters for ten drivers, with no less than ten previous champions in the race. He was reeled in and demoted however by Scott Campbell of Canada. In turn he had to give way for South African Cristiano Morgado to take his third title.



Charlie Eastwood was the class of the Rotax field in Portugal

Griffiths clung onto third. Martin Pierre, another Brit racing for Ireland took fifth, whilst Lucas Orrock lost his exhaust at the start of the final.

Results

Senior Max (all karts Solo), final: 1 Charlie Eastwood (Ireland) 21 laps in 21m 41.668s; 2 Edward Brand (UK) +1.986s; 3 Oliver Hodgson (UK); 4 Alexander Fuchslein (France); 5 Pierre Lehaene (Australia); 6 Joseph Marston (Australia); Fastest lap: Leon Haber (Estonia) 1m 01.162s; Heat Winners: Lachlan 25; Hodgson; Harrison Scott (UK); James Singleton (UK); Fred Quashyong; Pi Lehaene; 1m 01.662s; Starters: 62; Junior Max (all karts Bep), final: 1 Harry Webb (UK) 18 laps in 18m 59.276s; 2 Janneau Esmeijer (Holland) +3.013s; 3 Parker Thompson (Canada); 4 Ross Gunn (UK); 5 Jon De Waer (Spain); 6 Lars Lundkvist

(Holland); Pi Thompson (m 02.516s; HW: Bruno Barilo (Portugal) 25; Stefano Van Saem (Belgium); Barilo; Webb 25; Jon White (UK); 10: Bruno Barilo; 1m 02.512s; S: 03.

DD2 Masters (all karts Heco), final: 1 Cristiano Morgado (South Africa) 21 laps in 21m 20.572s; 2 Scott Campbell (Canada) +0.702s; 3 David Griffiths (UK); 4 Goncalo Gomes (Portugal); 5 Marcin Perca (France); 6 Boy Perera (France); 7: Campbell 1m 02.292s; HW: Campbell 25; Morgado 25; Griffiths; Perca; 10: Henry Martin (Argentina) 1m 00.058s; S: 55.

DD2 (all karts March), final: 1 Ben Cooper (Canada) 21 laps in 21m 02.896s; 2 Kostasinos Calko (Ireland) +0.181s; 3 Nyle Perera (Australia); 4 Mathias Deque (Belgium); 5 Mike Lallo (France); 6 Konstantinos Esmeijer (Holland); 7: Sandro Lachet (Greece) 4; Hernandez 59.487s; HW: Xen De Paepe (Belgium); Cooper 25; Kouri Lall (Slovenia); Sandro Whigper (Australia); 10: De Paepe 59.012s; S: 59.