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Contact: David Tennyson - 416-436-2819

Prepared by: Autosports Media Group

Photo by: Cody Schindel - Autosports Media Group

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**NICHOLAS LATIFI MISSES PODIUM DESPITE STELLAR WEEK AT GRAND FINALS**

*"Rookie DD2 driver earns heat race win and a front row start for the Final at the Rotax Max Challenge Grand Finals to cap off an incredible season of major international competition"*



*Nicholas Latifi capped off an incredible season with a solid week at the Rotax Max Challenge Grand Finals in the United Arab Emirates  
(Photo by: Cody Schindel - Autosports Media Group)*

Toronto, Ontario - Sofina Foods of Toronto, Ontario, returned to Canada following an exciting, yet disappointing Rotax Max Challenge Grand Finals. Sofina Foods Driver Development Program member Nicholas Latifi nearly completed the unthinkable, as a rookie DD2 driver making only his second start at the Grand Finals, by nearly winning the world title. Contact on the ultimate lap of the final race sent Latifi back in the field from his third place position. The 16-year-old racer was at the top of the time sheets all week long with impressive runs in practice, qualifying, heat races and the main events. Running against the best two-speed pilots in the world, Latifi made an impact on the entire field and left knowing a world title was just a few corners away.

Getting off on a solid but challenging start, Latifi would have been third on the grid from

timed qualifying but lost his best time because of a side pod coming off his kart on the third lap of the session. The result was only two timed laps that put him sixth on the combined sheets. Not to be deterred, Latifi stormed to the front in heat race one to score the win and show he was serious about the world title. Latifi then backed that performance up with fifth in the second heat race to grab another great score. In the third heat, the talented teen led until last lap where contact from behind moved him to 18th place in the final order. The combination of heat race finishes would put Latifi ninth to start the prefinal. In the prefinal, starting from the fifth row, Latifi again put on a passing clinic working his way to second place for an all-Canadian front row in the final.

The final was a true chess match right from the start as drivers looked to stay with the lead group and show their true speed. A great start had Latifi slot into second behind fellow Team Canada member Pier-Luc Ouellette. As the laps counted down the action heated up and several drivers in the lead group of five karts looked for a chance to make their presence felt in the final stages of the race. Latifi moved nicely into second place until the last lap where he again was moved off line by contact from behind. As Latifi gathered up his kart he fell from third to eighth place. A post race ten second penalty was handed to the driver that punted Latifi, moving Nicholas to seventh in the final order.

"Nicholas truly demonstrated to the world his exceptional skill, race craft and maturity behind the wheel at the Grand Finals. His performance was unmatched by a driver of his experience in karting, demonstrating his incredible talent. I have never worked with a driver with such skill, focus and determination," comments David Tenyson of the Sofina Foods Driver Development Program. "I was pleased to see that the race officials assessed a penalty to the driver that hit Nicholas from behind, forcing him off on the last lap and losing his third place position in the final."



*Latifi consults with mechanic Jean-Francois at the Al Ain Raceway*

*(Photo by: Cody Schindel - Autosports Media Group)*

For Latifi, heading into the Grand Finals he knew that as a rookie it was an uphill battle to the front. Great speed throughout the event kept him at the front despite some bad luck along the way. As one of the youngest drivers on the grid and having just completed his third full season of karting, Latifi showed incredible craft as he battled former World and National Champions to vie for a podium spot.

"This year's Grand Finals was a bit of a disappointment for my team and I. We had the speed to finish at the front, but just had no luck," comments Latifi. "Qualifying sixth after having to retire from the session early and having my fastest lap taken away from me really dampened our spirits. We were looking to come back strong for the heat races and get some good consistent results. After finishing second in the prefinal race I was really confident that I would be a top contender for the win in the final. I got through the start of the final and slotted into second for the first turn. I was running in the top three nose to tail the whole race until the last lap, where I got bumped from behind forcing me off-line which resulted in a couple of karts going by. Finishing seventh overall was not what I wanted but nonetheless it was a good experience and hopefully next year will be better. I would like to thank my mechanics Coy and Jean-Francois, and my parents for all of their support and encouragement."

The Sofina Foods Driver Development program was created to help Canadian karting series offer young drivers a goal and a prize to work towards. In 2010, the Sofina program supported the Eastern Canadian Karting Championship as well as Team Canada drivers going to the Rotax Max Challenge Grand Finals in Italy. The Sofina Foods Driver Development program is proud to support Canadian drivers reaching the international motorsports stage and are again this year a major supporter of Team Canada.

For more information about this release, please contact David Tennyson at [davidten@h10media.com](mailto:davidten@h10media.com).

This news release was prepared by Autosports Media Group.

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Autosports Media Group | 304 Stone Rd W | Suite 312 | Guelph | Ontario | N1G4W4 | Canada