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ART Grand Prix, the benchmark-setting Team in Round 1 of the 2012 CIK-FIA U18 World Championship



The Portuguese Braga circuit hosted the first round of the CIK-FIA U18 World Championship last weekend and with some sensational results, ART Grand Prix proved highly-competitive again by putting four drivers into the Final Race's top-six.

The CIK-FIA U18 World Championship is a World Championship held in three rounds and reserved for drivers under the age of 18. On the mechanical side, all the engines are provided by Parolin Racing and the chassis selected must be specifically homologated by the manufacturers. This choice, made by the CIK-FIA, provided a significant economic advantage. The material and operational costs have been cut, as well as many technical variables. On the other hand, the Championship remained open to several chassis manufacturer.

ART Grand Prix enthusiastically decided to join this new challenge since the beginning. The CIK-FIA environment enables the chassis manufacturers to line-up in a World Championship, and at the same time they can display their engineering abilities thanks to a clever format. As a consequence, it's been a really valuable training for ART Grand Prix, a new name in go-kart racing.

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Eighty drivers hit the track at Braga and our Karting Division lined-up Severin Amweg, Ben Barnicoat, Ricky Collard, Charles Leclerc and Sam Webster. The first results proved immediately positive in practice despite a thick rainfall. The Team and drivers did a great job in preparing for qualifying although everything changed right before the session. As the rain stopped, everyone got caught out by the weather conditions and consequently, the qualifying results proved way beyond the earlier expectations. Despite the issues that were threatening to condition the weekend's outcome, the weather got more stable during the rest of the meeting, and ART Grand Prix was able to show their full potential in the race heats set before the finals.

After having ended up qualifying in 50th, Leclerc showed to have an extremely fast pace despite his low starting position, and all the ART drivers kept on top as the team lined up with four of them making it to the top-7 on the grid for the Final with Collard (see picture above) sitting in the pole. The same results were confirmed at the end of the race with Leclerc ending up in 2nd, and the Collard-Barnicoat-Webster trio holding positions from fourth to sixth. Following the weekend's results, Leclerc is currently sitting in 3rd place in standings, just one points off the second place.

ART Grand Prix has many reasons to celebrate but the main good news is the great team effort. The Team and drivers showed great skills and determination as they progressed over the weekend and displayed some great potential. Eventually, some really positive result confirmed ART Grand Prix as the benchmark team for the Portuguese round of the World Championship.

For any information and media enquiry, please contact: media@art-grandprix.com
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