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ROTAX MAX Euro Challenge: Rainy Heats at Castelletto

For day 2 of the second round of the ROTAX MAX Euro Challenge 2013 the Italian weather changed dramatically: The sunny summer weather was gone and replaced by fresh temperatures and rainy conditions, which undid the entire testing work of the recent days, turning the qualifying heats into an open business on the the 1.256 metres long circuit of "7 Laghi" at Castelletto Di Branduzzo. Consequently the competition was mixed up again, bringing up new faces to the top of the classifications after a total of 22 heats.

Estonia's Juri Vips (Strawberry Racing) as well as the UK youngsters Guan Yu Zhou (Strawberry Racing), Josh Price (Coles Racing) and Lando Norris (RL Racing Dept UK) shared the heat wins in juniors category. Yet Zhou did a more outstanding job than the rest by winning two races and gaining a third rank as well, which put him on pole position for the prefinal. Behind him Josh Price (Coles Racing) and the quickest of qualifying, Jack Bartholomew (Coles Racing), took positions two and three, though not winning a race. Norris impressed with two wins, but after finishing only tenth in his last heat he dropped back to fourth place in the overall classification. Juri Vips ended up on rank eight, since a 15th place in his last heat ruined his chances of a better position.

The seniors had to complete ten heats, which finally saw five different winners. Jiri Forman (Protrain Racing) and Petr Bezel (MS Kart Racing Team) both from the Czech Republic took a win in their heats, while Dutchman Max Verstappen (CRG SPA) and qualifying winner Harry Webb (Strawberry Racing) crossed the finish line on the very top twice. But yet none of them was able to keep up with Sweden's Philip Morin (Dan Holland Racing). The FA driver left no doubt and won four heats on the rainy track and in doing so will be pole setter for the prefinal on Sunday. Right behind him Max Verstappen will start from second place just in front of Harry Webb, Charlie Eastwood (Strawberry Racing), Jiri Forman and and Petr Bezel.

In DD2 category the fastest man from qualifying, Xen de Ruwe (FK Racing Team AB Ltd), showed a constant performance but was not able to win any race in the end, which made him second in the ranking after the heats. On the other hand the Frenchman Alexandre Finkelstein (MD Competition) and Sean Babington (Dan Holland Racing), European titleholder of seniors, felt quite comfortable on the slippery track and took one victory each. They were rewarded with place three (Finkelstein) and five (Babington) in the ranking. Reigning world champion Ben Cooper (KMS Europe) was successful two times, but lost one of his wins after being disqualified for technical reasons. That led to place 21 in the overall ranking. So there was one man to be beaten: Lithuania's Simas Juodvirsis (Energy Racing LT). The DD2 champion of 2011 gave a brilliant comeback to the Euro Challenge by winning all of his three heats in a dominant way, which makes him pole setter for the prefinal on Sunday. In the Masters classification Cristiano Morgado (Josh Hart Racing) was quickest man on track. He put his Praga kart on the seventh place in the grid.

On Sunday the second chance heats will determine the last positions for the final phase. According to the weather forecast one can expect dry and sunny conditions for the decisive final races. So stay tuned into the official website www.rotaxmaxeurochallenge.com, where you get all information regarding reports, photos, results and live TV stream.

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