

CRG RACING TEAM

## BITTER BELGIUM FOR CRG, HILTBRAND MISSING OUT ON THE EUROPEAN KZ2 TITLE

The CRG driver Pedro Hiltbrand is Vice Champion but lost the chance to get the European KZ2 Championship title. Puhakka stopped by two incidents in KZ's final stages. The farce of the dropping nose cone. Max Verstappen in Genk at CRG's motorhome.



Joy, hope but also disappointment for the missed result in Belgium due to a series of very unlucky circumstances. These are the feelings after Genk at CRG-Maxter, especially for Pedro Hiltbrand, who missed out on the European KZ2 title, and for Simo Puhakka, that saw the victory slipping out of his hands when it seemed at reach.

### **KZ, DOUBLE INCIDENT FOR PUHAKKA**

In KZ **Simo Puhakka** has been the main protagonist of the Belgian weekend ahead of the final stages, as he has been competitive in qualifying ending just 7 thousands shy of the pole position and in the heats where he pulled two victories that earned him a pole position start in the Prefinal. The first corner of the Prefinal has been fatal for **Puhakka** though, as he went wide on the humid tarmac and then was involved in an incident. That was the start of a calvary that relegated him to the final P13. Things went even worse in the Final. At the start, he has been hit by a rival at the second corner and due to this push he also had a contact with **Andrea Dalè**. That was the end of it, and not only for **Puhakka** but shortly after also for **Dalè**. That was a real pity as **Puhakka**

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displayed great speed in this round thanks also to the CRG Road Rebel chassis, to the Maxter engine and to the overall setup.

The KZ Final was eventually won by Iglesias. The European Championship went Camponeschi's ways. He secured the result on Saturday thanks to the points obtained in the heats.

### **KZ2, THE IMPONDERABLE FATE OF HILTBRAND**

Disappointment in KZ2 has been even stronger. The Spanish driver of CRG, **Pedro Hiltbrand**, did not manage to secure his first International CIK-FIA title after the second place in Sarno and the victory scored in Zuera. Things should have been easy in Genk for him, but the unthinkable happened. After showing great speed in free practice early in the weekend, something went wrong starting from qualifying, when **Hiltbrand** only set the 28th time. This turned out to be a higher damage than expected. Starting all the heats from the back, the Spaniard had to retire due to an incident and then in the final heat of Saturday he found his way blocked by an incident involving five karts ahead of him and has been hit by a 30s penalty (dropped nose cone) that relegated him to the 23rd spot of the grid of the Prefinal. In Prefinal **Hiltbrand** ended 14th, while in the Final he was ninth but the seven points obtained in this way have been useless. His rival Johansson, ended third and secured the title totaling 3 points more than **Hiltbrand**.

In KZ2 things did not go well for **Felice Tiene** either. Started from the front row of the Prefinal due to his three great victories in the heats, he was pushed out of the track at lap two. **Tiene** managed to recover well up to P17. In the Final, he (and 7 other drivers) has been hit by the 30s dropped nose time penalty and therefore ended 26th.

The best result for a driver on CRG chassis was scored by the German **Maik Siebecke** of SRP Racing Team, who was fifth. Regarding the works drivers, the Brazilian **Gaetano Di Mauro** was

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18th, **Fabrizio Rosati** 31st due to a 30s time penalty after ending sixth in the second chance race. The other Brazilian **Enzo Bortoleto**, could not go beyond the second chance race as happened to the Japanese **Fuma Horio**.

### THE FARCE OF DROPPING NOSE CONES PENALTIES

In Genk the 30s time penalty handed due to nose cone dropping from the original position due to a contact, no matter if sought for or unintentional, burst the case. In England at PFI, in the European KF-KFJ, the distinction was made in terms of the type of contact, i.e. no penalty was given when the contact was found to be unintentional. In Genk this principle has not been applied and Pedro Hiltbrand has also been hit by a 30s penalty despite being flawlessly involved in an incident making his nose cone drop when he found a "wall" of karts in the line ahead of him. The net result was a 30s penalty for an absolutely unintentional contact. The same rigid principle had not been followed last Sunday in the two Prefinals of KZ2 and KZ when a countless of nose cones dropped in consequence of contacts on the wet tarmac due to the rain. In this occasion, regulations have not been applied but interpreted. In the case of Hiltbrand, regulation have been applied without considering the situation though. This seemed a farce to a lot of people...

### MAX VERSTAPPEN'S VISIT

Among the sweet notes in Genk, CRG has been delighted to receive **Max Verstappen's** visit, the driver that has been protagonist in karting with CRG up to two years ago. **Max Verstappen**, together with his father Jos, stopped by to say hello to drivers and all CRG staff awarding CRG President Giancarlo Tininini with the helmet (with dedication) that he used in 2013 when he won the KZ World Championship, the European KZ and KF and the WSK titles all in the legendary season 2013.

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## SUNDAY QUOTES

**Pedro Hiltbrand, KZ2:** “We made a mistake in qualifying, we then improved in the heats. An incident and a 30s penalty in the final heat on Saturday, as I could not avoid some rivals involved in an incident ahead, stripped me of some points that could have turned out to be crucial. I lost the championship for 3 points. I would like to thank CRG anyway on all the great work the team has done. We could not get the title in this occasion, but the material I have is great and I believe I will get it next time around.”

**Simo Puhakka, KZ:** “We have been very competitive in Genk and started off very well both in qualifying and heats. I got the pole position in the Prefinal, but we decided to go for a wet setup and that was a mistake. Rain stopped and this setup choice, together with me arriving too fast at the first corner, made a recover impossible. In the Final I had an incident early on, I have been pushed towards Andrea Dalè and I damaged one tire in the contact. We have been very competitive and I believe the podium was easily at our reach.”

All results are available in the websites [cikfia.com](http://cikfia.com) and [cikfiachampionship.com](http://cikfiachampionship.com). A TV special on the race will take place on Motors TV in the coming days.

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In the pictures: 1) Pedro Hiltbrand, KZ2; 2) Simo Puhakka, KZ; 3) CRG Racing Team; 4) Max Verstappen awarding Giancarlo Tinini with his crash helmet. Ph. CRG Press

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