

First winners in Europe at Campillos



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Gunskirchen, Austria, March 13, 2024 – Last weekend, KartCenter Campillos hosted the first edition of the Rotax MAX Challenge Winter Cup organized by WSK Promotion. The mixed weather conditions added an extra layer of excitement to the already thrilling racing spectacle, with rain and sunshine alternating throughout the weekend, providing a true test of the drivers' skills.

The winners of the respective categories were Albert Friend (Mini MAX), Jacob Ashcroft (Junior MAX), Jayden Thien (Senior MAX), Patriks Locmelis (DD2), and Martynas Tankevicius (DD2 Masters).

Mini MAX - Friend Excels in Every Condition

Albert Friend from Strawberry Racing dominated the weekend with remarkable performances. After securing pole position on Friday, Friend didn't let up in the heats, clinching 2 victories and a 4th position. This still allowed him to maintain the lead heading into Sunday's Pre-final. The intermittent rain made the Pre-final uncertain. In this case, victory went to Zdenek Babicek (TEPZ Racing), the best performer on wet asphalt with dry tires. Behind the Czech driver finished the consistent Oliver Spencer (Dan Holland Racing), securing a starting position from the 2nd row for the Final.

As the lights go out, Friend maintains the lead of the race in the first lap, but then Babicek makes the move and gets the leadership in the 2nd lap. In turn, Babicek has to yield to the Estonian Nikita Ljubimov (Bouvin Power), who started 5th. The battle is intense, and as the laps progress, Friend and Spen-

cer regain the 1st and 2nd positions. The two fight until the final corner. Friend emerges victorious, ahead of Spencer and Babicek.

Final Results Mini MAX

1st: Albert Friend
2nd: Oliver Spencer
3rd: Zdenek Babicek

Junior MAX - Ashcroft and Strele Duel

Jacob Ashcroft and Toms Strele of Dan Holland Racing kept spectators on the edge of their seats throughout the week. The fight started on Friday as Ashcroft got the pole position. Then the two teammates engaged in a spectacular battle in the heats. In this case, Strele prevailed, beating Ashcroft in the standings. Toms secured 2 victories and a 2nd place; Jacob secured 2 victories and a 3rd place. The surprise on Saturday, however, was Italian Lorenzo Giaquinto (MKC Motorsport), finishing 3rd, skillfully climbing 9 positions from qualifying with a 2nd, a 3rd, and a victory.

Sunday is the day of reckoning: Strele and Ashcroft also win the Pre-finals, while Giaquinto does not participate in the Pre-final and unfortunately dropped in the overall standings. Charlie Smith (Strawberry Racing) picks up where Giaquinto leave off, securing the 3rd position overall, ahead of Rory Armstrong (Strawberry Racing) and Lewis Goff (Sam Politt Racing).

Strele and Ashcroft face off in the Final. The two duele on the slippery track, which forced the Race Direction to introduce a Slow regime from lap 3 to lap 7. In the end, Ashcroft emerges victorious ahead of Latvian Strele and Gott. Jacob Ashcroft secured back-to-back victories, as he had already won in Mini MAX in 2023.

Final Results Junior MAX

1st: Jacob Ashcroft
2nd: Toms Strele
3rd: Lewis Goff

Senior MAX - Thien shines on Sunday

The Senior MAX category remained uncertain until Sunday. The pole-sitter on Friday, Thomas Bearman (KR Sport), struggled during the heats and failed to confirm his position. Standing out during the wet heats was Kai Hunter (Hunter Motorsport), who secured 5 victories out of 5 heats. The Briton defeated Oliver Hodgson (J3 Competition), who, in the downpour, gained 16 positions from qualifying. On Sunday morning, in the Pre-finals, Lewis Gilbert (Kraft Motorsport) and Vic Stevens (Bouvin Power) emerged victorious, putting the spotlight on them for the Final.

However, surprising everyone in the Final is Jayden Thien (Dan Holland Racing) who, starting 3rd, claims victory ahead of the Englishmen Hunter and Ethan Jeff-Hall (Sam Politt Racing). Thien manages to defeat Hunter, who until then seems unbeatable. The Dutchman, along with his team DHR, seems to have found a better setup on the dry track. Hodgson, who seems to be a race-contender, finishes outside the top 10 in 12th place.

Final Results Senior MAX

1st: Jayden Thien
2nd: Kai Hunter
3rd: Ethan Jeff-Hall

DD2 - Locmelis, Once Again

Patriks Locmelis (Biedriba MRG Racing) secures his second consecutive victory in the Winter Cup. The Latvian driver, starting from pole position, didn't have an easy race, as he had to withstand the attacks of William Kristensen (RS Competition) until the last corner. David Aulejtner (Schepers Racing) takes the third position.

However, the race weekend had told a different story until Sunday. Shining brightly in qualifying on Friday was the Estonian Ragnar Veerus (Kivi Racing Team), while Locmelis had clocked the 6th fastest time. However, Locmelis proved to be more consistent in the wet heats, where he claimed two victories and a 5th place compared to Veerus' 1st, 4th, and 2nd. Kristensen had some ups and downs, as he was called to stage a great comeback in Sunday's Pre-final after a bumper penalty in the latest heat, which pushed him back in the standings.

Final Results DD2 MAX

1st: Patriks Locmelis
2nd: William Kristensen
3rd: David Aulejtner

DD2 Masters - Tankevicius Prevails Over Picot

In the Masters category, the duel between Martynas Tankevicius and Nicolas Picot from 2023 resurfaces. The two have been battling since Friday in qualifying, where Picot set the fastest time. The Frenchman repeated his performance after the heats, appearing ready for "revenge" compared to 2023. But it wasn't meant to be. On a completely dry track, Tankevicius takes the victory in the Pre-final, beating Picot and the German Fabian Bock (Kraft Motorsport).

The three also contend for the Final. Picot prevails in the first 4 laps, only to relinquish the lead to the Lithuanian in the 5th lap. Tankevicius then builds the necessary margin to replicate his success from the previous year, with Picot and Bock joining him on the podium.

Final Results DD2 Masters

1st: Martynas Tankevicius
2nd: Nicolas Picot
3rd: Fabian Bock

The winners of all categories earn a free entry to the 4 rounds of the RMCET, while the 2nd placed drivers receive a free entry to 2 events, and the 3rd- placed drivers earn a free entry for the RMC Inter-

national Trophy.

Results can be accessed at: <https://www.rotaxmaxchallenge-eurotrophy.com/races/detail/circuito-karting-campillos-2024>

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