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## ROK CUP ITALY, ROUND 1 - RACE REPORT

It was a great start of the season for the ROK Cup Italy at the Franciacorta Karting Track in Castrezzato (BS), with an extraordinary number of entrants among the six categories on track. At the end of Sunday, the following leaders of the championship emerged: Achille Rea (Mini ROK), Sbardellati Federico (Junior ROK), Giudice Andrea (Senior ROK), Sorbello Andrea (Expert ROK), Pozzi Brando (Super ROK) and Rigodanza Riccardo (Shifter ROK)..

**Mini ROK**

The success of Mini ROK continued, with engines distributed by drawing lots by Vortex. There were 54 very young protagonists competing for the final victory.

In the qualifying rounds, the pole position went to Achille Rea, thanks to a time of 1:09.877 in Group 1. Li Linghan stood out in Group 2 with 1:10.243, taking second place, while Alessandro Nanni and Giuseppe Noviello took third and fourth places respectively in the general ranking. Blazej Kostrzewska claimed fifth place, preceding Jamie Ehrat in sixth, Luca Muzzolon in seventh, and Alberto Masotto in eighth. Alessandro Cereda finished ninth, and Andrea Cerbone tenth. Following them were Stanislaw Grabowski, Morgan Zammit Azzopardi, Benjamin Westwood, Aleksander Pelikanski, Augustin Feligioni, Platon Kovtunenko, Leonardo De Grandi, Momcilo Davoust, Jessica Calleja, Flora Odin, Farel Dugat Beretta, Giulio Manzoni, Lola Mukhammadiev, Vincenzo Salierno, Nicolaj Pietras, Dominik Wojcik, Leo Kralev, Elias Boullier, Mikolaj Gawlikowski, Radu Basescu Pricop, Marc Müller, Francesco De Luise, Francia Stavros Tsotsos, Kacper Kluk, Hunter Fischle, Camilla Amarotti, Gianmaria Ferretti, Nicholas Bertolani, Nikodem Osiecki, Daniel Hakkinen, Leonardo Lanza, Victor Gorun, Mattia Finadri, Federico Schiavi, Siavosh Derakhshan, Edoardo Traina, Romeo Stanislav Stefanov, Lina Salamanca, Antonio Martin, Tymoteusz Pieta, Martin Hsieh, Emma Boschetto, Felix Sim, and Jan Chojnacki.

Rea was implacable in the qualifying heats, winning two races in the program. Nanni achieved a victory and a second place, temporarily earning him the runner-up position in the category. Kostrzewska reached the Top 3, taking third place, followed by Linghan and Muzzolon in the intermediate ranking. There were significant climbs for Davoust and Pelikanski: the French moved from 18th to sixth, while the Polish racer advanced from 14th to seventh. The Top 10 was completed by Noviello, Cereda, and Kovtunenko.

The final was rich in battles and overtaking. Rea held onto first place at the start of the race, while Kostrzewska, Nanni, and Linghan swapped positions multiple times in just a few corners. Among them, Kostrzewska emerged as Rea's main rival, and during the second lap, he managed to take the lead. The Italian responded, regaining the lead after two laps, with Nanni quickly moving up to second place. Rea increased his advantage over Nanni, who, in turn, pulled away from his pursuers. The checkered flag celebrated Rea's victory and Nanni's second place. Masotto, with a great comeback in the final laps, secured third place and the fastest lap. Kostrzewska finished fourth, Davoust fifth, and Linghan sixth, the best among the Under 10 racers.

## **Junior ROK**

Record numbers were achieved for the Junior ROK category, with 56 entrants at the starting line of the first race of the championship.

Strengthened by his victory in the ROK Cup Winter Trophy in Lonato del Garda, Lyuboslav Ruykov opened the day on Sunday with the pole

position. The Bulgarian recorded a time of 1:05.569 in Group 2, bettering his rival's time by 0.281 seconds. Ettore Senesi was the fastest of Group 1 and placed second in the combined ranking. Leonardo Monzani, who was beaten by Ruykov by only 0.024 seconds, secured third place, while Angelo Pecoraro finished fourth in the combined ranking. Valerio Viapiana occupied fifth place, ahead of Sebastian Frigolet in sixth, Christian Romeo in seventh, and Riccardo Brangero in eighth. Mateusz Wal and Federico Sbardellati closed the Top 10. The ranking continued with Francesco Koci, Marlon Di Salvo, Antoni Kosiba, Guido Bruno Bidoli, Ilas Mitaki, Ahn Tu Ranghetti, Ioan Tudor Jercan, Emilio Tedesco, Stefano Zamponi, Carlo Pongratz, Nicolò Carrara, Thomas Pan, Enrico Pietro Villa, Andrii Kruglyk, Antonio Reginal Pizzonia Neto, Oskar Hildebranski, Borys Blaszczyk, Filippo Pola, Tomasz Cichoracki, Natan Rybczynski, Andrea Savoldelli, Leonardo Tribioli, Davide Ruja, Selina Baum, Michal Czyzewicz, Leon Larsen, Milosz Smuk, Giulio Mazzolini, Marcel Kieser, Alex Charles Troxler, Victoria Farfus, Ettore Di Domenico, Matteo Lazzaroto, Lena Pichler, Cooper Fysh, Aaron Trapletti, Benjamin Borg Irimia, Liam Secall, Chad Rissman, Iven Ammann, Julia Angelard, Riccardo Maglioli, Kimi Karakilic, Michal Zajac, Jaxon Fischle, and Maxim Becker.

Ruykov made no mistakes in the qualifying heats: the Bulgarian secured three victories in three races and maintained the first place in the intermediate ranking, with Pecoraro as the first chaser this time, thanks to a victory and two-second places. Sbardellati moved from tenth to third, followed by Romeo, who climbed from seventh to fourth. Senesi slipped from second to fifth place, with Viapiana, Wal, Di Salvo, and Kosiba completing the Top 10.

The final saw Ruykov taking advantage of the pole position: the Bulgarian driver immediately took the lead of the operations, followed by Sbardellati and Pecoraro, who, instead, moved back to seventh place after a few corners, giving the third position to Senesi. Just before the end of the first lap, Sbardellati successfully attacked Ruykov and became the new leader of the race. From that moment on, Sbardellati started gaining a good advantage over the rest of the group, while Ruykov had to watch his back from a threatening Senesi who, on the third lap, found the right chance to overtake him. After a total of 12 laps, Sbardellati finished the race with a great victory and the fastest laps, ahead of Senesi in second, and Ruykov in third. Viapiana finished fourth, while Jercan Tudor performed a comeback of 13 positions and finished fifth, preceding Pecoraro in sixth.

## **Senior ROK**

A great number of entrants participated in the Senior ROK category, which boasted 47 drivers registered for the weekend at Franciacorta.

Champion of the recent ROK Cup Winter Trophy staged in Lonato del Garda, Andrea Giudice turned out to be the fastest in the timed qualifying on Sunday morning.

The Italian recorded a time of 1:04.416 in Group 1, 0.059 seconds better than Danny Carenini, who led Group 2 and was second classified. Ghazni Bin Faizal Motlekár occupied the third position overall, followed in fourth by Riccardo Ferrari, fifth by Riccardo Salemi, and sixth by Alexander Ruta. Among the first ten, we found Gianmarco Cortopassi, Giovanni Polato, Franciszek Czapla, and Samuele Di Filippo in that order. The qualifying ranking continued with Hlib Ukhovskiy, Lorenzo Benedetti, Simone Taccola, Zachary Taylor, Alex Laghezza, Alessandro Giarratano, Franciszek Lassota, Kaloyan Varbitzaliev, Piotr Orzechowski, Pietro Camerlengo, Edoardo Prioglio, Emanuele Romanelli, Mattia Jentile, Luis Moser, Luca Luongo, Luca Magnussen, Alessandro Cocchi, Riccardo Chiodo, Piotr Protasiewicz, Paolo Dung Pastori, Luca Perelli, Davide Torrentelli, Tommaso Curione, Chais Tippett, Andrea Fiocco, Alberto Bernardi, Rebecca Guaraguaglini, Colin Wazny, Davide Pretosi, Lorenzo Lenzi, Andrea Saporiti, Valentino Rossi, Rikardo Bakaj, Iacopo Frascolla, Ludovica Miceli, Luca Davì, and Fabio Silvestri.

The ranking changed at the end of the qualifying heats. With two victories on his record, Carenini climbed to the top of the category, ousting Giudice who, with a win and a second position, found himself in second place. Ghazi Bin Faizal Motlekár kept the third place, while Di Filippo and Bedetti gained the fourth and fifth positions respectively. Czapla, Varbitzaliev, Taccola, Giarratano, and Magnussen showed off with good comebacks and secured the last available positions among the first ten. Ferrari, Polato, and Salemi slipped back, all three having collected penalties during the heats.

A heated start marked the final on Sunday afternoon. Carenini held the first position at the start line, but Giudice stuck to the polesitter. Carenini went off the track, leaving Giudice in the lead. The mistake cost Carenini the pole position, and he ended up behind Motlekár, Bedetti, Giarratano, Cortopassi, Taccola, Czapla, Bernardi, and Protasiewicz. Without losing hope, Carenini began a furious comeback and, from tenth, he was already third after six laps, with only Giudice and Motlekár ahead of him. But once again, the Italian made a mistake, allowing Giudice and Motlekár to breathe a sigh of relief. Giudice deservedly won the race, his second in a row counting the Rok Cup Winter Trophy, while Motlekár took the second step of the podium. Carenini finished third, ahead of Bedetti, Taccola, and Protasiewicz. Ferrari, starting in 16th place, finished seventh.

## Expert ROK

The rain and wind of Franciacorta characterized and influenced the evolution of the Expert ROK race, which offered a starting grid with 20 drivers.

In the only qualifying session, Andrea Sorbello led everyone thanks to the best time of 1:05.816, a time only 0.094 seconds faster than the one registered by the Australian Tyler Greenbury, who was second classification. The teammate's Paolo Baselli and Alessandro Viganò

were third and fourth respectively, while behind them we found Filippo Repetto and Marco Beretta, fifth and sixth. Seventh was Adrian Marcinkiewicz, eighth was Gianni Zani, ninth was Angelo Ardito, and tenth was Roberto Nali. The reigning champion Sona Ptackova was eleventh, followed by Daniel Zajac, Fabio Cretti, Gianluca Rubiolini, Riccardo Pedrola, Michele Zampieri, Riccardo Pini, Tino Donadei, Marco Nannavecchia, and Romano Calogero.

In Race 1, the plot twist came already in the pre-grid, with Baselli being forced to stop for technical problems. The race began with Greenbury immediately ahead, skilled in overtaking the polesitter Sorbello, despite the external trajectory. The two drivers had already had a good advantage over the rest of the group, led by Viganò and Zajac, who had started last as 12th. On the 4th lap, Sorbello launched the attack on Greenbury at the last bend, but they touched each other in braking: the Italian took the lead, while the Australian slipped back to the sixth position. Sorbello became soon uncatchable and, at the end of the ten minutes and a lap, crossed the finish line, despite the three seconds of penalty added in the final time because of the contact with Greenbury; the latter managed to perform a comeback to the second place, while Zajac climbed the lower step of the podium. Fourth place went to Viganò, ahead of Repetto and Beretta.

In the first afternoon, a strong downpour had forced the sporting marshals to stop the activity on track and cancel the second race of the weekend.

## Super ROK

The Super ROK, the more performant direct drive category of the ROK Cup, witnessed constant and growing participation, with 29 entrants in the first race.

Brando Pozzi had put everyone in line in ranking with the best time of 1:04.358. Domenico Cicognini chased in second position, with 0.112 seconds from Pozzi, while the Swiss Antonio Lagrotteria and Sergio Koch occupied the third and the fourth positions respectively. Christian Canonica had gotten the fifth position, ahead of Aleksandar Bogunovic, sixth, Nicolò Coppotelli, seventh, and Riccardo Martinello, eighth. The ranking had gone on with Alessandro Arrey Bernardini, Matteo Favero, Luca Fiorenti, Renius Jejdling, Matteo Berruti, Alex Desario, Lynn Neuhaus, Riccardo Cocozza, Alessandro Cocozza, Manuel Gritti, Sachel Rotgé, Alessandro Zini, Chiara Bolognini, Thomas Carnovali, Simone Donchi, Edoardo Iacobucci, Mattia Gafforelli, Edoardo Montoro, Gabriele Cucinotta, Matilde Sereggi, and Christian Giovanni Signoretta.

In Race 1, Pozzi had made no mistake from the pole position and had kept the lead, while Koch – with a brilliant start from the fourth position – had climbed to the second place, but Cicognini had ousted him after a few corners. Also, Lagrotteria, during the second lap, had managed to overtake his teammate, Koch, getting the temporary third position.

Despite the very wet track, Pozzi had full control of the race. Cicognini had tried to reach the leader of the race, but he couldn't: with 1.235 seconds of advantage, Pozzi had crossed the finish line first, instead, Lagrotteria had to retire at the penultimate lap and had given the third place into the hands of Koch. Bogunovic had closed fourth, ahead of Canonica, fifth.

Unfortunately, because of the bad weather which had suspended the activity on the track in the afternoon, the second race in the program was cancelled.

### **Shifter ROK**

The Shifter ROK, the karting category with gears of the ROK Cup, was unmissable in the opening round of the championship.

Among the 38 drivers at the start line, Riccardo Rigodanza stood out at the top of the ranking of the qualifyings, with a time of 1:02.307 recorded in Group 1. Mattia Limena led Group 2 with a time of 1:03.727 and placed at the back of the Italian rival in the combined ranking. Adrian Labuda caught the third place, while Marco Vannini placed himself in fourth position. Following them were Daniele Demartis, fifth, Fabrizio Morardo, sixth, Samuele Leopardi, seventh, and Elliot Shaw, eighth. Luca Gianassi and Victor Martin Odin completed the Top 10, ninth and tenth respectively. Behind them were Philippe Ehrensberger, Manuel Daziano, Federico Squaranti, Davide Cordera, Roberto Manduchi, Marco Acquarella, Giacomo Pellegrino, Marco Chiarello, Leonardo Saba, Pietro Fioravanti, Edoardo Villa, Boris, Cutaia, Victor Jimenez, Alessio Foresto, Andrea Zemin, Ferrando Giacomo Pegazzano, Massimiliano Pezzucchi, Edoardo Sabatino, Mattia Rossetti, Riccardo Franciosi, Cristian Lovi, Pietro Gobbi, Paolo Fracasso, Andrea Aliberti, Leonardo Boccardi, Edoardo Mormorelli, Gabriele Bensi, and Francesco Buffa.

Rigodanza had a perfect drive in the qualifying heats, with two victories in two races: these results assured him the pole position for the final. Limena achieved a victory and a second place, securing the second position, while Vannini gained two third places and moved up to third. Labuda finished fourth, Daziano climbed from 12th to fifth position, and Demartis was sixth. The group of the first 10 on the grid was completed by Odin, Leopardi, Morardo, and Cordera.

At the turning off of the traffic light of the final, Rigonza and Limena were immediately at loggerheads, but the polesitter kept his rival at his back. Rigodanza left behind his chasers just after a few corners, while a Limena in difficulty focused his energies on defending himself from Odin, Labuda, Vannini, and Leopardi. At the third lap, Odin overtook Limena and earned immediately a good margin, but Rigodanza boasted already an unbridgeable advantage. Lost the second place, Limena competed against Vannini, but he spun at the bend and involved the latter, leaving Leopardi, Daziano, Labuda, and Chiarello to fight for the podium. In the meantime, to the sound of fast laps, Rigodanza was

already uncatchable and drove alone under the checkered flag. Odin closed second, while Leopardi preceded Daziano. Instead, Labuda and Chiarello messed up their glory dreams at the last lap.