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First champions of Triple of Crown of Karting crowned

ROCK ISLAND, IL – The first champions of the Triple Crown of Karting were crowned at the annual Awards Ceremony following the Xstream Rock Island Grand Prix powered by Mediacom.

Triple Crown of Karting awards were given as the result of points won in Briggs & Stratton 206 Heavy, Yamaha SuperCan Heavy and 125cc Open Shifter at Quincy, Elkhart and Rock Island. Triple Crown points were awarded in Margay Ignite Senior at Quincy, Indianapolis and Rock Island.

In order to participate, racers must have signed up for the series and paid a one-time \$50 series fee in addition to regular entry fees.

There were close points battles in several of the classes. In the 125cc Open Shifter class Joe Ruch of Indiana rode two early victories to a 2 point series win over Scott “Skitchy” Barnes of Bermuda. Tennessee’s Devon Smith-Harden was third.

In Yamaha SuperCan Heavy, Iowa’s Michael Dittmer also pulled out a 2 point series win over Morgan Schuler after Schuler’s win at Rock Island. Tony Neilson was third in Triple Crown points.

In Briggs & Stratton 206 Heavy, Iowan Neilson won all three races of the Triple Crown to amass the largest points total of the year to win that title. Wisconsin’s Allen Borntreger was second and Logan Smith third.

The Margay Ignite Senior Triple Crown battle was won by Texan Jeff Dolian with Barnes 3 points back in second and Keith Scharf of Missouri in third. First, second and third place trophies were awarded along with cash prizes to all first-place winners based on the number of Triple Crown entries in their class.

Each event runs its own rules, weights, spec tires, prizes, etc. and assigns Triple Crown points. For example, you could finish in fifth place at one of the races competing against non-Triple Crown competitors, but still win first place points for finishing ahead of others participating in the three-race series.

The points system is simple: 6 points for first, 4 for second, 3 for third, 2 for fourth with all others who start receiving 1 point. Ties will be broken by finishing position at Rock Island. This system virtually assures that everyone has a chance to win the Triple Crown as long as they participate in all of the events.

The return of Elkhart in 2017 and Quincy South Park this year restored two of the more historic races in the sport. Coupled with the Rock Island, which continues well into its third decade, the races represent 65 years of karting history.

Watch for information early next year on the second annual Triple Crown of Karting.

Quincy Grand Prix of Karting at South Park

In 2002, race promoter Gus Traeder decided not to bring the South Park race back after 32 years based on a deteriorating track, high costs and declining entry numbers. Traeder founded the race in 1970 as a tie-in to the Dogwood Festival.

This year's decision by Traeder's son, Terry, to bring back the Grand Prix of Karting to South Park after a 17-year pause was two-fold. Gus Traeder passed away in 2016. Terry Traeder, a former national and professional champion driver, knew his dad had always wanted to see the race brought back. When the Quincy Park District resurfaced South Park's streets, Traeder knew the Grand Prix could be resurrected.

The Quincy Grand Prix was once the longest-running street race in America. Its roots could be traced back to 1958 when Gus Traeder was the manager of Quincy's Montgomery Ward Farm Store. A supplier brought a kart to the store and Traeder bought Quincy's first.

Gus Traeder later became a well-known racing promoter and founded the Professional Karting Association in 1978. That first race in 1970 saw 73 drivers in five classes compete for a purse of \$1,000. At its height, there were nearly 600 entries.

Xtream Rock Island Grand Prix powered by Mediacom

Rock Island, known by racers as "The Rock", has long been an iconic event that is on most racers' bucket list. It began in 1994 and was part of Traeder's Professional Karting Association for the first two years.

The race shifted gears in 1996 with karting promoter and NASCAR Winston Cup safety official Tom Argy Jr. becoming race director. Since his death Terry Riggins has served in that capacity for the past 15 years.

Rock Island combines national and even international kart racing with the ambiance of the city's Downtown Arts & Entertainment District in a metropolitan area of 375,000 people. It includes nightly outdoor concerts, a car show and other activities. It hosts racers from coast to coast and 8 foreign countries and is the only place in kart racing where top level 4 cycle, 2 cycle, gearbox and vintage karts all race together at the same venue in front of thousands of spectators. For the past 19 years it has also been host to the "King of the Streets" shifter race. Rock Island is sanctioned by USAC and is on the ACCUS national schedule which allows international competitors.

Thor Industries Elkhart Riverwalk Grand Prix

In the early 1990's the Elkhart Grand Prix had over 40,000 spectators, 600 entries, and was televised on "the new" ESPN2 network. After a more than 20-year absence, the Thor Industries Elkhart Riverwalk Grand Prix brought karting history back to life in northern Indiana last year.

As part of the revitalization of downtown Elkhart's Riverwalk District, racing returned in 2017 along a unique .6-mile track that crosses the Elkhart River twice per lap. Led by Thor Industries and the City of Elkhart, the region's RV manufacturers came together to create an event the city's citizens and racers can enjoy every August!

Over 140 racers took part in the 2017 event that was highlighted by a weekend of concerts, family events, and racing. In 2018 the first karting "Relay Race" was added with more concerts and activities for the family.