

XTREAM



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Xtream Rock Island Grand Prix

entertains big crowds in 27th year

ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS — The Xtream Rock Island Grand Prix, the karting street race that national driver Race Liberante once called “the baddest-ass go kart race in the world,” once again put on quite a show. This year, the largest crowd since pre-Covid years lined the course and was treated to some great action by some of the nation’s top drivers. Heavy rain late Saturday forced 3 heat races to be moved to Sunday morning, but the rest of the program was right on schedule.

“The main reason we have been holding this race for so many years is for the benefit of the community and the downtown, although it helps that the racers enjoy coming here so much,” said Roger Ruthhart, president of the Grand Prix committee. “This is one of the few places in the country where they can actually race in front of and entertain spectators.”

“It’s good to see close racing, businesses open again, food vendors back, lines at Miller beer stands, nightly musical entertainment at The Tracksid Bash, the hotel filled, people at the Bally’s casino, and thousands of spectators watching one of the best karting events in the world,” Ruthhart said. Dates for the 2023 race are Sept. 2-3.

Riley Scott, who had gone winless at Rock Island since winning twice in 2018, took home three Rock trophies. Drake Ostrom, Justin Wishard, both from Illinois, and Scott “Skitchy” Barnes from Bermuda each took home two Rocks as did Andrew Budjoso, of Ohio, who won both the King of The Streets shifter crown and the Open Shifter race. It was his second King of The Streets crowning in the last two years and he finished with his older brother, Robert, in second. A.J. Myers, North Carolina, the #1 ranked shifterkart driver in the US, was sidelined with a mechanical issue on the pace lap and did not start. Budjoso’s second win in Open Shifter left his Magik Kart teammate Myers in second place by just .511 of a second.

Riley Scott’s three wins came in Margay Senior Ignite, Briggs 206 Heavy 2 and Briggs 206 Medium, where the top four all finished under one second apart. Riley’s father, Jeff, also brought home a Rock after winning the Briggs 206 Masters race by just .426 of a second over Todd Bolton.

Drake Ostrom, of Illinois, gave his fiancée Nicole Henderson a special wedding gift winning the \$1,000 first place check for the King of The Rock Briggs 206 race just 13 days before their wedding. She presented him with the checkered flag at the finish line. “She’s never carried a checkered flag out for a Rock,” said Ostrom. Jeff Dolian of Texas finished second behind Ostrom by just .184 of a second. With a field that also included names like Welsh, Wishard, Neilson, Lund, Barnes, Riley Scott, Dittmer, Bolton and others, announcer Dave MacIntyre proclaimed the race “just like a national championship.” With the top 6 all finishing under 1 second apart, it seemed like it.

Tony Neilson took the early lead with Connor Lund and Ostrom joining him in the lead pack. On the last lap Ostrom pushed Lund past Neilson and then passed Lund to win by .184 of a second. Jeff Dolian ended up in second place and Michael Welsh was third. Ostrom would later add a win in the Yamaha SuperCan Heavy class to his collection of Rocks, beating Ohio’s Blake Korth by just 1 second.

Justin Wishard of Illinois took an early lead in the 20-lap King of The Rock 100cc pro race, but was later caught by Austin Wilkins, of Texas, who took the lead on the white flag lap. Wishard retook the lead and won his first Rock trophy on the last lap by just .042 of a second. Wishard and Wilkins also had a battle

in the 100cc Senior race where Wisherd also grabbed the lead for his second win of the day, just .10 ahead of Wilkins.

Barnes, who was this year's Rock Island Ironman scheduled to race 10 classes, made his trip from Bermuda worthwhile winning the Ignite Senior 2 race, where the top four all finished less than a second apart. He then won the Open Shifter Masters race leading all 20 laps. Joe Ruch finished second and Tiffany Kelly was third in her first Xtream Rock Island Grand Prix appearance.

Tony Neilson was able to claim the victory in the Ignite Masters class after Barnes led the majority of the race before contact put him into the wall. The win moved Neilson's career wins at Rock Island to 23, just five behind all-time leader Gary Lawson.

Ashton Wheeler took the win in the Briggs 206 Medium 2 race and Connor Lund won the Travis DeVriendt Memorial Briggs 206 Heavy class by .064 over Dolian. Kevin Williams won the Vintage Open race, Kris Porter won Vintage Yamaha, and Steve Welte built on his long history in karting with a win in the Vintage Mac class.

New this year at Rock Island was a special "Track Team of The Year" award where competitors from the same home track could earn points regardless of what class they were competing in. Gateway Kartplex in Madison, Ill. near St. Louis, won the coveted banner this year, beating out 61 Kartway in Delmar, Iowa. Four tracks from four different states had enough entries to compete.

Rock Island is located in an area known as the Quad-Cities, equally divided between Illinois and Iowa, with a metropolitan population of 400,000. It is home to the Rock Island Arsenal military base and corporate headquarters for John Deere in Moline, Ill. It is served by the Quad-City International Airport and is at the intersection of Interstate highways 80, 74, 88 and 280.

The Xtream Rock Island Grand Prix has featured drivers from 39 states, 8 foreign countries and 15 foreign winners.

Sponsors for the event include: Mediacom, Briggs & Stratton Racing, Bally's Quad-Cities Casino & Hotel, Hoosier Kartsport,, O'Reilly Auto Parts, Modern Woodmen Financial/ Joe Schurr agent, Miller/Coors, C&W and Sons Trucking, RLV Tuned Exhaust, CBS TV4 / Fox 18 and CW, the local iHeart Radio stations: Big 106.5, Fox Sports QC, WOC and WLLR, Schurr Power Racing Engines, Sunbelt Rentals, Johannes Bus Service, Holiday Inn Rock Island, eKartingNews.com, Courtesy Car City, Gas & Electric Credit Union, Rogan Scale, Triple E Sales, Brenny's Motorcycle Center, Hakuna Matata Charters, Rock Island Grand Prix corner workers, Duncalf Karting and Duncalf Chiropractic Center, QC Sports Net.

More information on the Xtream Rock Island Grand Prix can be found at racerockisland.info.