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Xtream Rock Island Grand Prix adds 3 new classes for Sept. 2-3 street race

ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS — It's been almost 30 years since planning began for the first Xtream Rock Island Grand Prix, the world's largest and most prestigious karting street race. This will be the 28th year. The sport has changed a lot in that time and sometimes it's hard to notice changes when you host one race a year. Rock Island organizers have taken a look at how they are doing and what might need to change. There are 2 major challenges and, in a sense, they go hand in hand: the racing needs to be safer; more support is needed from karters and sponsors due to growing costs to keep the event thriving.

"We know that for many racers, and future racers, Rock Island is a bucket-list event and the only place where so many different types of karting are featured and thrive," said Roger Ruthhart, president of the Grand Prix committee. "We're known for being fun on and off the track. and a challenging weekend. Briggs, 2-cycle, shifter and vintage race classes have had a healthy list of race offerings. Last year we even tried unsuccessfully to add an electric kart exhibition. This year we are inviting even more drivers to participate by adding 3 additional classes."

- 1) **Briggs & Stratton Novice:** This class is designed for the more entry level street racers who don't want to compete against the top national drivers. No one who has won at Rock Island before can

enter this class. No bump drafting allowed and any contact while passing in corners will be discouraged and carefully scrutinized.

- 2) **A unique Rok/Honda Shifter class:** This class has been blended with Open Shifter in an adoption of a Stars Championship Series format where Rok and Honda karts will compete in both their own race and Open Shifter class at the same time. A driver could win the Rok class while finishing in Open Shifter at the same time.

The Grand Prix is also excited to be joined by Simpson-Bjerke Racing and Factory Kart Mid-East as sponsor of the race.

“I just love racing and want to bring more people into karting, from all 50 states and as many countries as we can,” said team principal Courtney Simpson. “It’s the Superbowl of Kart Street Racing.”

- 3) **TAG Senior:** At one time Rock Island was one of the largest TAG races in North America. Then entries declined and the class was dropped. “But we’ve had TAG racers who want to compete here so we’ve brought it back and hope it offers another opportunity for racers and teams to support our event. And it’s another opportunity for Rokkers, along with the shifters, and VLR in the 100cc Senior Classes, to “Rok The Rock,” said Ruthhart.

The race organization is excited about the new class additions and new sponsorship support in challenging times. “We are looking forward to the action the Factory Kart teams and others will add in these classes and others,” he said.

Race classes on tap for 2023: King of the Streets Open Shifter, King of the Rock Briggs 206, King of The Rock 100cc, Ignite Senior 1&2 and Ignite Masters, Briggs & Stratton 206 Medium 1&2, Briggs Heavy 1&2, Briggs Masters and Briggs Novice; 100cc (KA100, VLR, Yamaha KT100 Pipe), Yamaha Sr. Heavy (4-hole can), Open Shifter/Rok-Honda, Shifter Masters, Vintage Open, Vintage Mac and Vintage Yamaha. Classes with smaller numbers of entries may be run together and be scored separately.

A rules review is under way and will be posted to the website when complete. Spec tires will again be Hoosiers bought through registration, which is expected to open in May.

“Last year was challenging due to so much construction going on around the track. It’s good for the city but challenging for our event,” said Ruthhart. “While these projects continue, most of the exterior work will be done soon. We have also had good dialogue with the city which is planning downtown street work which should address some of our safety concerns. Other issues are also under discussion as part of the overall review of the event.

“Working with our partners at National Karting Alliance, we also plan to address spectator safety concerns raised by insurance underwriters,” said Ruthhart. “But with a 4-time increase in our insurance costs, we need support from racers and new sponsors if the event is to continue.”

Watch Rock Island’s social media pages for details on Rules and Registration. Sponsor inquiries and race questions can be sent to rockislandgrandprix@gmail.com.

A room block for racers has been set up at the Holiday Inn in Rock Island.

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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 Grand Prix typically attracts race teams from coast to coast as well as Canada and Bermuda. There have been drivers from 8 foreign countries and 14 foreign winners.

Sponsors for the event include: Mediacom, Briggs & Stratton Racing, Factory Kart Mid-East, Bally's Quad-Cities Casino & Hotel, Hoosier Kartsport, O'Reilly Auto Parts, Baker Street Creative, Lincoln Electric, Gett Industries, Modern Woodmen Financial/ Joe Schurr agent, C&W and Sons Trucking, Miller beer Euclid Distributing, CBS TV4 / Fox 18 and CW, the local iHeart radio stations: Big106.5, Fox Sports QC, WOC and WLLR, QCSportsnet.com, 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, Hiland Toyota.,

For more information on the race, please visit racerockisland.info

