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ROK CUP ITALIA, ROUND 3 - RACE REPORT

The 2023 ROK Cup Italia season goes on with the 3rd round at the South Garda Karting in Lonato del Garda (BS). In total 224 drivers in the six categories have participated at the races. At the end of the race day on Sunday, the championship leaders are: Shen Zeyu (Mini ROK), Marchesi Nicolas (Junior ROK), Dragan David (Senior ROK), Ptackova Sona (Expert ROK), Grzywacz Bartosz (Super ROK) and Taylor Niki (Shifter ROK).

Mini ROK

Record numbers for the Mini ROK, the ROK Cup Italia category for the

youngest drivers, that reaches the maximum number of 54 participants reported in the regulation, with engines provided and distributed by the Promoter by drawing lots.

First pole position of the season for Julian Frasnelli, the fastest ever in the qualifying practices on Sunday morning with 55.028 seconds lap time. While, with 55.174 seconds lap time, the current champion Shen Zeyu is the first in the second qualifying group and gains the second place in the combined ranking. Esteves Riven and Norbert Jr. Plaszewski close their groups in second position, with the Swiss driver third classified and the Norwegian fourth. Fifth place for Franciszek Bal, Zack Zhu sixth, Marco Puma seventh, Jay Kostecki eighth, Sofia Povazhnaia ninth and Jercan Tudor tenth. The next placed drivers are Ilias Mitaki, Vsevolod Osadchyi-Suslovskiy, Alessandro Nanni, Antonio Ianni, Lorenzo Di Pietrantonio, Benjamin Westwood, Nicolò Carrara, Angelo Pecoraro, Milosz Smuk, Dario Palazzolo, Gabriele Iacomelli, Justin Di Lucia, Angelo Stuppia, Giuseppe Noviello, Angel Franceskin, Ella Hakkinen, Wright Kier Laird Sherren, Oskar Baron, Johannes Buchhammer, Lorenzo Zucchetto, Maxim Becker, Andrea Carbone, Francesco Koci, Carlo Pongratz, Momcilo Davoust, Luca Muzzolon, Victoria Farfus, Alberto Masotto, Daniel Hakkinen, Tommaso D'Ambrosio, Gianmaria Ferretti, Manuel Ranica, Nicholas Bertolani, Davide Di Filippo, Jarno Kummer, Augustin Feligioni, Leon Beller, Alex Dal Maso, Vincenzo Salierno, Valerio Santini, Plamen Teliyski, Linghan Li and Shae Shield.

Due to the large number of participants, even for this round, the drivers are split in three groups for the qualifying heats. Well done for Riven in the heats: he wins two races out of two and takes the first place, with Zeyu stable in second position and with a current success, while Frasnelli moves back to third place. Zsebo goes up from tenth to fourth position, ahead of Zhu and Puma. To complete the top 10, Ianni, Smuk, Osadchyi-Suslovskiy and Koci, this one coming back from 34th place in qualifying.

As usual, the final of the "little drivers" of the Mini ROK is really interesting up to the last meter. The race starts with Rivas, Frasnelli, Zhu, Ianni and Zeyu in the first five positions after the first turn, but then Frasnelli takes the lead. Rivas is really close and starts a long fight with Frasnelli, full of overtaking. At the 5th lap Zeyu and Zsebo come up and try to overtake Riven, but this one doesn't give up until two laps to go. But the victory becomes a hard fight between Zsebo, at the lead, and Zeyu: during the last turns, the Chinese driver tries to overtake the Hungarian and the two get in contact. Zeyu doesn't give up and wins, while Zsebo leaves the podium to Puma, second, and Plaszewski third. Unfortunately, Riven is involved in the accident and classified 24th.

Junior ROK

Once again large participation in the Junior ROK, with 39 drivers registered for the third round of the championship.

The pole position goes to Simon Mayer, the fastest ever with 49.004 seconds lap time. Filippo Pola gets the first position in group 1 of the qualifying practices with 49.309 seconds lap time and gains the second place in the combined ranking. Franciszek Czapla third and Fabio Reale fourth ahead of Maksymilian Rafalik fifth and Franciszek Lassota, sixth place. Seventh position for Qarrar Firhand, followed in the ranking by Antoni Kosiba, Nicolas Marchesi and Matteo Rainalter. The ranking of the qualifying practices follows with Giulio Mazzolini, Riccardo Brangero, Alex Laghezza, Zackary Taylor, Alessandro Giarratano, Alex Desario, Emilio Tedesco, Ettore Sanesi, Vili Hakala, Jan Blazic, Guido Bruno Bidoli, Marlon Di Salvo, Ahn Tu Ranghetti, Luca Lo Bue, Stefano Zamponi, Leonardo Monzani, Adriano Roggero, Devin Leon Ucar, Matteo Pau, Lorenzo Lenzi, Davide Pretosi, Riccardo Moreni, Andrea Thej, Stefano Ferrari, Rikardo Bakaj, Selina Baum, Kimi Rarakilic, Enrico Pietro Villa and Dominik Beller.

The leader of the classification changes at the end of the qualifying heats. Czapla wins the two races and gains the top, while Rafalik goes up in second position thanks to a success and a second place. Firhand gets the third position, ahead of Kosiba and Lassota. Two top 5 are not enough for Meyer to keep the lead: the Austrian slips to sixth place followed by Pola that goes from second to seventh position. Rainalter, Brangero and Desario enter the top 10, instead Reale falls from 4th to 21st. In the end, Marchesi is excluded from the final due to two withdrawals.

The start of the last race of the weekend is exciting, with Czapla and Rafalik that keep the first two positions, while Kosiba, Mayer and Lassota get the better of Firhand. The trio formed by Czapla, Rafalik and Kosiba immediately create a gap from the group of chasers and start a long fight on the edge of hundredths of a second. Czapla is the best one and, lap after lap, creates a good gap from Rafalik and Kosiba that, meanwhile, are really close to each other. At the end of the 16 laps planned, Czapla gains a gap of more than one second on Rafalik, second place and Kosiba third. Lassota and Firhand fight until the end for the fourth place, with the Pole who precedes the Indonesian under the checkered flag. Bidoli, Reale and Meyer finish sixth, seventh and eighth respectively.

Senior ROK

Large participation in the Senior ROK, with 56 drivers at the start for the third round of the season.

The lead of David Stefan Dragan in the qualifying continues. The Romanian gets the third pole position in the championship thanks to 48.379 seconds lap time, while Christian Canonica is the best in group 1 with 48.437 seconds lap time and goes behind him in the combined ranking. The last year champion in the Super ROK category, Riccardo Ianniello makes his season debut in the Senior ROK with a positive third place, ahead of Adrian Labuda fourth, Alessio Mario Abbate fifth and Davide Marconato sixth. Niccolò Coppotelli gets the seventh position

followed by Patrik Fraboni, Luca Bettoni and Gianmarco Cortopassi. The ranking continues with Federico Bagioli, Lorenzo Bedetti, Federico Colombo, Filippo Tornaghi, Mateusz Piszczako, Michael Müller, Paolo Dung Pastori, Samuele Di Filippo, Mattia Jentile, Vittorio Maria Russo, Edoardo Proglia, Luca Perelli, Alexander Panaev, Colin Würthenberger, Francesco Curione, Nicole Ameglio, Rebecca Guarguaglini, Kaenan Sini, Alessio Migliucci, Daniele Galbiati, Cristian Lovi, Giuseppe Gaglianò, Alessandro Cocchi, Matteo Zaffarano, Ludovica Miceli, Alberto Bernardi, Matteo Favero, Giovanni Polato, Niccolò Fontani, Piotr Orzechowski, Sachel Rotgé, Matteo Berruti, Massimo Cannizzo, Mattia Chiurato, Matteo Bellandi, Giovanni Tiberio, Maia Meneghin, Tommaso Arlati, Daniele Guenzi, Gabriele Giganti, Emanuele Romanelli, Fabio Silvestri, Noah Massa, Manuel Detoma, Simone Taccola and Mattia Severino Marchiante.

Everything is perfect for Dragan even in the qualifying heats, with the championship leader author of three victories out of three races. Canonica is stable in second position thanks to two successes and a third place, while Bettoni goes from ninth to third place. A success also for Ianniello fourth, with Abbate, Labuda, Coppotelli and Marconato immediately following in the ranking. Müller jumps from 16th to 9th place, in the end Cortopassi completes the top 10.

In the final, good start without mistakes from the first position for Dragan, as well as for the drivers to follow: Bettoni, Abbate and Coppotelli. Ianniello and Canonica, promptly recover the third and fourth position during the first lap, behind the leader Dragan and Bettoni.

Ianniello goes to attack: he firstly overtakes Bettoni during the 2nd lap, then reduces the gap on Dragan. Even Müller, in the meantime gone at the fifth place, overtakes with success Canonica and Bettoni. Going back to the head of the race, Dragan manages at the best the advantage on Ianniello and triumphs under the checkered flag. Müller gets the third place of the podium, while Canonica closes fourth ahead of Bettoni.

Expert ROK

Incredible success of registered drivers for the Expert ROK, a continuously growing category that even counts 22 participants in this third round of the ROK Cup Italia season.

As it happened at the Cremona round, Sona Ptackova is the leader in the Sunday morning qualifying practices, the fastest on track with 49.711 seconds lap time. The second position goes to Luca Fiorenti thanks to 49.776 seconds lap time, while Michele Zampieri is third with only 3 thousandths of gap from his compatriot. After the absence in the second round, Antoni Bal comes back with the fourth best time in the qualifying practices, ahead of Tino Donadei fifth, and Filippo Repetto sixth. Paolo Baselli seventh, Riccardo Pini eighth, Alessandro Viganò ninth and Pier Giuseppe Di Landro tenth. To follow in the ranking: Fabio Cretti, Roberto Nali, Marco Beretta, Angelo Ardito, Riccardo Pedrola, Alberto Franchini, Roberto Pelanconi, Gianluca Rubiolini, Reto Kummer,

Francesco Doria, Leonardo Grassini and Diego Bartolozzi.

In race 1, good start for Ptackova immediately at the top followed by Zampieri that tries to overtake Fiorenti at the first turn, without success.

At the 2nd lap Donadei stands out with an overtake on Zampieri to get the third position, while Fiorenti tries to overtake Ptackova. However, the duo Donadei-Zampieri reach Fiorenti that must defend himself, contributing to the escape of Ptackova. The Czech gains a good gap on her chasers and crosses the finish line first, with an advantage of almost 5 seconds over Fiorenti, second classified, and Donadei third. Zampieri finishes fourth, immediately followed by Repetto and Baselli.

In race 2, good start for Nali from the first place and for Baselli that immediately attacks the rival, while Viganò goes from the second to the third place. In just one lap, Viganò gets back to his starting position overtaking Baselli, then at the 2nd lap, he also overtakes the leader Nali. In the same moment, Zampieri overtakes Baselli and gets the third place. And it is Zampieri himself who becomes the main star of the race: in just two laps goes at the top and creates a gap from his rivals. In the next laps, Donadei and Fiorenti also come out and go up to fourth and fifth place, but at the 11th lap an accident between Repetto and Di Landro calls for the Slow, which definitively closes the race. Zampieri wins, with Viganò and Nali completing the podium.

Super ROK

In Lonato there is space, of course, also for the Super ROK, the best performing single-speed category of the ROK Cup Italia.

Second consecutive pole position for Bartosz Grzywacz, author of the fastest lap in 47.711 seconds. Gaia Cardinali is the immediate chaser of the Pole, second, while the ROK Cup Winter Trophy champion Domenico Cicognini gains the third position. Kinga Wojcik is fourth, with Yicheng Qu fifth, Federico Vecchio sixth, Lorenzo Rubes seventh and Manuel Gritti eighth. Lynn Neuhaus and Chiara Bolognini complete the top ten, while to follow we find Filippo Magnani, Matteo Adami, Nicole Maffeis, Alessandro Zini, Valentina Nessi, Lorenzo Poletti and Ella Zammit.

In race 1, great start for Grzywacz, Cicognini and Qu, with Cardinali who gives space to the rivals and follows in fourth position, ahead of Rubes. The Monegasque decides to attack and, with a decisive overtaking, she takes the third place from Qu, while Rubes gives his fifth position to Lynn Neuhaus. In the meantime, Cicognini tries to keep up with Grzywacz, but the Pole comes first under the checkered flag, with Cicognini and Cardinali engaged in a final sprint: in the end Cicognini takes it for just 33 thousandths ahead of the girl from Monaco. But she loses the podium due to a 5-second penalty for the front spoiler in the incorrect position and leaves to Qu and Neuhaus the third and fourth place.

Everything happens in Race 2. Gritti promptly takes the lead, with

Wojcik, Neuhaus, Cicognini and Cardinali immediately in the next positions. Cicognini is unleashed: in just few turns he gains the second position, then he overtakes also Gritti and goes at the top. During the 3rd lap, Gritti ends up in a spin and leaves the race. Even Neuhaus leaves the race after a contact with Qu at the beginning of the race. Cicognini tries to escape, but Cardinali reaches the rival, with Grzywacz to follow the Monegasque after coming up from eighth place. At the 7th lap, Grzywacz overtakes Cardinali and after another two laps, he takes the leadership away from Cicognini. The Pole wins the second race of the weekend, ahead of Cardinali, Wojcik, Qu and Cicognini, this one slipped back in the final laps. However, the ranking changes in the post-race, with a 5-second penalty to Grzywacz and Cicognini for the front spoiler in the incorrect position. Cardinali is first, with Wojcik second and Qu on the lowest step of the podium.

Shifter ROK

Great show for the Shifter ROK, the gearbox category of the ROK Cup Italia, with even 36 drivers at the start.

First seasonal participation and pole position for Samuele Leopardi, able to register the best lap time of 46.988 seconds. Andrea Aliberti gets the second position, while Gabrio Bizzozero and Marco Chiarello get the third and fourth position respectively. The leader of Cremona, Niki Taylor, is in fifth place, followed in the ranking by Federico Mascialino sixth, Gabriele Bensi seventh and Fabrizio Morardo eighth. Fifth row for Davide Cugini and Massimiliano Pezzucchi, sixth row for Lorenzo Ripamonti and Boris Cutaia. The ranking continues with Federico Squaranti, Riccardo Rigodanza, Andrea Zemin, Alessandro Lizio, Edoardo Sabatino, Philippe Ehrensberger, Mattia Rossetti, Damiano Sapio, Alessio Foresto, Victor Martin Odin, Marco Acquarella, Daniele Demartis, Matteo Benedetti, Pietro Gobbi, Manuel Daziano, Stefano Mira, Giacomo Pellegrino, Gioele Pollini, Riccardo Franciosi, Leonardo Boccardi, Alejandro Alvarez Rojo, Francesco Buffa, Lorenzo Celetti and Francesco Turzo.

In race 1, Leopardi starts in pole position and remains at the lead after the first turn, with Aliberti and Chiariello following him and Taylor immediately in fourth place after a perfect start. Leopardi soon chases his rivals and gets a good gap on Aliberti after few laps, while Chiarello and Taylor must concentrate on Bensi capable to rise from the seventh to fifth position. The fight for the lowest step of the podium gets the attention of the spectators: Bensi overtakes Taylor during the 6th lap, then he makes a long pressing on Chiarello. In the meantime, Leopardi gets about 3 seconds of advantage on Aliberti and wins the race ahead of his compatriot. Chiarello beats Bensi and takes the third place, finally Taylor finishes fifth.

In race 2, Zemin does not waste the opportunity to start in front of everyone and keeps the leadership even after the red lights turns off, with Morardo, Taylor, Mascialino, Bensi and Aliberti in the immediately

following positions. After few turns, Taylor attacks Morardo with success and goes to chase Zemin who, meanwhile, has a good gap on the rest of the group. However, Taylor makes an early start and gets a 5-second penalty. Anyway, Taylor tries hard to catch Zemin, but the Italian driver comes first under the checkered flag. Mascialino and Leopardi, the last one eighth at the start, get classified second and third respectively. They also beat Taylor, then seventh in ranking. Fourth place for Bensi, followed by Morardo and Squaranti.