



SIX DIFFERENT WINNERS OPEN THE 2026 CHAMPIONS OF THE FUTURE ACADEMY PROGRAM SEASON IN VALENCIA

New Talent Emerges as The 2026 Season Begins in Valencia

Four days on track, two days of racing, and six different winners set off fireworks in the season opened of the 2026 Champions of the Future Academy Program International Series.

After winter preparation and reflection on the 2025 title successes of Perico, Clancy, and Silkunas, the season officially came back to life at Kartódromo Internacional Lucas Guerrero in Chiva, Spain. New drivers joined returning contenders, fresh suits and sticker kits lined the paddock, and across Mini 60, OK-N Junior, and OK-N Senior, the opening round offered an early look at what each

competitor had brought with them into the new campaign.

Experience Meets Emerging Pace

Returning to a circuit known for punishing mistakes, especially at the final chicane, the Mini 60 field faced a demanding start. For some, qualifying was an entirely new challenge, while others such as Wynn Godschalk and Charles Clough arrived with far greater familiarity.

Saturday began with Maximilian Schilling securing pole position and leading into the heats. Godschalk moved ahead in both races as several drivers found themselves battling track limits, including Ilyas Sami, who received a five second penalty for cutting the final chicane. Sofia Rudenko and Jan Vavra delivered standout recovery drives, gaining twelve and ten positions respectively.

Rain shortly before the final transformed conditions. The greasy surface left Mini 60 shaped shadows stretching across the circuit during the grid walk, and grip became the decisive factor in the opening laps. Godschalk led early, but Mik Klinkers steadily closed the gap and executed an outside move in the closing stages to secure victory.

Sunday began with rolling and positioning games in qualifying that prompted a warning from race control. Charles Clough capitalised and finished five places higher than his Saturday qualifying position. Across the heats, Godschalk, Sami, and Schilling remained closely matched, each taking a share of the front running positions.

In the final, dry conditions allowed the leading trio to run nose to bumper. Sami attempted a move around the outside at Turn 1 but settled into second position. Godschalk crossed the line first after a showdown with Sami and Klinkers, but a post race decision disqualifying him from the final left the result under appeal.

Transition and Opportunity

The Junior category blended drivers stepping up from Mini with those already established, creating a field balancing development with growing experience as drivers adapted not only to racecraft, but also to the additional torque and traction of the OK-N Junior package.

Saturday qualifying initially went to Christian Faye Lund, but both himself and Stanislaw Grabowski were later disqualified for a pregrid infringement. Zoltan Coigny inherited the pole position and used the opportunity to set the tone for his weekend, maintaining strong form across the heats to secure the front position for the final.

On home soil, Hernan Rodriguez remained consistently in contention throughout the race and converted that presence into victory. Atiq Mir, now making the step up from Mini machinery, secured third place in the final, marking her strongest international result in her career so far.

Sunday provided Coigny with the chance to reinforce that Saturday momentum. Qualifying again went his way, this time ahead of Faye Lund, who returned to form without suffering a repeat of Saturday's disqualification, and Andie Stewart. Across the heats, the order remained fluid as drivers continued to search for the balance between outright pace and race management that so often defines the opening rounds of a season.

After being in the fight all weekend, Coigny converted his pace into victory, securing an almost perfect Sunday.

OK-N Senior: Simons Shines

With Markus Silkunas' record breaking 2025 campaign now part of the series history, attention shifted to those looking to fill the boots he left behind.

On Saturday, Oskar Galan led qualifying ahead of Kacper Rajpold and Angelina Simons. In the heats, Galan converted pole into a win, while consistent performances allowed Simons to secure pole for the final. Simons then delivered a composed drive, controlling the race throughout to take victory ahead of Emmanouil Lioudakis and Jagrat Detroja. Emil Bråten produced one of the standout performances of the weekend, gaining twenty three positions across the final, more than one overtake for every lap of the race.

Sunday reshaped the narrative, and as often happens in racing, one driver's misfortune became another driver's treasure. Ina Rostad showed strong pace in practice and secured pole position on Sunday, but a chain guard failure at the start of Heat 1 brought her race to an early end following intervention from race control leaving Emmanouil Lioudakis and Michal Zajac to benefit from the circumstances early on.

Zajac started the final from pole as the lead changed hands between several contenders including Zajac, Lioudakis, Detroja, and Rajpold. Angelina Simons charged through from nineteenth to rejoin the fight at the front, executing repeated moves into the final chicane lap after lap, however a later incident during an overtaking attempt forced her off track.

Detroja crossed the line first to take his first International win, but a five second nose cone penalty applied after the race promoted Kacper Rajpold to victory ahead of Venesa Silkunaite and Mikel Zajac.

With the opening round complete, the momentum of the Champions Of The Future Academy Program is confirmed. The championship now heads to Greece, where the next chapter of the 2026 season will unfold and where Sami, Coigny and Lioudakis will fight to hold onto their early leads.





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