

EUROPEAN TITLE CAMPAIGNS INTENSIFY AS CHAMPIONSHIP HITS FULL SWING IN VALENCIA

5 May 2026



Three weeks after the season opener in Italy, the Mondokart.com FIA Karting European Championship heads to Spain this weekend as 246 OK, Junior and Academy Senior drivers will descend on the Kartodromo Internacional Lucas Guerrero in Chiva, near Valencia with title ambitions sharpening and championship momentum shifting up a gear.

We return to the Valencian track this week for a fourth consecutive year of racing after it debuted on the FIA Karting calendar in 2023. Back then current FIA Karting World Champion (OK) Thibaut Ramaekers was the first driver to win an FIA Karting race at the circuit. The success of the Belgian driver, who is now racing in the French Formula 4 Championship, will surely be a source of inspiration for the drivers this weekend who will be looking to emulate his success and accelerate their European and Academy Trophy title charges.

The 1.4km circuit on the East coast of Spain features high-speed straights and technical sections with a lap record of 52.2 seconds in the OK class, offering a suitable challenge for the young drivers. In the team standings, KR Motorsport leads both OK and Junior categories headed into Round 2 with a 37- and 26-point lead over Parolin Motorsport respectively.

Driver education will also take centre stage on Wednesday as Academy Trophy drivers participate in a 'Good Sportsmanship' course delivered by the FIA. Developed to embed healthy and safe racing habits as drivers begin their careers, this latest initiative forms part of the motor sport governing body's commitment to support the next generation of stars and invest in the future of the sport.

All rounds of the Mondokart.com FIA Karting European Championship will be **LIVE and FREE** to watch on the FIA Karting YouTube channel.

OK

After Round 1 delivered a closely fought and tense weekend of racing last month, expectations are high for another thriller in the OK category. Noah Baglin sits atop the championship standings after his almost faultless run of heats and an assured performance in the final which leaves him leading the pack into Round 2.

Dean Hoogendoorn clawed his way back into contention with a near podium finish after a disappointing performance during Qualifying Practice in La Conca, and travels to Valencia with renewed determination. Similarly, James Anagnostiadis who qualified in 35th position and made-up ground to cross the line seventh will be hoping for a stronger start to his weekend.

Luke Kornder, the only driver to take points from Noah Baglin during the heats in Italy and who later closed in on the Brit during the final will be looking to go one step higher on the podium this weekend whilst Zac Drummond, who made up 13 places in the final, remarked after his podium finish "I'm very excited for Valencia, we're very fast there and I've got the lap record and two pole positions. We'll see what happens!"

Attention will also be on Klara Kowalczyk, the young Polish driver who started her season strongly and was unlucky to not come away from Round 1 with more points after a series of setbacks during the heats dampened her strong qualifying performance that initially placed her third.

Turkish driver Iskender Zülfiçari who struggled to maintain his polesitter advantage in La Conca bounced back the following week in Lonato to take a race win which he will be hoping to capitalise on in Valencia. Others to watch include Gilles Herman, Henry Domain, Evan Purcell and Nicolo Cuman.

In total 97 drivers will take to the track this weekend as the 2026 Mondokart.com FIA Karting European Championship hits the halfway point.

JUNIOR

An open field across the Junior category has characterised the start of the season with close racing and multiple contenders showing strong pace. Will Green turned his difficult early season fortunes around to take the chequered flag in Italy after a solid weekend of running for the young Brit.

Gioele Girardello, who moved up to Junior after his victory in the 2025 FIA Karting OK-NJ World Cup, showed solid race pace to come home second with a fastest lap ahead of polesitter Bruno Priam who had struggled during Saturday's heats but held onto third position. The Belgian driver commented after his podium finish that "Looking ahead, for me it's possible to target another podium in Valencia. I like it there, I was second in the winter cup there."

Daniel Miron Lorente races on home soil this weekend as he continues to impress. He started the previous race at the front of the grid following a dominant performance throughout the heats, only to fall back towards the end of the race with Italian driver Julian Frasnelli snatching points off the Spaniard.

Mercedes Junior driver Niccolò Perico found it challenging to recover from his qualifying performance, especially after a Super Heat pile-up on lap 1 that set him back significantly and so will be looking to restart his European title campaign at the second round.

Entering the mix is also hotly-tipped American driver Troy Ferguson. Troy is one of eight Junior wild card entries and joins the Parolin Motorsport team this year after his victory in the FIA Karting Arrive and Drive World Cup (Junior) in Malaysia. He went on to deliver a standout performance during the FIA Karting Shootout where he placed second and won free tyres, fuel and entries for up to 5 FIA Karting events in 2026 plus a financial contribution to an FIA Karting team of 3,000 euros per event.

Other names to watch include Many Nuvolini who won three out of his four heats in Italy, Oiva Vettenranta who has showed signs of early promise this season as well as Czech racer Zdenek Babicek and British driver Harry Williams.

In total 100 drivers form the grid for the Junior category this weekend as the 2026 Mondokart.com FIA Karting European Championship continues.

ACADEMY SENIOR

The 2026 FIA Karting Academy Trophy season gets underway this weekend following the successful debut of a senior category last year. Yuzuki Sato from Japan won the 2025 Senior Trophy and therefore qualified for the inaugural FIA Karting Shootout. Sato went on to win the Shootout and secure €250,000 towards an FIA-certified Formula 4 season, a transformational prize the entrants of this year's Academy Trophy will surely be looking to replicate as they launch their Trophy campaigns.

Exprit karts with Vortex engines continue in 2026 as the Academy Trophy-approved karts with a ballot used to randomly determine chassis and engine distribution. Maxxis will also continue as the Academy Senior tyre supplier with karts racing on their Option tyre.

The largest Academy Senior grid to date will feature new countries participating in the Academy Trophy for the first time this year with Rion Tytynxhiu representing Kosovo, Ganza Ian Mugabo representing Rwanda and Maximilliano Gobbi representing Uruguay. Every global region is represented in the category which allows each FIA Member Club (ASN) to nominate a junior and senior driver each season.

Simba Motoda from Japan leads the early favourites following his impressive performance at the FIA Karting Arrive and Drive World Cup last year where only a front-fairing penalty denied him victory on track with Troy Ferguson ultimately lifting the trophy.

Australian driver Liam Carr joins the Academy Trophy as the reigning Australian Kart Champion (KA2) alongside Derek Wargo who represents the USA and begins his first full senior season, describing it as “a dream come true.”

Finally, Michal Zajac has already claimed a podium at the Kartodromo Internacional Lucas Guerrero this year and flies the flag for Poland, whilst Essa Al Hammadi has also shown signs of promise from his time racing in the UAE.

49 drivers enter the three-round championship this weekend as they begin their quests to be named 2026 FIA Karting Senior Academy Trophy Winner.

PROVISIONAL TIMINGS

Friday 8 May

08:30 – 11:45 Free Practice

11:54 – 13:15 Qualifying Practice (OK, Junior)

16:55 – 17:12 Qualifying Practice (Academy Senior)

14:55 – 19:15 Qualifying Heats (OK, Junior)

Saturday 9 May

10:20 – 18:12 Qualifying Heats

Sunday 10 May

10:45 – 12:20 Super Heats

13:10 Drivers' Presentation

13:50 Academy Trophy Senior Final

14:50 Junior Final

15:50 Senior Final