

# F1 legend shines in Bahrain karting

Rubens Barrichello leads double winners in first two rounds of Sakhir Rotax MAX Challenge at Bahrain International Karting Circuit

● Julian Rivera, Xen De Ruwe join Barrichello as back-to-back victors in championship's first two rounds

● Antione Lemiesx, Tye Mejia and Oliver Kruglov also emerge triumphant in round one

● Caleb Odendaal, Luca Houghton and Pappacenia Elia clinch a win apiece in second round

TDT | Manama

Formula 1 legend Rubens Barrichello spearheaded a trio of supremely talented racers who clinched back-to-back victories in the first two rounds of the Sakhir Rotax MAX Challenge (SRMC) 2023, held over the weekend at Bahrain International Karting Circuit (BIKC) in Sakhir.

Barrichello triumphed in both DD2 MAX Masters Finals along with BIKC's globally renowned 1.414-kilometre CIK-FIA track, and was joined as double winners by Julian Rivera in the Micro MAX category and Xen De Ruwe in the DD2 MAX class.

Meanwhile, also stepping onto the podium as victors from round one were Antione Lemiesx in the Mini MAX, Tye Mejia in the Junior MAX and Oliver Kruglov in the Senior MAX. From round two, Caleb Odendaal captured first place in the Mini MAX, Luca Houghton won the Junior MAX, and Pappacenia Elia took the chequered flag in the Senior MAX Final.

The SRMC has kicked off the 2023/2024 national karting season at BIKC, the world-class grassroots motorsport facility of Bahrain International Circuit (BIC).

The final two rounds of this campaign are scheduled to take place this coming weekend on Friday and Saturday. The SRMC will then be followed by the



Rubens Barrichello receives his winner's trophy during his podium ceremony

Bahrain Rotax MAX Challenge (BRMC) 2023/2024, which is set to feature eight rounds taking place until March of next year.

The SRMC and BRMC are for individual racers competing against one another in sprint races in their very own Rotax-powered karts.

## DD2 MAX Masters

In last weekend's events, Rubens Barrichello was the pace-setter in the DD2 MAX Masters from the opening session. He topped the first round's Qualifying with a best lap of 55.167 seconds and then won the Pre-Final unchallenged. In the Final, Barrichello raced to the victory after 15 laps with a winning time of 13 minutes 45.822 seconds. He was joined on the podium by runner-up Anthony Hogg.

In round two, Barrichello was even quicker in Qualifying with a best lap of 53.963s for pole. He won the Pre-Final before completing his sensational double in 13:37.545 in the Final, again finishing ahead of Hogg.

## Micro MAX

In the Micro MAX category, Julian Rivera narrowly beat out Rayyan Najjar in the first round's Qualifying with a fastest time of 1:05.542. In the Pre-Final,

Rayyan triumphed while Julian was disqualified from the session, but Julian bounced back in their nine-lap Final, taking the chequered flag in 9:30.913 with a significant lead over Rayyan.

In round two, Julian picked up from where he left off the previous day, topping the Qualifying timesheet with a quickest lap of 1:03.773 and then winning the Pre-Final. Julian then took his second Final win of the weekend in 9:29.924, with Rayyan joining him on the podium.

## DD2 MAX

In the DD2 MAX class, Xen De Ruwe set the quickest lap time of 53.800s in the opening round's Qualifying and went on to win the Pre-Final. He then powered to a fantastic win in the 15-lap Final in 13:30.882, enjoying a 14.767s gap from runner-up Dainal Muallem.

In round two, Muallem was the early aggressor and was best in Qualifying with a lap of 53.289s. But in the Pre-Final, De Ruwe captured the lead in the opening lap and went on to claim the win, setting the stage for his Final victory in 13:28.966, this time with an 8.396s gap from Muallem. Sheng Ya Hong joined them on the DD2 MAX podium in third place.



Winners from the past weekend's rounds celebrate on the podium

## Mini MAX

In round one of the Mini MAX battles, Nasser Nass topped a highly competitive Qualifying session with a best lap of 1:01.380. He then triumphed in the Pre-Final, but in the Final, Nasser crossed the finish line in first place but was demoted to third due to a 10-second penalty. Antione Lemiesx, who made a stunning late surge after starting from fourth, inherited the victory with a time of 9:12.133 after nine laps. Shaheen Shaheen followed closely in second 0.197s back, and Nasser completed the podium placers classified 4.646s from Antione.

In round two, Shaikh Ahmed bin Saqer Al Khalifa took the top spot in Mini MAX Qualifying with a fastest lap time of 1:00.584. Nasser then won the Pre-Final but it was Caleb Odendaal who was celebrating on the top podium step following the nine-lap Final.

After starting third, Caleb was in the lead by lap three and powered on to triumph in 9:02.699. Nasser dropped back to fourth but fought back brilliantly to gain two places by the finish and take the runner-up spot 1.828s from Caleb. Shaikh Ahmed joined them on the podium in third 2.176s behind.

## Junior MAX

The Junior MAX category saw plenty of heated action and Luca Houghton struck first by topping Qualifying in round one with a



The Sakhir Rotax MAX Challenge (SRMC) has kicked off the 2023/2024 national karting season at Bahrain International Karting Circuit, the world-class grassroots motorsport facility of Bahrain International Circuit. The final two rounds of the SRMC campaign are set for this weekend

once again best in the Junior MAX Qualifying with a lap of 55.645s. He then triumphed in the Pre-Final before claiming a fantastic pole-to-flag win in the Final in 13:54.904. Tye followed just 1.064s adrift, while Brett was third 2.321s back.

## Senior MAX

The Senior MAX class featured the largest field of entrants in both SRMC rounds last weekend. In the opening meeting, Shaikha Haya bint Duaj bin Salman Al Khalifa topped the Qualifying timesheet with a 54.813s best lap. Oliver Kruglov then won the Pre-Final, and then maintained his strong form for a pole-to-flag win in the 15-lap Final with a time of 13:42.966. Pappacenia Elia was classified second with a 2.399s gap, while Theo Kekati took third place 6.958s behind.

The following day, Elia rode his momentum into the second round and was best in Qualifying with a 54.158s lap time. He triumphed in the Pre-Final, and then wrapped up a perfect outing with an outright victory in the Final, finishing in 13:42.752 after 15 laps. Elia enjoyed a 5.235s winning margin from Fahad Almuqla in second, while Fahad Alkhaled claimed third 5.347s back.

At the end of all the SRMC action on each day, the winners were awarded their respective trophies and medals by BIKC and BIC officials in podium ceremonies.

In round two, Luca was

## Record-breaking Hypercar battles set for WEC weekend

TDT | Manama

Motorsport fans attending the upcoming Bapco Energies 8 Hours of Bahrain at Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) will enjoy a never-before-seen Hypercar spectacle at the World Endurance Championship (WEC) event.

A record number of 12 Hypercars flying the flags of eight teams and six manufacturers will be lining up on the grid, making for the largest-ever entry in the WEC's top-tier category to hit the tarmac at "The Home of Motorsport in the Middle East".

The Bapco Energies 8 Hours of Bahrain is scheduled to take place 3 and 4 November at BIC in Sakhir as the final round of the 2023 FIA WEC season.

This year, the Hypercar category will yet again be the top draw, but this time it will have



Toyota Gazoo Racing's #7 Hybrid in action earlier this WEC season

up to a dozen contenders vying for glory as the Spirit of Le Mans makes its presence felt once again in the Kingdom.

Toyota Gazoo Racing and Peugeot TotalEnergies will be making their return. They will be joined in the Hypercar battles for the first time in Bahrain by Ferrari AF Corse, Porsche

Penske Motorsport, Cadillac Racing, Floyd Vanwall Racing Team, Hertz Team JOTA, and Proton Competition.

Toyota Gazoo Racing, Peugeot TotalEnergies, Ferrari AF Corse and Porsche Penske Motorsport will each have two cars taking to the track. Eleven of the cars will be Hybrids, including both

of Toyota's GR010 challengers, Peugeot's 9X8 contenders, Ferrari's 499P challengers, and Porsche's 963 cars, which will also be raced in by Hertz Team JOTA and Proton Competition.

Cadillac Racing will be on track with its V-Series.R Hybrid, while Floyd Vanwall Racing Team will compete with their Vanwall Vandervell 680.

Many of motor racing's most popular and supremely talented drivers will be among those sharing the duties in their respective Hypercars in Bahrain. They include former Formula 1 aces Sebastien Buemi and Brendon Hartley in Toyota Gazoo Racing's #8 car; Kamui Kobayashi in Toyota's #7 challenger; Paul di Resta and Jean-Eric Vergne in Peugeot TotalEnergies' #93 contender; and Antonio Giovinazzi in Ferrari AF Corse's #51 car, to name only a few.

## Verstappen claims 50th career win

AFP | Austin

Freshly-minted triple world champion Max Verstappen

completed a hat-trick of Texan victories when he claimed the 50th win of his career in the United States Grand Prix.

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