

RED WHITE SANGARI KART PRIX 2009
SEPANG (MALAYSIA) 20-22nd NOVEMBER

INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS

WITH 108 ENTRIES, THE FIRST EVER RED WHITE SANGARI INVITATIONAL KART PRIX CHAMPIONSHIP AT SEPANG WAS A GREAT SUCCESS, BOTH IN TERMS OF PARTICIPATION AND RACING INTENSITY.

REPORT & PHOTOS **M.ZAKARIA**

Drivers from United Kingdom, Brazil, Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Switzerland, Macau, Germany, Netherlands and Philippines were determined to demonstrate their driving skills against each other. With the highest prize to date in Asia Pacific Karting Championship, it's hardly any surprise to see big names coming from all over the world. Most notably, Ireland's World Champion Martin Pierce who is driving in the Senior Max category. The three categories featured are Rotax Micromax

with the hot weather. The mechanics and drivers work to get the setup suited to the medium/fast characteristics of the track. The pit area was full of activity as drivers were going back and forth and fans getting on the track and in the pit lane taking opportunity to get closer to the action. Hats off to the organizers for bringing this sport close to its fans and let them be a part of what karting is all about - pure racing and less politics.

As typical Malaysian style weather, rain had been pouring consistently since Day 1 of the event in the afternoon sessions. In a similar fashion, as expected it was a wet race for **Rotax Micromax** final, which started in the afternoon. All the drivers were using wet Mojo tires. There was a hint of panic among the pit crews as they scrambled to fit the wet tires. The fans were up on their feet in the grandstand and before the race even started, a collision already took place on the way out of the pit lane for familiarization lap between Gezha Falihi Putradimi and Rafif Rabbani. Fortunately it was minor rear-ender and both were able to carry on.

Starting on pole was Giuliano Raucci with Perdana Putra Minang second on the grid. But it was Pietro Rimbano and Suhaizarul Suhaizat who commanded the race as Giuliano Raucci dropped to 3rd as the race unfolded. Nothing could separate these three drivers as they dragged each other to checkered flag. It was a very tight race and in the end it

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(8-12 years old), Rotax Junior (13-16 years old) and Rotax Senior (15 – above years old).

The event ran for 3 days from Friday to Sunday. Friday was the unofficial practice sessions with the track already buzzing with activities. Non-Malaysian drivers got their chance to familiarize with the track environment and acclimatize



was Pietro Rimbano who emerged as the winner, Suhaizarul Suhaizat second and Giuliano Raucci third. As the podium celebration was about to commence, there was a protest and the result was put on hold. When the official result was out, Pietro Rimbano was disqualified due to technical infringement and Suhaizarul Suhaizat was announced as the winner. It was a sad day for Pietro Rimbano as his victory is short lived and having being earlier celebrated at the top of podium in front of huge crowds really adds salt to his wounds.

Rotax Max Junior category was dominated by Nabil Jeffri in all practice sessions, qualifying heats and pre-final. However, lady luck seemed to



Above, Micro Max winner Suhaizat with the trophy and the \$4,000 cheque, after that Brazilian Rimbano who finished first was DQ at the technical checks.
 Left, Victor Franzone from Brazil (124) grabs second in Junior Max.
 Top, Senior start with Ryuichi Nara (203) and Sotaro Mimura (204) challenging Pierce for the lead.





Above, Nara (203) leads on Pierce (219) in the exciting Senior final.

Right, a heated phase in the Micro Max final of the fight among Suhaizat (97), Rimbano (29) and Raucci (25).

Opposite page, Senior winner Martin Pierce (219) on starting grid.



RESULTS

MICRO

1) 97 Suhaizarul Bin Suhaizat; 2) 25 Giuliano Raucci; 3) 13 Jon Lee Xuan Hao; 4) 12 Muhammad Luqman Hakim; 5) 77 Maximilian Fewtrell; 6) 31 Brendan Seibl; 7) 22 Tachapan Vijitranon; 8) 18 Adam Muqri Mohd Noor; 9) 75 Low Kent Jun; 10) 17 Rowan Grinwis

JUNIOR

1) 120 Muhammad Nabil Jeffri; 2) 124 Victor Franzoni; 3) 117 Rahul Raj Mayer; 4) 138 Kittitat Vongprai; 5) 106 Parth Kar-

nasingh Ghorpade; 6) 139 Pattarol Vongprai; 7) 123 Calvin Seibl; 8) 102 Chang Mun Shien; 9) 116 Timothy Thomas Yeo Ren Quan; 10) 101 Silvano Christian

SENIOR

1) 219 Martin Pierce; 2) 203 Ryuichi Nara; 3) 210 Mohammad Afiq Ikhwan; 4) 204 Sotaro Mimura; 5) 224 Mohamed Farriz Fauzy; 6) 225 Rafeal Suzuki; 7) 226 Vinicius Perdigao; 8) 222 Andrew Tang; 9) 220 Tan Wei Ron; 10) 209 Mikko Petteri Nassi

stops smiling for him when Jaie Robson took the top step of the podium in a dramatic and tricky final race. On a drying circuit, teams were faced with the tough decision of whether to go for wet weather tires or slicks. All drivers with the exception of Australian driver Robson opted for slicks. He took advantage of the tricky condition and a bit more rain later in the race to secure his first position and only later was stripped of his win due to a technical irregularity. Clerk of the course James Leong later commented on kartingasia.com forum mentioning that the driver in the juniors, having made the right choice of tyres ran away hands down. Unfortunately at scrutineering, it was found that he used non-standard engine gasket. He further clarified that it

is clearly stated in the Rotax Technical Regulations that only Genuine Rotax components shall be used. Nabil Jeffri then was promoted to top spot of the podium to summarize his perfect weekend of the event. Victor Franzoni finished second and Rahul Raj Mayer third.

John King, the boss of Comma Motorsports expressed his gratitude by looking back at the history. Nabil Jeffri and Suhaizarul both arrived at the team without equipment. It was last week before the event Nabil got a new Junior engine and Suhaizarul got a MicroMax engine from a new senior engine in stock plus a used P8 junior cylinder with a used MM kit. John King also made sure all engines were run in carefully, then stripped, and

the crank balanced. He believed this was the key to his team victorious outing.

The final for **Rotax Senior** was a battle between Ryuichi Nara and Martin Pierce. Both were a class above from the rest in all the qualifying heats. But Martin Pierce did one better by taking pole position for the final. Ryuichi Nara joined him on the front row and the final was all set for an intense showdown. In the first few laps, Satoro Mimura and Ryuichi Nara overtook Martin Pierce only to delay him the fight for first place. Ryuichi Nara took advantage and built a steady gap to Satoro Mimura who was holding back Martin Pierce. When Martin

Below, flags exchange in a very friendly racing event. After the first edition held in Malaysia, organizers announced the next editions will be held in Indonesia (2010) and Brazil (2011). Right, Rimbano's weekend end in tears after he gets DQ in Micro Max. The young Brazilian talent finds comfort on his friend shoulder, Raucci, who was elated to second.

