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APRIL 25, 2009 NEWS

EKN Trackside: Snap-on Stars of Karting Grand Prix of Sonoma - Saturday Report

Sunny skies and steady winds greeted the competitors at the Jim Russell International Karting Center this morning and once things got underway, it appeared as though Ron White and Brett Felkins would step into the limelight in the Senior categories of the Snap-on Stars of Karting Western



Ron White's two victories in the KZ2 heat races will put him on pole for Sunday's Prefinal (Photo: On Track Promotions - otp.ca)

Division opener. White (CRG) may have started fifth in the short-fielded KZ2 class, but he quickly took the lead in the opening two heats en route to victories, chasing rookie Brendan Phinny (Top Kart) across the line in the final moto to secure the pole position for the Prefinal on Sunday morning. Leading Edge Motorsports' Brett Felkins (Intrepid) stole the show in the other two senior classes, taking two wins in both TaG ICC and Sr. National, finishing up with a pair of top-fives in the final round of heats to clinch the pole for both Prefinals. Simply put, the racing was amazing but both of these drivers are going to need to step it up on Sunday as their competition was able to outrun them in the final round of heats, opening the door for some challengers to vie for the top of the podiums.

Rookie KZ2 driver Brendan Phinny (Top Kart) grabbed the holeshot from the pole position ahead of Gregory Liefoghe (Intrepid) and Ron White (CRG), who got a great jump from fifth to third at the green flag. The move of the race was laid down when Liefoghe went inside of Phinny into turn one, with White watching it all unfold to go further inside to make it three wide. White came out with the lead and went on to earn the win with Phinny holding onto second ahead of Liefoghe. Texan Cody Jolly (CRG) ran fourth ahead of Colorado pilot Marc Elliott (Arrow).

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Phinny and Liefoghe were slow off the line at the start of the second heat race as White grabbed the holeshot. Through the opening corner, Jolly spun on the exit and fell to the tail of the field while Phinny slotted into second as the two pulled away from the rest of the field. White would go on to lead all 11 laps to the win with Phinny giving chase. Liefoghe ran a solid third as Elliott took fourth after battling nicely with Derek Tillett (CRG).



The third race featured another great battle within the top three. Phinny showed the way early but White and Liefoghe were right there to make it fun. The veteran White put the pressure on Phinny to the point where the rookie missed a shift coming out of the tic-tac-toe section of the track, which allowed White to come alongside into the next corner. Phinny pulled an outside-inside move to get a better exit, getting alongside White heading into the esses. White had to give way to Phinny, who retained the lead, completing an impressive defense against one of the sport's finest gearbox racers. White continued on to try another attack but he came up short, watching as Phinny pulled away to take his first ICC heat win. Jolly was able to work by Liefoghe for third while Elliott again completed the top-five.



As he did in qualifying, Brett Felkins earned the pole position in Sr. National and TaG ICC for their respective Prefinals

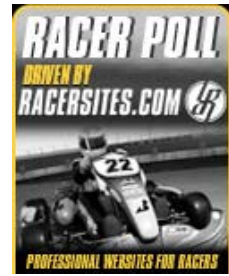
(Photo: On Track Promotions - otp.ca)

With his two runner-ups and victory, Phinny will start alongside White on the front row. Liefoghe and Jolly will grid on row two with Elliott and Tillett one row back.

Brett Felkins (Intrepid) and Andre Nicastro (Italkart) went wheel to wheel on the start as Nicastro looked to pinch Felkins to the inside.

Starting third, Wimsett moved into second in the opening lap and went for the lead at the end of lap one but Felkins would retake the position on the exit of turn one. Tyler Wheeler (Italkart) benefitted from the battle and moved to second on the exit of tic-tac-toe however Wimsett would come back to retake the second spot. Neil Alberico, who started 18th after a disqualification in qualifying was up to seventh by the end of lap three and closing in on the battles within the top five. Felkins would go on to lead the rest of the laps to take the win as he pulled out to a 1.4-second advantage over Wimsett. Wheeler ended up third ahead of Brett Buckwalter (Italkart) and Nicastro.

Felkins and Nicastro led the field around to begin the second heat race. Wimsett joined the fight and made a bid for the lead but didn't get it and ended the opening lap in fourth behind Buckwalter. Alberico looked to begin his charge forward until a broken throttle cable force him to go by hand control to accelerate. Wimsett then cleared Buckwalter for third and easily pulled away but Felkins and Nicastro were too far ahead to finish one-two. Buckwalter settled for fourth behind Wimsett with Jess Peterson (Top Kart) rounding out the top-five.



What is the most concecutive weekends of karting you have completed in your career?

- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5-6
- 7 or more

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POLL HISTORY

Unlike the opening two heats, Felkins did not get the jump he previously experienced and was back to third after the tic-tac-toe section behind Nicastro and Le Duc. Buckwalter and Wimsett made up the early top-five until the two went side by side resulting in Buckwalter taking a path through the grass that put him at the tail of the field. Lap three however would be the turning point of the event as Wimsett got inside for position and the two made contact. Wimsett continued on after returning his chain back on his Intrepid machine but a lap down while Le Duc watched from the side lines. Nicastro would put in the best laps of the race to pull out to a three-second victory over Felkins. Wheeler was third at the line with Stepanova Nekeel (CRG) and Peterson crossing in fourth and fifth.

Felkins will lead the Senior National field to the green flag with Nicastro joining him up front. Wheeler's string of solid results put him third in the order following the heat races with Buckwalter able to recover in his third heat to start outside row two. Wimsett will go from row three, next to Ocala podium finisher Nigel Saurino.

The TaG ICC division was the first to begin the wheel to wheel action of the day with pole sitter Brett Felkins (Intrepid) grabbing the holeshot to begin their opening heat race. Michael Hogg (Top Kart) got a great start to go from fifth to third on the start to slot in behind Remo Ruscitti (Italkart).



Despite his spin in heat three, Brett Felkins two heat wins earns him the pole for the TaG ICC Prefinal (Photo: On Track Promotions - otp.ca)

The top three gapped on rest of field and would finish that way with Don McGregor (Italkart) and Nic Le Duc (Tony Kart) completing the top-five until Ruscitti was excluded from the results for an altered airbox boot.

Felkins would show the way in heat two with Hogg blasting off the line into the second spot as they exited the opening corners. Andre Nicastro (Italkart) started third but slowed half way through lap one and pulled off with a flat tire. Felkins ran alone up front until Ruscitti slide into second to get by Hogg and began to run down Felkins. Ruscitti turned quick laps and closed in on the leader but ran out of time. Felkins took his second win ahead of Ruscitti, Hogg, McGregor, and Le Duc.

Three for three at the drop of the green, Felkins earned the hole shot once again as Nicastro was even slowing off the line as the rest of the field scrambled around him. Ruscitti gave chase to Felkins as McGregor found himself in third early on. Behind him was a great battle for fourth with the rest of the field. Felkins looked to have the race in hand until a spin with two laps to go put Ruscitti to the point. The same lap, Hogg spun in turn 1 following some contact in the race for fourth. When the checkered flag fell, Ruscitti took the victory with McGregor placing second. Neil Joseph (Italkart) won the battle for third with Nicastro finishing fourth. Despite his spin, Felkins managed to get up to fifth place at the line.

Felkins will grid from P1 with McGregor earning a spot on the front row starting position. Hogg and Ruscitti will fill row two with Joseph and Le Duc in row three.

Phil DeLaO showed the way in the opening KF3 heat race with Taylor Miinch (Top Kart), Alessandra Madrigal (Kosmic) and Broc Yocom (Kosmic). The top three ran similar lap times but DeLaO was just too strong. The order was static for the rest of the race and order was unchanged until Miinch was excluded from the results for an altered airbox boot.

DeLaO led early and pulled away to open the second heat race until he slowed on lap three. Miinch and Madrigal would get by and then DeLaO would pull off track with his axle shifting which caused his chain to fall off. Madrigal kept close to Miinch by setting the fast lap but would settle for second behind Miinch with Yocom finishing third.

The third heat was similar to the first with DeLaO leading all nine laps to take the win. Miinch and Madrigal were close early but DeLaO put down a couple laps to pull out to a good size lead in the end. Yocom continued to improve his lap times but would finish fourth behind Miinch and Madrigal.



Three solid heat races earns Alessandra Madrigal the pole for Sunday's TaG Junior Prefinal (Photo: On Track Promotions - otp.ca)

The opening heat race for Junior National was a bit chaotic while halfway through the first lap, officials decide for a complete restart with the front row inverted. Taylor Miinch (Top Kart) and Alessandra Madrigal (Kosmic) went to the front row with Luis Tyrrell (Top Kart) and Kiel Spaulding (Trackmagic)

back to row two. Big contact on the second start involving Spaulding and Miinch along with others resulted in a red flag as Spaulding needed medical attention. Once restarted, Tyrrell went on to take the win by 1.459-seconds over Madrigal. Miinch held on to third ahead of Ocala winner Phil DeLaO (CRG) with Mason Chelootz (Top Kart) rounding out the top-five.

Following heavy contact through the opening corner, Madrigal escaped to lead the early portion of the second Junior National as the second row once again started on the front row. Miinch, who started second, went off track in the opening corner to fall to the tail of the field, joined by DeLaO as well. Madrigal would go on take the win with Spaulding running a close second. Tyrrell and Thomas were third and fourth with Miinch climbing back to fifth.

Spaulding would be penalized to start from row two after two false starts for the third and final heat. Once starter Matt Long gave them the green, Miinch used the outside line to exit the opening corner as the leader. Tyrrell slotted into second with Spaulding, Madrigal, and Austin Elliott (Top Kart) the early top-five. Things got

interesting when Spaulding tried to get by Tyrrell on the outside of the final corner and the two made contact, sending Spaulding off track and to the tail of the field. This allowed Miinch to cruise to the victory by just over two-seconds with Madrigal ending up second. DeLaO advanced up to third in the race with Thomas up to fourth and Louie Pagano (Birel) all the way from 17th to fifth.

Madrigal and Miinch will lead the field to the green flag in the Prefinal with Tyrrell and DeLaO in row two. Chelootz and Tyler Thomas (Top Kart) will go from row three.

The opening Cadet heat race came down to a photo finish after seven laps of racing. Pole sitter JR Raczko (Energy), Carter Williams (Top Kart) and Riley Reyes (CRG) came to the checkered flag three wide. At the line it was Reyes who had his nose out in front with Williams beating Raczko for second. Zane Smith (Top Kart) beat out Jacques Saurino (Top Kart) for fourth.



*Winning heat 2 and 3 in Cadet earns JR Raczko the pole position for the Prefinal in his first Stars weekend
(Photo: On Track Promotions - otp.ca)*

The second heat came down to just Reyes and Raczko in the end. Raczko lead early with a small gap while Reyes battled with Hermanson and Saurino. Once he got away from them, Reyes turned the quickest laps of the race to catch Razcko. Once he caught the leader, the two went back and forth until Raczko drafted by Reyes on the last straight to take the win by 0.037-seconds. Williams was third with Smith and Hermanson rounding out the top-five.

The start of the final heat race was not what Reyes hoped for as he would fall back to fourth while Raczko, Hermanson, and Saurino showed the way. Saurino would get by Hermanson for second as would Reyes. With the field battling behind him, Raczko would go on to take the win after posting his fastest laps near the end to pull out to 1.382-second win. Saurino held off Reyes at the end for second with Hunter Corbitt (Birel) finishing fourth ahead of Williams.

With his two wins, Raczko will start the Prefinal from P1 with heat one winner Reyes in P2. Williams and Saurino are third and forth in the heat point standings with Smith and Hermanson in row three.

The final day of action at the Grand Prix of Sonoma will see the championship standings begin to take shape with Sunday's Prefinal and Final for the six categories. For complete coverage, visit the [Official Event Page](#) with links to results and the [Official Discussion Thread](#) and make sure to tune into the [EKN LIVE](#) page with the day's action to be aired through the EKN TV section.

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