

GERMANY



Report and photos: Timo Deck



Sensational

What a start of German ROTAX MAX Challenge in Wackersdorf

About 70 pilots lined up for the first round of Germany's ROTAX MAX Challenge 2005 in Wackersdorf on May 15th. This High-Quality Hobby-Series has again had a considerable increase of entries. As from this year, the three categories JuniorMAX, MAX and RM1 are more interesting because along with amateurs and rookies you also have more professional drivers. Organizer Peter Kessler was overwhelmed by the way his Challenge developed: "It's unbelievable how fast this series has grown giving us the

possibility to organize our own event. Especially the MAX category that counts more than 40 pilots. We therefore created a special race-mode, in which the grid is split after the qualifying into two groups for pre-final. The best 17 pilots of each pre-final qualify for the A-final. The remaining drivers will race the B-final with a lower score, this way all participants have the same opportunity to race and this expresses the real spirit of the Challenge best." **JuniorMAX.** In the JuniorMAX category David Lux set the pace. Although

German Rotax Max Ch.
Round 1
Wackersdorf, 15th May

JuniorMAX – Final – 1) Lux (M-Tec); 2) Greif (Tony); 3) Hoppe (M-Tec); 4) Castrop (Cosmos); 5) Korn (Kosmic); 6) Severin (CRG); 7) Wilhelmus (CRG); 8) Gnadl (CRG); 9) Siebecke (CRG); 10) Trompertz (M-Tec).
not finished: Kevin Keglevic, Zanradi; Patrick Kreutz, Birel; Verena Stahl, M-Tec
MAX – Final – 1) Horneff (MikeWilson); 2) Matis (Kombi); 3) Holzhäuser (CRG); 4) Bertl (Swiss Hutless); 5) Walczok (CRG); 6) Käsgen (M-Tec); 7) Thum (Swiss Hutless); 8) Van Spengen (Gillard); 9) Hoffmann (CRG); 10) Olivo (CRG).
RM1 – Final – 1) Müller; 2) Mohr; 3) Steidl; 4) Scheidegger; 5) Winzen; 6) Müller; 7) Birkholz; 8) Mikl; 9) Röhlen; 10) Wagenbach.

Top, delighted Dennis Horneff on the finishing line of the Max final.

Below, Junior winner David Lux. Even if not pole-setter, he took both prefinal and final wins



he didn't gain pole-position, the M-Tec driver won both races with no one to rival him. Further back there was a bit of confusion. Meanwhile about 10 pilots struggled for 2nd and 3rd place. In the deciding final Toni Greif took 2nd in front of Daniel Hoppe. The latter is the youngest driver on grid and put in a strong performance in his very first race.

MAX. The impressive grid of the MAX pilots was dominated by Dennis Horneff, a young driver who has already gained experience in the 100ccm Junior category. Starting on

Mike Wilson-chassis he won both pre-final and final. "The race was not that easy at all. During the last laps my engine kept having cutouts. So I was glad to reach the finishing line", explained the winner. Andreas Matis took final second, while Tobias Holzhäuser, who drove regardless of any losses, pushing Wiebke Zimmerling (vice-champion 2004) off the track finished 3rd.

RM1. Ten pilots were heading for the first victory in the RM1 category. Carsten Müller (MAX-champion of 2004) ascended to the RM1 proved

that he had managed the change perfectly. After pole-position, he left no doubt and won both races dominantly. Only Patrick Mohr could match his pace ending up in 2nd place in front of Frank Steidl, a former 125ccm shifterkart driver.

All told, we saw a perfect start of the RMC-season in Wackersdorf. During the drivers ceremony about 200 persons were present in order to cheer the winners. RMC-Organizer Peter Kessler thanked his organisation team for the great job they did in organising the weekend.

Above, Rm1 drivers getting ready for starting procedures

Below left, drivers lineup

Below, Rm1 pace setter, Carsten Müller

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start. He was still very fast, but could do no better than sixth.
Max. Again, the MAX grid was the biggest grid. Swiss Hutless drivers Denis Thum and Manuel Bertl, teammates, put their Karts in first row after qualifiers. At prefinal lights, Thum took the lead at first, Bertl managed to reduce the gap but he took no risks in dangerous overtaking. Rene van Spengen (Gillard) following close behind the leading duo, completed final one podium. In the final, Thum was again the fastest

at the lights but exactly half way through the race Bertl overtook his teammate. From now on he kept his pursuer under perfect control and won his first race of the season. Thum followed in second place in front of van Spengen. Favourite, Dennis Horneff (Mike Wilson), Andreas Matis (Kombi) and Tobias Holzhäuser (CRG), favourites in Wackersdorf suffered a real disaster. They got caught up in a big collision in the prefinal, which meant an early exit for them. In the final, Horneff made the most of his situation and caught up with the leading train to take twelfth.

RM1. Carsten Müller is currently the driver to beat in RM1. But to say it briefly, there is no cure for this at the moment. Again in Oschersleben he took pole, he pulled clear of his rivals to take an unchallenged victory. Sebastian Gretkiewicz took second in both Finals. Lothar Winzen and Frank Steidl fought for final third. The duel was close, worth seeing, it was only decided during the very last lap. Winzen delayed braking too much and went off the track for a short instant. Steidl took advantage of this mistake and managed to keep his third place to the end.

Over to the East

Big Max grid, close fighting where last lap was decisive

Seventy drivers met at the Motopark Oschersleben, eastern Germany for the second round of Germany's ROTAX MAX Challenge 2005, where the atmosphere was more relaxed compare to round one; there were no major accidents and spectators enjoyed some fast driving and great excitement. The weather too was cool and windy but there was no need for

spectators to wear warm clothes, as usual the racing provided all the heat and excitement necessary to warm things up.

Junior Max. Already during the first round, in Wackersdorf, Patrick Kreutz (Birel) was very fast; he was the fastest in qualifiers, but after during the races his luck ran out. But here in Oschersleben, the Birel driver's luck was back.

Again he claimed Pole, this time he managed to defend his lead brilliantly throughout the races. After a start/finish pre-

German Rotax Championship
 Round 2 Oschersleben,
 12th June

Junior Max - 1) Kreutz (Birel); 2) Siebecke (CRG); 3) Korn (Kosmic); 4) Widdmann (Kosmic); 5) Hoppe (M-Tec); 6) Lux (M-Tec); 7) Wilhelmus (CRG); 8) Castrup (Cosmos); 9) Gnadt (CRG); 10) Severin (CRG)

Max - 1) Bertl (SwissHutless); 2) Thum (SwissHutless); 3) Van Spengen (Gillard); 4) Rasper (Kosmic); 5) Hahnfeld (CRG); 6) Zimmerling (M-Tec); 7) Belka (CRG); 8) Walczok (CRG); 9) Olivo (CRG); 10) Friednchs (CRG)

RM1 - 1) Müller (RM1); 2) Gretkiewicz (RM1); 3) Steidl (RM1); 4) Winzen (RM1); 5) Müller (RM1); 6) Mohr (RM1); 7) Scheidegger (RM1); 8) Birkholz (RM1); 9) Schepler, (RM1); 10) Wagenbach (RM1)

final win, Kreutz dominated the final too. He stormed away to lead from the light pulling away from the rest of the pack to take a double victory, leaving them to fight for the other podium places. As Nico Castrup (Cosmos) made a mistake and dropped places, Maik Siebecke, in front of Oliver Korn (Kosmic), went on to complete final podium. David Lux, winner in Wackersdorf, wasn't at his best shape this time. He went off the track in prefinal giving him final rear



Top, Max drivers rolling down the start finish line. Thum and Bertl, both Swiss Hutless, had no rivals

Right, Junior Max podium

Top, RM1 third place Frank Steidl

Left, Junior Max podium

Rm1 final start. Again Carsten Müller dominated. He also took round 2 win

Exciting driving under changeable weather



Rm1 supreme protagonist, Carsten Muller pockets title with one round yet to go. Junior and Max classes see different winners so championship hopes are still high.

Round 3

Weather conditions for halftime German Rotax Max Challenge promised the hottest race of the season, about 75 drivers faced up the torrid situation.

JuniorMAX: Ronald Lackner (Energy) dominated qualifiers. Next to him, on grid 2 Oliver Korn (Kosmic). Prefinal: the leading group made up of Lackner, Korn, Castrup, Kreutz, Knogler and Severin stuck together from start to finish. On the last lap Castrup tried to overtake but he dropped back to fifth. Lackner led the Final too, but at the end of the first lap he duelled with Korn and both lost their places. The whole grid passed Korn, Lackner managed to take second place behind the new leader, Knogler. The latter was unable to defend himself from Lackner so the Energy driver re-took the lead. Behind him a new formation, Severin and Castrup. In the end Castrup took second half way through the race and attacked the leader successfully thus being the third winner in the three race.

MAX: 43 drivers entered for the Max class, which made the holding of two separate Finals necessary. After qualifiers, about thirty drivers qualified within just one second, led by pole-setter Sebastian Silberling (CRG) in front of Daniele Maccini (VRK). Prefinals were held in two groups. Prefinal 1 was a clear matter for Thum who defended his position up to the finish. Seitter, Silberling, van Spengen and Bastian Rasper followed behind. Mac-

cini, on his new VRK-Chassis dominated Prefinal 2. He kept his position in front of Bertl and Horneff constantly. Thum and Maccini stormed off to lead at the lights chased by Seitter, Horneff, Bertl and van Spengen; driving was very close indeed. During the tough early fights several drivers had to retire: Silberling lost his front bumper and Christian Gruber retired with technical problems. Heidorn rocked the boat with a crash in which he got slightly hurt. His accident was not without consequences, several drivers said that they had seen red flags during the incident. Race direction however denied all claims and left the classification unchanged. Back to the race: Horneff managed to overtake both leaders and won his second race of the season. "Who would have thought it possible", Horneff stated after the race, adding "in the practice sessions we had a major engine failure and during the Final formation lap my electric starter didn't work properly, I only just managed to take my starting position in time". Seitter and Maccini completed podium.

RM1: The gearbox category was again dominated by Carsten Müller. Team M-Tec driver set best time in qualifiers and won both races. In Prefinal Patrick Mohr, Frank Steidl, Lothar Winzen, Rene Müller and Markus

German Rotax Championship Round 3 Ampfing, 17th July

JuniorMAX – 1) Castrup (Cosmos); 2) Lackner (Energy); 3) Severin (M-Tec); 4) Dutz (CRG); 5) Knogler (SwissHutless); 6) Trompertz (Tony); 7) Hoppe (M-Tec); 8) Grupp (M-Tec); 9) Siebecke (CRG); 10) Koglevic (Zanardi).
MAX – 1) Horneff (MikeWilson); 2) Seitter (Birel); 3) Maccini (VRK); 4) Thum (SwissHutless); 5) Spengen (Gillard); 6) Punwin (VRK); 7) Rasper (Kosmic); 8) Bertl (SwissHutless); 9) Matis (Kombi); 10) Heidorn (CRG).
RM1 Finale – 1) Müller (RM1); 2) Scheidegger (RM1); 3) Mohr (RM1); 4) Müller (RM1); 5) Steidl (RM1); 6) Winzen (RM1); 7) Gretkiewicz (RM1); 8) Birkholz (RM1); 9) Wolf (RM1); 10) Wagenbach (RM1).

Scheidegger continued to swap places. After attempting to overtake, Steidl spun and lost his chances. Winzen was listed second on the finishing line, but a ten-second penalty threw him back to fifth. Mohr slipped into second place in front of Scheidegger and Müller. In the final, Scheidegger took second behind leader Carsten Müller. Scheidegger defended his position throughout the race against Mohr, Müller, Steidl and Winzen. To the end the Swiss managed to overtake a few lapped drivers and saved himself the decisive margin for second as Mohr came up to complete podium.



Above, Max start in Ampfing. 3 Kombikart lead the field.

Right, Junior winner Castrup. A brilliant second half race granted him top spot in the youngest class.



German Rotax Championship Round 4 Wittgenborn, 14th August

Junior MAX – 1) Greif (Kombi); 2) Kreutz (Birel); 3) Knogler (Kosmic); 4) Severin (M-Tec); 5) Schweiger (First); 6) Siebecke (CRG); 7) Korn (Kosmic); 8) Wilhelmus (CRG); 9) Trompertz (Tony); 10) Koglevic (Zanardi).
MAX – 1) Scheefhals (Kombi); 2) Matis (Kombi); 3) Spengen (Gillard); 4) Horneff (MikeWilson); 5) Thum (Swiss Hutless); 6) America (Kombi); 7) Rasper (Kosmic); 8) Heidorn (CRG); 9) Hahnfeld (CRG); 10) Hrebicek (Mach1).
RM1 Finale – 1) Müller (RM1); 2) Mohr (RM1); 3) Höfle (RM1); 4) Scheidegger (RM1); 5) Steidl (RM1); 6) Gretkiewicz (RM1); 7) Bayer (RM1); 8) Wagenbach (RM1); 9) Wolf (RM1); 10) Winzen (RM1).

Round 4

The fourth round was held on the track at Wittgenborn, called "Vogelsbergring", which is 600 meters above sea level and the highest located karting circuit in Germany that requires good driving skill and a precise line. This was even more important because on Sunday it started to rain heavily and the event became the first wet-race of the season.

JuniorMAX: The Junior category was dominated by Patrick Kreutz (Birel) in qualifying. He took pole-position in front of Toni Greif (Kombi). The prefinal was a clear matter for Patrick Kreutz, he pulled away from the grid and going on to win with a 7-second gap. Behind him Toni Greif took flag second as he defended his position from Maik Siebecke. On the slowly drying track, the final was different, some brilliant driving livened the scene. Kreutz led at first but then the Birel driver had to hand over his position to Tony Greif on lap four. From here on the latter drove one

In changeable track conditions Tony Greif (28) was the best in Juniors in Wittgenborn

Left, if Carsten Muller is racing his very own championship the best in RM1 was Markus Scheidegger (9)

Left, Ronald Lackner (Junior Max)

fast lap after the other and took his first race win of the Challenge. Behind Kreutz drove a determined race, he profited by the quarrel of his chasers Siebecke, Knogler, Severin and Schweiger. Siebecke and Knogler especially put in a fight worth mentioning. While Siebecke seemed to be faster on wet sections of the track, Knogler had visible advantages on the dry ones. The decision fell on the penultimate lap as Siebecke spun at the beginning of the start-finish straight leaving Knogler to take third in front of Severin.

MAX: In qualifying, the drivers of the second group were faster than the first group due to a slowly drying track. Andreas Matis (Kombi) took pole in front of his teammate Peter Scheefhals. Prefinals went off without a hitch. Matis took Prefinal 1 while Scheefhals took Prefinal 2. In the Final the three Kombikarts were on first three grids with Matis on pole in front of Scheefhals and America. Just before the start, it started to rain again; the first laps were thus changed to a blind flight for all drivers. After spray faded, Matis was in the lead in front of Scheefhals. Both teammates drove regularly until the last lap when the duel began. Scheefhals managed a brave overtaking in the infield and took the win. "Of course it's a bit annoying to loose the win shortly before finish but since Scheefhals did a guest start he is not considered for championship points", stated Matis after the race. Third place went to Rene van Spengen.

RM1: The RM1 category found its championship decision this weekend; Carsten Müller (M-Tec) was the one who had won all races of the season and in Wittgenborn



he took two more victories making himself champion ahead of time. With this, Müller is one of three drivers who will represent Germany at the Grand Finals in Malaysia in November this year.

During drivers ceremony, organiser Peter Kessler was happy with the rainy event: "Driving under these conditions was extremely difficult - therefore my respect to all participants. Thanks also to our race director Rainhard Tropp and all the marshals who did an awesome job. I think we have all had enough rain this weekend, and I will do my very best for sunny weather for the final round in Hahn".

Above, A problem too much for Ausritt (83) in Max category

Only a great final lap-passing manoeuvre from his teammate Scheidegger, prevented Matis (81) from winning the Max category.

Report and photos: Timo Deck, Motorsport XL



Save the best for last...

The tough fog covering the Hunsrückring in Hahn during the final round of Germany's Rotax Max Challenge was no result of common cigarette smoking, in order to calm down ones frayed nerves. Yet there was enough occasion to be excited since one expected the championship decisions in the categories of Junior and Max.

The Challenge once again lived up to its name: Fighting only took place on track, while fair gestures, helpfulness and a big feeling of togetherness dominated the atmosphere the whole weekend. So on Saturday evening nobody missed the great barbecue event, celebrating a great season. Organiser Peter Kessler rose to speak, introduced several news for 2006 and took the chance to honour the five female pilots starting this year. Moreover several interviews and a lottery made the evening – which for many ended in the early morning hours – a success.

Junior. With Patrick Kreutz, Toni Greif, Oliver Korn, Nico Castrup and Maximilian Severin there were still five drivers having realistic chances for title. But in qualifying it was guest pilot Lukas Kuhn setting quickest time in the 23 pilots comprising grid. Oliver Korn followed in second in front of Anne Trompertz, reaching her best qualifying result this season. While qualifying had taken place on dry track, the drivers had to face rainy conditions in prefinal. The start was a clear matter for Kuhn. Together with Greif behind him,

both headed away from the grid. The decisive action followed in the last but one lap, when Greif found his chance to pass the leader. For Greif it was an important step towards title. Not less worth seeing was the struggle between Patrick Kreutz and Christian Schweiger fighting for third podium step. Finally it was Kreutz having his front bumper ahead and in doing so still maintaining his championship options. Severin was captured in a tough fight which made



German Rotax Championship Round 5 Hunsrückring, 11th September

Junior - 1) Greif (Kombi); 2) Kuhn (Crg); 3) Hoppe (M-Tec); 4) Schweiger (First); 5) Keglevic (Zanardi).
Championship - 1) Greif, 345; 2) Korn, 330; 3) Severin, 329; 4) Castrup, 325; 5) Hoppe, 321; 6) Kreutz, 320; 7) Siebecke, 320; 8) Widmann, 299; 9) Wilhelmus, 294; 10) Keglevic, 290.
Max - 1) Thum (SwissHutless); 2) Holzhäuser (VRK); 3) Rasper (Kosmic); 4) Bertl (SwissHutless); 5) Gruber (SwissHutless).
Championship - 1) Thum, 360; 2) Horneff, 357; 3) Rasper, 339; 4) Bertl, 334; 5) Holzhäuser, 321; 6) Hahnfeld, 315; 7) Heldom, 313; 8) Belka, 305; 9) Matis, 304; 10) Walczek, 290.
RM1 - 1) Müller (RM1); 2) Winzen (RM1); 3) Grotkiewicz (RM1); 4) Bayer (RM1); 5) Scheidegger (RM1).
Championship - 1) Müller, 382; 2) Mohr, 349; 3) Scheidegger, 344; 4) Winzen, 340; 5) Steidl, 336; 6) Müller, 325; 7) Grotkiewicz, 312; 8) Birkholz, 308; 9) Wagenbach, 297; 10) Scheppler, 296.



him only finished ninth. Even worse was the race for Castrup: "On dry conditions we belong to the quickest, but rain makes it difficult for us to find the right setup". The final should bring the championship decision – now with dry conditions. At the start it was Kreutz rocking the boat since he span in front of the complete grid. With great fortune most of the drivers draw aside just in time. The ones who could not were involved in bigger pile-up, in which nobody was injured. Kreutz now had to give up his fight for championship in the same way as Castrup who came out of the collision with a bended rear axle. Title had to be decided between Greif and Severin. Though the latter obviously fought for each point, Greif was not beat. He made his double victory a whole and in doing so did not leave any doubt to his being new JuniorMax champion.

Max category provided once again the

biggest with 43 drivers. In qualifying it was guest pilot Christian Gruber – one of Germany's most experienced karting drivers – who took pole. Behind the former Formula Renault pilot Andreas Matis followed before the rivals for title Dennis Horneff and Denis Thum that drove exactly the same lap time! Prefinal 1 was a clear matter for Dennis Horneff. He won the race with an impressive gap in front of his chasers Rasper and Bertl. Thum at first was far away from easy going, then lap by lap he gained confidence and places ending up second saving himself a starting position in the first row of the final. Everything was ready for a breathtaking final, which it indeed proved to be. It surely was the most intense race of the season. Thum took lead in front of Holzhäuser. Horneff was third. These three changed positions in an entire casual way. A winner could not be predicted. The decision fell towards the end, when Horneff had small contact with Thum: "My side bumper broke slightly and kept pushing into my front tyre", stated Horneff who finally dropped back to fifth. "This is what comes out if you risk too much. But this is karting", so the final word of a fair sportsman. The last laps of the race were a question of form for Thum. He crossed the line being well aware of being the new Max champion. Behind him Holzhäuser took his best result of the season and even Rasper and Bertl showed themselves happy with their positions. Since in Germany's Max Challenge the participant has to be at least 18 years old, Bastian Rasper was the lucky one that will represent his country in the upcoming World Finals in

Malaysia.

RM1. Not much suprising was the pole position for the new RM1 champion Carsten Müller. Behind him Lothar Winzen was rewarded with second spot. Worth mentioning was the debut of OMP Export Manager Bruno Curletto. Following the invitation of Uli Walz (Racepro) Curletto started for the very first time on RM1. He did quite well in free practise but was forced to start prefinal from last position. A slowing puncture in qualifying stopped him from doing better. Prefinal was business as usual for Carsten Müller, heading away from his chasers and taking the win again. Rank two was a hard-fought case in which Lothar Winzen finally asserted himself. Frank Steidl had to defend his third position tooth and nail – without success. In the end he had to give up to Konrad Bayer. Without major incidents final went off without a hitch, watching Carsten Müller take the tenth victory in tenth race of the season. Behind Carsten Müller Patrick Mohr took vice championship in front of Markus Scheidegger.



MAX Championship podium: Rasper, Thum and Horneff

LEFT, 2005 Junior protagonists.

FAR LEFT, This year Rm1 has been property of Muller. No one really seemed capable of challenging his lead.

TOP, Cheers for Thum. He won the championship by just three points over his closest rival

TOP RIGHT, Toni Greif during Junior qualifying heats. He will eventually not only win the race but also seize the Championship.

RIGHT, Junior drivers ready for the race director briefing just before the start.