



## **WIND OF CHANGE OVER THE EUROPEAN SUPERKART CHAMPIONSHIP**

If the intensity of the opening round of the European Superkart Championship held this weekend at Magny-Cours is maintained throughout the competition, its 2011 edition could very well be the most fascinating and competitive one since 2002, when the European tour of the 250cc karts was revived by the CIK-FIA.

Race 1 at Magny-Cours saw the first seven Drivers cross the finish line within 3 seconds. And while the reigning Champion Gavin Bennett (Anderson-DEA) eventually won, the runner-up Emmanuel Vinualès (Anderson-DEA) regretted at the finish that he had not been informed of the lap-charting and he was surprised to take the chequered flag whereas he was planning to launch an assault on the last lap. Bennett had taken the lead and immediately built a small gap but Vinualès managed to catch up with him again after a few laps. Then there was a close and fascinating fight between Bennett and Vinualès, who overtook each other for the lead lap after lap. Never very far behind this two-some, Daniel Hentschel (Anderson-DEA), Cyril Vayssié (PVP-DEA) and two "rookies" at the European level, Laurent Marchandise (PVP-FPE) and Henrik Lilja (PVP-PVP) were also at it as they passed one another several times on every lap. Handicapped in practice by a lack of running and of reference points with his brand-new equipment he was still putting together during the night before the race, Peter Elkmann (MS Kart-DEA) shone thanks to a frenzied but finally vain recovery. Although he crossed the finish line in fourth place, the German (European Champion in 2008) was excluded after the race because he was declared one kilo too light. Daniel Hentschel scored a very fine third place, ahead of Henrik Lilja and Laurent Marchandise - Magny-Cours constituted the first participation at the European level for these two Drivers who had switched over from KZ. Their débuts had already been hailed in practice as Marchandise achieved pole-position and Lilja was fourth! Cyril Vayssié, Adam Kout (MS Kart-VM), Antoine Lacoste (PVP-FPE), Vesa Lehtinen (Anderson-FPE) and Guido Kleinemeyer (Anderson-BRC) completed the "Top 10".

Started on the same high rhythm Race 2 was somehow less indecisive once Bennett, who was tucked until then in Vinualès' slipstream, had carburettor problems which made him end up in 14th place. Vinualès Junior prevailed, thus signing his first European win, some 9 years after his father François' victory in the same French round of the European Championship (then held at Le Mans). Vinualès also takes the lead of the provisional classification of the European Championship. Second in Race 2 for a long time, Laurent Marchandise finally gave in to the assaults of Daniel Hentschel in the last lap. Cyril Vayssié confirmed his good performance of the first race by being classified fourth ahead of Malcolm Crowe (Anderson-DEA), not sad to reach the finish in good position after his promising 5th practice time was ruined by an early retirement in Race 1. Henrik Lilja concluded his maiden European Superkart weekend with a solid 6th place en Course 2, ahead of Carl Hulme (Anderson-FPE), Adam Kout, Marcel Maasmann (Anderson-FPE)

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For further information on the CIK-FIA, please consult our Internet site :  
**[www.cikfia.com](http://www.cikfia.com)**

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and Paul Kennings (Anderson-FPE).

The only female Driver of the field, the Dutchwoman Priscilla Speelman (MS Kart-VM), landed two convincing 11th places.

The Superkarts ran at Magny-Cours within the framework of a very international and varied meeting in which F2, F3, GT, Caterham and Lotus successively performed on the track. Slightly less fast than F3 single-seaters, Superkarts systematically proved faster than all the Ferraris, Aston Martins, Ford GTs and Porsche GT3s of the Spanish series International GT Open.

The European Superkart Championship will continue on 11 and 12 June in the Czech Republic on the Autodrom circuit of Most.

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