**TEAM SOUTH AFRICA SHINES IN ROTAX FINALS**

*South African champions at sharp end in ‘Olympics of Karting’*

Team South African closed off a brutal week of 2023 Rotax Max ‘Olympics of Karting’ Grand Finals action with four drivers delivering the goods in their Grand Finals heats.

It was up to Kyle Lawrence, Reagile Mailula, Sebastian Boyd, and Rafael da Silva to fly the flag in Saturday’s Finals. The closest fought week in 23 years of the Rotax Max Grand Finals saw teammates Jamie Smith, Kian Grottis, KC Ensor-Smith and Erich Heystek, Kent Swartz Wian Boshoff, and Caleb Odendaal exit after Friday’s Pre Finals.

Kyle Lawrence fared best of the four South African finalists. He made up no less then seventeen places en route to fourth in over-32 DD2 Masters Final at the Bahrain International Kart Circuit. Lawrence escaped a red card in one of his heats before delivering that powerful drive in the Saturday Final to clinch a top ten overall.

Reagile Mailula endured a tough week in the under-13 Mini Max heats and squeaked into his Pre Final by the skin of his teeth. Spice then climbed ten places through that Friday race to qualify 33rd for the final. And on Saturday, Mailula was in even more scintillating form as he disposed of no less than twenty rivals to finish a brilliant eleventh overall.

Sebastian Boyd starred throughout the week, well within the top ten to qualify fifth for his Pre Final only to be barged off the track to retire from that crucial race. Still, Sebastian qualified 21s for Saturday’s Grand Final, where he made up team places only to be pushed wide again. He re-joined to ultimately gain three places to end 18th.

Team South Africa’s youngest member Da Rafael Silva endured a tough week, but he did enough to line up 33rd on the under 11 Micro Max Grand Final grid, where he made up a couple of places through the race to finish 31st.

The rest of the team, DD2 drivers, Jamie Smith and Kian Grottis, Senior Max duo KC Ensor-Smith and Erich Heystek, Junior Max drivers Kent Swartz, who was taken out of the lead group in his Pre Final, and Wian Boshoff, and Mini Max lad, Caleb Odendaal were all eliminated after three gruelling days of racing in their Pre Finals.

“Bahrain hosted a truly incredible 2023 Grand Finals,” Rotax MAX SA boss Ed Murray concluded. “The competition was super tight and closer than ever, with absolutely no room for error right across all the classes and there was much innovation, like racing under lights for the first time to conclude another incredible year of South African Rotax Max karting.

“Congratulations to every one of Team South Africa who made such a brilliant effort in this weekend’s Grand Finals, and to every Rotax karter who competed throughout the year nationally, and in the regions on a job very well done. Now for a little rest before it starts all over again for 2024. Bring it on!”