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## Clash of street race titans at ‘baddest ass go kart race in the world’

ROCK ISLAND — Two giants of North American street racing faced off again during the 25<sup>th</sup> annual Xstream Rock Island Grand Prix powered by Mediacom, world’s largest karting street race.

After a five-year absence raising a family, Gary Lawson of Indiana returned to “The Rock” for the 25<sup>th</sup> edition in hopes of adding to his 28 wins at the prestigious event. Meanwhile, Tony Neilson entered 10 of the 17 classes offered hoping to add to his 20 careers wins at Rock Island and closing the gap on Lawson. Lawson won three of the four races he entered – one at the expense of Neilson – while Neilson added three more wins to run his total to 23 including Yamaha Heavy 1. Another local Quad-Cities driver, Tim Goettsch, added a 12th career win in Yamaha Medium to move to third place in overall wins. Gage Rucker won the Yamaha Heavy 2 race.

Among Lawson’s wins was the Travis DeVriendt Memorial Briggs Heavy race with 30 entries. Each year the race helps to draw attention to suicide awareness after the untimely death of the former Rock Island champion. An on-track autograph session for race fans precedes that race.

“My goal was to just get one (win) and instead we got three. We were close in a couple of others and just didn’t have enough but that’s what this event is all about – great competition,” said Neilson. Later Neilson called out Lawson and his family at the annual awards ceremony, thanking them for returning to Rock Island. “It’s an honor to race with you,” Neilson said.

“My son already is racing a little kid kart and having a blast so it’ll be more of him and less of me as the future unfolds,” Lawson told The Dispatch-Rock Island Argus newspaper. “I doubt I’ll run much after this,” added Lawson, now an engine builder for Comet Kart Sales in Indiana.

Meanwhile another milestone was hit with the 20<sup>th</sup> running of the King of the Streets open shifter race. One of the stoutest fields in recent history took the grid for Sunday's feature after a unique back-to-back heat race format on Saturday.

Race Liberante made a run from back in the field to second place by the midway point and then ran down three-time SKUSA SuperNationals winner Billy Musgrave from California as the white flag flew to win by .524 of a second with Texan Jake French third, 2.441 seconds back. The race featured five of the nation's top shifter pilots and three previous King of the Streets winners. Last year's King, Rory van der Steur from Maryland, finished sixth.

As he donned the ceremonial crown and cape, Liberante declared Rock Island "the baddest ass go kart race in the world" and promised to enter even more classes in 2020 "because I love it that much."

"I am so, so happy that I came to this event," Liberante said. "This is what karting needs. If you are interested in go karting after this, and I don't know why you wouldn't be, get in touch with your local kart shop and get out here next year and have some fun. Nothing can replace this...The whole Rock Island staff is phenomenal here. I can't be happier."

Liberante also won a second open shifter race leading all 20 laps. Bermuda's Scott "Skitchy" Barnes led all 20 laps in the Shifter Masters event for his fourth win at Rock Island.

Pete Vetter won his third Rock winning the Margay Ignite Senior 2 race. Austin Wilkins, the 2017 King of the Streets, won the TaG Senior race beating Josh Lane by 6 seconds. Wilkins still holds the record for the fastest lap ever run at Rock Island, a 31.084 set in 2016. The closest anyone got this year was a 31.682 by Liberante in King of the Streets.

Rock Island prides itself on being the one event where nearly every type of kart is showcased and this year that included three vintage race classes. Shawn Welte from Wisconsin won Vintage Open, Marty Westen from Iowa won Vintage Yamaha and Dave Fisher from Illinois completed the trio winning Vintage Mac.

Another up-and-coming young driver had a statement weekend when Evan Stamer, 17, from downstate Illinois, won two races including a win at the wire against Neilson in the Margay Ignite Senior 1 race.

"It's such a legendary event and the racers I beat are so amazing. To beat Neilson head-to-head like this is indescribable. He's won so many big races and he's always seemed to get me before but I finally got him today," Stamer told the Dispatch-Argus.

He also won the Briggs CIK bodywork race. The family and friends of racer Russ Jolly, 38, who passed away unexpectedly in July from a heart-related illness, used a moment before the race to remember him with a "Jolly Smash" tribute. Friend Michael Welsh drove Jolly's 005 kart.

Racers agreed events like that make Rock Island special. "The support and love he has had is exponential," said his wife, Jillian, who helped push his kart to the starting grid. "It means a lot."

Race teams at Rock Island this year represented Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, Missouri, Massachusetts, Indiana, Alabama, Florida, North Carolina, Texas, Kansas, Tennessee, Maryland and Arizona as well as Canada and Bermuda. Rock Island is licensed through the United States Auto Club (USAC) and is on the ACCUS calendar so that drivers from any country can compete. There have been drivers from 8 foreign countries and 13 foreign winners.

**Sponsors for this year's event include:** Mediacom, Jumer's Casino & Hotel, Hoosier Tires, LeCont Tires, Gett Industries, Briggs & Stratton Racing, Modern Woodmen Financial/ Joe Schurr agent, CBS TV4 / Fox 18 and CW, Schurr Power Racing Engines, RLV Tuned Exhaust, Sunbelt Rentals, AMT Ambulance, Johannes Bus Service, The Dispatch-Rock Island Argus-QC Online.com, Holiday Inn Rock Island, eKartingnews.com, Courtesy Car City, Gas & Electric Credit Union, Rogan Scale, Triple E Sales, Curry's Transportation, Miller Trucking and Excavating, Brenny's Motorcycle Center, Hiland Toyota, QC Gearheads, RIGP Corner Workers, Becky Rasmussen, Quad City Camaro Club, HMG-TB Kart Indy, City of Rock Island/Ald. Dylan Parker and the local radio stations Q106, Fox Sports QC, WOC and WLLR.

**For more information on the race, please visit [rockislandgrandprix.com](http://rockislandgrandprix.com).**

## **Feature Races 2019 Xtream Rock Island Grand Prix powered by Mediacom**

### **Briggs & Stratton 206cc Heavy 1**

- 1, Gary Lawson, Greenfield, Ind.
  - 2, Mike Welsh, Eldridge, Iowa
  - 3, Connor Lund, Dixon, Ill.
  - 4, Tony Neilson, Delmar, Iowa
  - 5, Morgan Schuler, DeWitt, Iowa
  - 6, Evan Stamer, Glen Carbon, Ill.
  - 7, Justin Wishard, Pecatonica, Ill.
  - 8, Matt Pewe, Davenport, Iowa
  - 9, Jesse Clossey, Beloit, Wis.
  - 10, Marvin Borntreger, Elroy, Wis.
  - 11, Jeff Dolian, Plano, Tex.
  - 12, Chad Patch, Davenport, Iowa
  - 3, Ethan Dietrich, Byron, Ill.
  - 14, Logan Smith, St. Charles, Ill.
  - 15, Allen Borntreger, Elroy, Wis.
  - 16, Mahlon Borntreger, Elroy, Wis.
  - 17, Tyler Jaspersen, Rosemount, Minn.
  - 18, Dillon Morley, Moline, Ill.
  - 19, Jeremy Hood, Avon, Ind.
  - 20, Jason Crane, Quincy, Ill.
  - 21, Joshua Skelley, Davenport, Iowa
  - 22, Jerry Miller, Blue Grass, Iowa
  - 23, Nelson Ullinskey, Kewanee, Ill.
  - 24, Joseph Rapp, Bettendorf, Iowa
  - 25, Justin Johnson, Goshen, Ind.
  - 26, Mitchell Staats, Milan, Ill.
  - 27, Matthew Burpo, Paragon, Ind.
  - 28, David Borntreger, Muscoda, Wis.
- Did not start:** Shaun Miller, Claypool, Ind.; Nick Ockenfels, Bettendorf, Iowa; John Pritchett, Marquette, Mich.

### **Yamaha Heavy 1**

- 1, Gage Rucker, Truxton, Mo.
  - 2, Chad Patch, Davenport, Iowa
  - 3, Dustin Blomme, Eldridge, Iowa
  - 4, Tony Neilson, Delmar, Iowa
  - 5, Michael Dittmer, Davenport, Iowa
  - 6, Shane Wells, Blue Grass, Iowa
  - 7, Mike Welsh, Eldridge, Iowa
  - 8, Kristopher Porter, Rock Island, Ill.
  - 9, Randy Porter, Rock Island, Ill.
  - 10, Lucas Hart, Jefferson City, Mo.
  - 11, Casey Jacobs, Colona, Ill.
  - 12, Tim Goettsch, Bettendorf, Iowa
- DNS:** J.T. Noble, Holts Summit, Mo.

**Margay Ignite Senior 1**

- 1, Evan Stamer, Glen Carbon, Ill.
- 2, Tony Neilson, Delmar, Iowa
- 3, Justin Vancil, Quincy, Ill.
- 4, Pete Vetter, Arnold, Mo.
- 5, Jeff Dolian, Plano, Tex.
- 6, Alexander Searle, Plantation, Fla.
- 7, Michael Scharf, St. Louis, Mo.
- 8, David Cole, Grand Rapids, Mich.
- 9, Brandin Moore, Alton, Ill.
- 10, Gage Rucker, Truxton, Mo.
- 11, Greg Mefford, Glen Carbon, Ill.
- 12, Max Geitzenbauer, St. Charles, Mo.
- 13, Rockwell Secrest, St. Charles, Mo.
- 14, Kayla Carlson, Princeton, Iowa
- 15, Keith Scharf, St. Charles, Mo.
- 16, Chris Kendall, Moline, Ill.

**DNS:** Scott Barnes, Bermuda.

**Disqualified:** Hunter Richardson, Edwardsville, Ill.; Christopher Krider, New Windsor, Ill. (failure to weigh).

**Briggs & Stratton 206cc Heavy 2**

- 1, Tony Neilson, Delmar, Iowa
- 2, Morgan Schuler, DeWitt, Iowa
- 3, Connor Lund, Davis, Ill.
- 4, Matt Pewe, Davenport, Iowa
- 5, Madison Borntreger, Elroy, Wis.
- 6, Jason Crane, Quincy, Ill.
- 7, Justin Wishard, Pecatonica, Ill.
- 8, Ethan Dietrich, Byron, Ill.
- 9, Logan Smith, St. Charles, Ill.
- 10, Jerry Miller, Blue Grass, Iowa
- 11, Allen Borntreger, Elroy, Wis.
- 12, Joseph Rapp, Bettendorf, Iowa
- 13, Carter Pease, East Moline, Ill.
- 14, Chad Clay, Sheridan, Ill.
- 15, David Borntreger, Muscoda, Wis.
- 16, Marvin Borntreger, Elroy, Wis.
- 17, Justin Johnson, Goshen, Ind.
- 18, Joshua Skelley, Davenport, Iowa
- 19, Jeff Dolian, Plano, Tex.
- 20, Gary Lawson, Greenfield, Ind.
- 21, Dillon Morley, Moline, Ill.
- 22, Matthew Burpo, Paragon, Ind.
- 23, Tyler Jaspersen, Rosemount, Minn.
- 24, Jesse Clossey, Beloit, Wis.
- 25, Mike Welsh, Eldridge, Iowa

**Did not finish:** Nelson Ullinskey, Kewanee, Ill.; Brian Duchak, North Reading, Mass.; Manuelo DeCampos, Palham, NH; Mitchell Staats, Milan, Ill.

**DNS:** Shaun Miller, Claypool, Ind.

**King of the Streets (Open shifter)**

- 1, Race Liberante, Sewickley, Pa.
- 2, Billy Musgrave, Norco, Calif.
- 3, Jake French, Royse City, Tex.
- 4, Austin Wilkins, Wylie, Texas
- 5, Joe Ruch, McCordsville, Ind.
- 6, Josh Lane, Pingree Grove, Ill.
- 7, Rory van de Steur, Chesapeake City, Md.
- 8, Devon Smith-Harden, Nashville, Ind.
- 9, Jason Campbell, Gilbert, Ariz.
- 10, Cody Elliott, Lake Geneva, Wis.
- 11, Pierce Baldus, Shawnee Mission, Kan.
- 12, Chase Allard, Bristol, Ind.
- 13, Aaron Snyder, North Aurora, Ill.
- 14, Tony Malito, Carmel, Ind.
- 15, Cody Beck, Ashville, Ohio
- 16, Troy Allard, Bristol, Ind.
- 17, Zachary Schiff, Columbus, Ohio

18, Lance Lane, Algonquin, Ill.  
19, Aaron Bromberek, Lemont, Ill.  
**DNS:** Scott Barnes, Bermuda; Chad Lee, Hanceville, Ala.; Andrew Bujdoso, Gerard, Ohio.

#### **Yamaha Heavy 2**

1, Tony Neilson, Delmar, Iowa  
2, Tim Goetsch, Bettendorf, Iowa  
3, Dustin Blomme, Eldridge, Iowa  
4, Gage Rucker, Truxton, Mo.  
5, Casey Jacobs, Colona, Ill.  
6, Mike Welsh, Eldridge, Iowa  
7, Chad Patch, Davenport, Iowa  
8, Shane Wells, Blue Grass, Iowa  
9, Michael Dittmer, Davenport, Iowa  
**DNS:** J.T. Noble, Holts Summit, Mo.; Lucas Hart, Jefferson City, Mo.

#### **Margay Ignite Senior 2**

1, Pete Vetter, Arnold, Mo.  
2, Evan Stamer, Glen Carbon, Ill.  
3, Hunter Richardson, Edwardsville, Ill.  
4, Justin Vancil, Quincy, Ill.  
5, Michael Scharf, St. Louis, Mo.  
6, Rockwell Secrest, St. Charles, Mo.  
7, Brandon Moore, Alton, Ill.  
8, Gage Rucker, Truxton, Mo.  
9, David Cole, Grand Rapids, Mich.  
10, Greg Mefford, Glen Carbon, Ill.  
11, Ken Bratsch, Bettendorf, Iowa  
12, Scott Barnes, Bermuda  
13, Brett Diercks, Bettendorf, Iowa  
14, Keith Scharf, Kirkwood, Mo.  
15, Jeff Dolian, Plano, Tex.  
16, Alexander Searle, Plantation, Fla.  
17, Christopher Krider, New Windsor, Ill.  
18, Greg Jaspersen, Rosemount, Minn.  
19, Tony Neilson, Delmar, Iowa  
**DNS:** Kayla Carlson, Princeton, Iowa; Chris Kendall, Moline, Ill.

#### **Briggs & Stratton Medium**

1, Gary Lawson, Greenfield, Ind.  
2, Evan Stamer, Glen Carbon, Ill.  
3, Mike Welsh, Eldridge, Iowa  
4, Tony Neilson, Delmar, Iowa  
5, Ashton Wheeler, Donahue, Iowa  
6, Justin Wishard, Pocatonia, Ill.  
7, Marvin Borntreger, Elroy, Wis.  
8, Joshua Skelley, Davenport, Iowa  
9, Aaron Snyder, North Aurora, Ill.  
10, Dillon Morley, Moline, Ill.  
11, Allen Borntreger, Elroy, Wis.  
12, David Borntreger, Muscoda, Wis.  
13, Joseph Rapp, Bettendorf, Iowa  
14, Matt Pewe, Davenport, Iowa  
15, Brodie Myer, Leamington, Ontario, Canada  
16, Mahlon Borntreger, Elroy, Wis.  
**DNS:** Chandler Grave, Hannibal, Mo.

#### **Yamaha Medium**

1, Tim Goetsch, Bettendorf, Iowa  
2, Gage Rucker, Truxton, Mo.  
3, Mike Welsh, Eldridge, Iowa  
4, Tony Neilson, Delmar, Iowa  
5, Dustin Bloome, Eldridge, Iowa  
6, Michael Dittmer, Davenport, Iowa  
7, Aaron Bromberek, Lemont, Ill.

**TaG Senior**

- 1, Austin Wilkins, Wylie, Tex.
- 2, Josh Lane, Pingree Grove, Ill.
- 3, Aaron Snyder, North Aurora, Ill.
- 4, Aaron Bromberek, Lemont, Ill.
- 5, Ricardo Nunes, Marlbororough, Mass.
- 6, Justin Dittrich, West Babylon, NY
- 7, Marciano Dos Santos, South Yarmouth, Mass.
- 8, Gregory Dos Santos, Oelham, NH
- 9, Keith Scharf, Kirkwood, Mo.
- 10, Hugo Armendartz, Weyland, Mass.
- 11, Tobe Armendartz, Boston, Mass.
- 12, Devon Smith-Harden, Nashville, Ind.
- 13, Rockwell Secrest, St. Charles, Mo.

**Briggs & Stratton-CIK bodywork**

- 1, Evan Stamer, Glen Carbon, Ill.
- 2, Justin Wishard, Pecatonica, Ill.
- 3, Ashton Wheeler, Donahue, Iowa
- 4, Mike Welsh, Eldridge, Iowa
- 5, Scott Barnes, Bermuda
- 6, Brodie Myer, Leamington, Ontario, Canada
- 7, Hunter Richardson, Edwardsville, Ill.
- 8, Don Newman, Coal Valley, Ill.
- 9, Gage Rucker, Truxton, Mo.
- 10, Carter Pease, East Moline, Ill.
- 11, Ethan Dietrich, Byron, Ill.
- 12, Jesse Clossey, Beloit, Wis.
- 13, Matthew Burpo, Paragon, Ind.

**125cc Shifter Masters**

- 1, Scott Barnes, Bermuda
  - 2, Lance Lane, Algonquin, Ill.
  - 3, Jason Campbell, Gilbert, Ariz.
  - 4, Christopher Rock, Kerhonkson, NY
  - 5, Troy Allard, Bristol, Ind.
  - 6, Tim Hannen, Cuddebackville, NY
  - 7, Chad Lee, Hanceville, Alab.
  - 8, Chris Worthington, Franklin, Ind.
  - 9, Fred Robertson, London, Ohio.
- DNS:** David Davis, Warrensburg, Mo.

**Vintage Open**

- 1, Shawn Welte, Onalaska, Wis.
  - 2, Nathan Hamilton, Ursa, Ill.
  - 3, Steve White, Richland Center, Wis.
- DNS:** Dave Fisher, Milan; Bart Miller, Kokomo, Ind.

**Vintage MAC**

- 1, Dave Fisher, Milan, Ill.
  - 2, Mark D'Elia, Lewiston, NY
  - 3, Tom Day, Galesburg, Ill.
  - 4, Randy Duncalf, Taylor Ridge, Ill.
  - 5, Aaron Kruger, Lincoln, Ill.
  - 6, Adam Kruger, Streator, Ill.
  - 7, Gene Lang, Kewanee, Ill.
- DNS:** Gary Wlodarsky, Wellington, Ohio.

**Vintage Yamaha**

- 1, Marty Westen, Washington, Iowa
- 2, Ken Woolridge, Urbana, Ill.
- 3, J.T. Noble, Holts Summit, Mo.
- 4, Kirk Gustafson, Moline, Ill.
- 5, Matt Arp, Davenport, Iowa
- 6, Jimmy Yeager, East Moline, Ill.

- 7, Josh Schmidt, Oswego, Ill.
- 8, Reginald Rowsey, Quincy, Ill.
- 9, Becky Rasmussen, Davenport, Iowa.

#### **Briggs & Stratton Masters**

- 1, Gary Lawson, Greenfield, Ind.
- 2, Tony Neilson, Delmar, Iowa
- 3, Jeff Dolian, Plano, Tex.
- 4, Mike Welsh, Eldridge, Iowa
- 5, Morgan Schuler, DeWitt, Iowa
- 6, Jeremy Hood, Avon, Ind.
- 7, Don Newman, Coal Valley, Ill.
- 8, Jerry Miller, Blue Grass, Iowa
- 9, Jason Crave, Quincy, Ill.
- 10, Chad Clay, Sheridan, Ill.
- 11, Ken Bratsch, Bettendorf, Iowa
- 12, Mark Cerk, Franklin, Ill.
- 13, John Pritchett, Marquette, Mich.
- 14, Andy Vest, Madison, Tenn.
- 15, Matt Robinson, Gallatin, Tenn.
- 16, Marcelo De Campos, Pelham, NH
- 17, Robert Snyder, Fulton, Ill.
- 18, Jacob Wright, Wayzata, Minn.

**DNS:** Shaun Miller, Claypool, Ind.; Brian Duchak, North Reading, Minn.

**DQ:** Jamie Bradford, Mount Juliet, Tenn.; Matthew Burpo, Paragon, Ind.; Ken Paulson, Beloit, Wis. (failure to weigh)

#### **125cc Open Shifter**

- 1, Race Liberante, Sewickley, Pa.
- 2, Austin Wilkins, Wylie, Texas
- 3, Devon Smith-Harden, Nashville, Ind.
- 4, Joe Ruch, McCordsville, Ind.
- 5, Scott Barnes, Bermuda
- 6, Cody Elliott, Lake Geneva, Wis.
- 7, Chase Allard, Bristol, Ind.
- 8, Andrew Bujdoso, Gerard, Ohio
- 9, Pierce Baldus, Shawnee Mission, Kan.
- 10, Rory van der Steur, Chesapeake City, Md.

**DNS:** Josh Lane, Pingree Grove, Ill.; Aaron Bromberek, Lemont, Ill.

#### **Margay Ignite Masters**

- 1, Tony Neilson, Delmar, Iowa
- 2, Pete Vetter, Arnold, Mo.
- 3, Jeff Dolian, Plano, Tex.
- 4, Scott Barnes, Bermuda
- 5, Keith Scharf, St. Louis, Mo.
- 6, David Cole, Grand Rapids, Mich.
- 7, Tim Hannen, Cuddebackville, NY
- 8, Adam Sullivan, NA
- 9, Ken Bratsch, Bettendorf, Iowa
- 10, Gerald Locke, Concord, NC
- 11, Greg Jaspersen, Rosemount, Minn.

**DNS:** Brett Diercks, Bettendorf, Iowa; Brandon Moore, Alton, Ill.; Greg Mefford, Glen Carbon, Ill.