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## **Who will make history at the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Xtreem Rock Island Grand Prix powered by Mediacom?**

ROCK ISLAND — When you have raced every Labor Day weekend for 25 years, the highlights tend to pile up. But competitors in this year's version of the Xtreem Rock Island Grand Prix powered by Mediacom, world's largest karting street race, could make some history of their own.

Tony Neilson, one of the nation's top kart-racing talents from nearby Delmar, Iowa currently sits second in the all-time Rock Island win list with 17, trailing only legendary Gary Lawson who has 25. But Neilson could put a good dent in that spread after entering his Margay machine in 10 of this year's 17 races. He and his team have proven before that multiple wins are possible, stacking up six wins in 2015.

Another race to watch is the 20<sup>th</sup> running of the King of the Streets open shifter race with a stellar field already registered with some last-minute additions still expected. Californian Billy Musgrave and Jake French from Texas, who finished 1-2 at the final race of the Superkarts! USA Pro Series, will try to keep Rory Van der Steur from Maryland from repeating as King of the Streets. Scott "Skitchy" Barnes from Bermuda, a multi-time winner at Rock Island who has never been King, is also expected in the field again. Josh Lane from Illinois, who was crowned King in 2015, is back as is Texan Austin Wilkins, who won the crown in 2017 and holds the track's fast lap record. Joe Janowski who won the inaugural King of the Streets race in Oklahoma City, will be on hand to crown the new king.

Another highlight of the weekend is always the Briggs Heavy Travis DeVriendt Memorial race – the first race of the day on Sunday. The race each year helps to draw attention to suicide awareness after the untimely death of former Rock Island champion and Quad-Citizen. An on-track autograph session for race fans will precede that race.

The Margay Ignite out-of-the box package will also be featuring in three races this year. This weekend also includes three races featuring vintage karts from 1984 or earlier. An increase in entries this year should result in some exciting racing from these racers who still race their classic machines for the love of the sport.

But when you've had top quality racing for 25 years, ironman efforts, long distances traveled and historic achievements are not unusual.

In 1998 Jason Birdsell was the original ironman, entering 9 classes and winning five of them while coming close in several others. Alan Rudolph has won the King of the Streets crown five times

Nelson Phillippe came over from France to win at Rock Island. Then in 2004 he became the youngest driver to ever compete in Champ Car – which later merged with IndyCar. In 2009 Phillippe announced that his new "I Drive Green" race team would field the first carbon neutral entry in the Indianapolis 500.

While Phillippe came a long way to win at The Rock, Michele Bumgardner came even farther. She was the first woman to win here in 2008 and repeated the feat the next year. The Filipino driver was known as the Asian Karting Queen and became Rock Island's 8<sup>th</sup> foreign-born winner. There have now been 12.

Joey Hand was an early winner at Rock Island and went on to a storied career in sports car racing. He won the Rolex 24 at Daytona and 12 hours of Sebring on his way to the ALMS GT Driver's Championship. In his first start at the legendary 24 Hours of LeMans he finished third.

In 2002, Scott Speed won the coveted King of the Streets title. It was the last kart race he ever ran and he called it his greatest karting victory. With support from Red Bull he moved quickly up the motorsports ladder to become the first American in decades to race in Formula 1. He later raced with NASCAR and Formula E, twice was in the X Games and for the last several years has run the Red Bull Global Rallycross Championship.

IndyCar drivers Graham Rahal and Conor Daly have also competed at Rock Island.

Rock Island has also had competitors go on to successful motorsports careers outside the cockpit.

Anna Chatten raced here with her father when she was in high school. Her career has led her through the crew side of the sport. In 2009, Anna made history when she became the first woman “over the wall” at the Indianapolis 500 where she was transmission tech and worked the air jack with Dryer & Reinbold’s award winning pit crew.

Another Rock Island racer, Cal Stewart, a multi-time winner, is part of the Hendricks Motorsports team and Dillion Morley works in quality control for Stewart – Haas Racing, both in North Carolina.

This year’s Grand Prix offers 17 feature races Sunday, Sept. 1. Practice and heat races fill the racing schedule on Saturday, August 31. All racing will be featured live worldwide in a webcast by **ekartingnews.com**.

There will continue to be other attractions offered during the race day and into the evening. This year’s Sunday Car Show is expected to include 50 cars from the Quad City Camaro Club, QC Cruisers, QC Gearheads and QC Mustang Club on 18th Street near WHBF TV. The popular Oscar Meyer Weiner Mobile will be at the car show Sunday greeting fans, giving away Weiner Whistles and samples. There will also be a variety of food and merchandise vendors in the center of the race course.

Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights will feature a full lineup of outdoor concert entertainment. Grand Prix Weekend will be kicked off with a free family concert in Schwiebert Riverfront Park at 7 p.m. Thursday night sponsored by the Rock Island Parks and Recreation Department and featuring the high energy group Wicked Liz and the Bellyswirls.

**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 weekend, including the detailed race schedule, please visit [rockislandgrandprix.com](http://rockislandgrandprix.com).**

## **Xtream Rock Island Grand Prix powered by Mediacom 2019 race weekend schedule**

## **THURSDAY, AUGUST 29**

7-9 p.m.: Opening concert at Schwiebert Riverfront Park, sponsored by Rock Island Parks and Rec Department and featuring Wicked Liz and The Bellswirls. Part of the Thursday night Groove Concert Series. Free admission.

## **FRIDAY, AUGUST 30**

2-10 p.m.: Competitor sign-in open at Holiday Inn, Rock Island.

2-5 p.m.: Pre-race tech/scrutineering open at the off-site staging area, Jumer's Casino & Hotel.

5 p.m.: Streets close in The District of Rock Island.

6-11 p.m.: Pits open.

6-9 p.m.: Pre-race tech/scrutineering, fuel testing open on the pre-grid.

8 p.m.: Outdoor music on the East Plaza Stage sponsored by the Rock Island Brewing Company featuring Alex Williams. Admission charged.

## **SATURDAY, AUGUST 31**

7 a.m.: Pits open.

7-9 a.m.: Driver sign-in open at Holiday Inn, Rock Island.

7 a.m.: Pre-race tech/scrutineering for overnight arrivals only.

7:15 a.m.: Mandatory Driver's Meeting in front of the Argus building.

8 a.m.-1 p.m.: Two practice rounds. Five-minute sessions. Crossing breaks every four rounds.

10 a.m.: Grand Prix Marketplace vendors open.

Noon-5 p.m.: Heat races.

5 p.m.: Track closes at conclusion of racing.

9 p.m.: Outdoor music on the East Plaza Stage featuring Press Play, a Stone Temple Pilots tribute band, and Chained Alice, an Alice in Chains tribute show. Sponsored by the Rock Island Brewing Company. Admission charged.

## **SUNDAY, SEPT. 1**

8 :30 a.m.: Final practice round begins.

10 a.m.: Grand Prix Marketplace vendors and Car Show open.

10:30 a.m.: Opening Ceremonies.

10:45 a.m.: Kid's Autograph Session. Start/Finish line.

11:00 a.m.: Racing begins.

5 p.m.: Racing ends.

7 p.m.: Xstream Mediacom Awards Ceremony, Holiday Inn, Rock Island.

## **MONDAY, SEPT. 2**

9:30 a.m.: Annual Rock Island Labor Day Parade. 18th Avenue and 24th Street.

**Note:** *All times tentative and subject to change.*