

BKMS Racing

Superkart Racing Team



Paul Takes First Euro Podium!

BKMS Racing Begin European Series Campaign at Magny-Cours

The BKMS Superkart Racing Team travelled to the Circuit de Nevers Magny-Cours in France for the first round of the CIK-FIA European Superkart Championships this weekend (4-6th May). Paul Kennings was the only driver this weekend whilst Neil Bagley rested his hand injury. The event was extremely well supported, so much so that the CIK had closed entries on the event early when the maximum number of competitors (60) had been reached. Some reserves travelled, including two Spaniards – great to see a new European country entering the fray. The popularity of the category caught some drivers on the hop and some top names were unable to place an entry, as they were too late.

The free practice session on Friday was a good chance to both re-learn the circuit (Paul's last visit here was in 2004) and also to scrub race tyres. As the session was mainly exploratory, the team decided to run the spare engine in this session to reduce the miles on the best engine.

The first of the two qualifying sessions started very well as Paul posted an early provisional pole position time of 1m 41.885s. The time stood for a large portion of the session until first Damien Payart (F / Malm-FPE Racing) and then Gavin Bennett (GB / Bennett's Coaches / GB Racing) beat him. At the end of the session, Paul was 3rd only 0.25s off the pole time.

Following some overnight changes, Paul went out in the second qualifying session on Saturday morning. The team ran a fuel level similar to race conditions and carried out some long running. The pace was encouraging as Paul posted a number of consecutive mid-1m 42's. He was unable to improve on his time of Friday so had to settle for 5th as Malcolm Crowe (GB / CPC Motorsport - Anderson CSK), Stefan Malm (S / Malm-FPE Racing) and Payart (poleman) posted quicker times. Paul's final grid position was 5th. This was important for a good start as the layout at Magny-Cours means that the field strings out very quickly following the first two sweeping bends.

The first race was held in dry, cool and cloudy conditions. Paul made a conservative start in anticipation of the usual traffic jam at the Adelaide hairpin and, sure enough, a number of drivers went for glory and few found it. The result of the melee was that Paul was in 2nd place pressuring Antoine Lacoste (F / ALR Racing). On the second lap, however, disaster struck Paul. As

he exited the Nuerburgring chicane, the kart suddenly understeered. At this point Damien Payart went past. Paul persevered for another lap and a half but Paul was soon down to 7th and well off the pace.

Paul had to retire and discovered that the front-right steering upright had broken. An unfortunate end to a promising race. The race was eventually won by Gavin Bennett with Michael Warn (S / Team JP Racing) 2nd and Jurgen Reinke (D) filling the podium. Former World Champion Poul Petersen (DK / PVP Kart) had one of his most competitive finishes for a while with 4th place.

BKMS Racing put the work in to replace the damaged chassis components overnight and came out looking for a result in Race 2 on Sunday morning. Overnight rain had left the surface quite damp so the start was going to be very difficult for everyone. Paul again started conservatively and was down to 9th as they crossed the stripe for the first time, the circuit was very slippery. Paul pressed on and was soon in contention with a group containing Crowe, Mark Owens, Malm, Payart and Lacoste. Paul passed Lacoste and then Malm slid off the circuit at the fast Estoril 2nd turn. Then, Crowe hit a damp patch that catapulted him off the track in a straight line, such was the low grip. Paul was then pressuring Owens who suddenly lost drive as his transmission failed. All this left Paul dicing with Lacoste for 4th place. They had a great scrap to the line and this battle soon became for the podium as Lee Harpham slipped back to 6th on the closing lap with a mechanical problem. Paul was ecstatic, his first European Series podium by less than 2/10th's of a second.

This was the icing on the cake for an already great weekend for the team - a new member was born! Paul now becomes an uncle for the first time and Bob is now a grandfather! Paul's sister Susan gave birth to Isobel on Wednesday while the team were travelling out. Congratulations to Susan and Alistair.

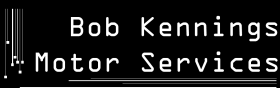
So, another great meeting for BKMS Racing. Many thanks to Firestopit, Bob Kennings Motor Services, Crabtree Chadwick Solicitors and GT85. Next stop – Knockhill in Scotland.



BKMS Racing's next event is at the British Superkart Series Round 2 at Knockhill in Scotland - 27th May.

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