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Kirkwood Nets Podiums on WKA Debut with Walldinger Racing

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Kershaw, SC (26 March 2012) - Walldinger Racing scholarship winner Kyle Kirkwood claimed two podium finishes and four top-10s as he made his WKA Manufacturer's Cup Series debut at the Zoom Zoom Nationals held this weekend at Carolina Motorsports Park in Kershaw, South Carolina.

Kirkwood was a busy racer on the weekend, competing in both the Komet Jr. Heavy and Yamaha Jr. Lite events under the watchful guidance of Walldinger Racing Team Manager Tim Pappas.

Each class holds qualifying, with those times setting the order for a pre-Final sprint, which in turn then marks the grid for the all-important Final event.

After qualifying third to net a second row start for the Komet Jr. Pre-Final, the class made two failed attempts at a green flag start and per WKA rules, when the leaders cannot bring the field to the green at the proper speed and in correct formation, the second row is moved up to the front to lead the class to the start.

So, in just his first WKA Manufacturer's Cup event, Kirkwood quickly found himself leading 34 karts to the green flag. The young racer was up to the task, and used the inside line to his advantage as he maintained first place to lead the first lap of the race.

Unrelenting pressure saw him eventually cede the lead, but a clean and consistent run netted a second place finish with the No. 29 Arrow machine for the Floridian, which landed him on the outside pole for the start of the 12-lap Final.

Making his first WKA final appearance, Kirkwood didn't have the start that he wanted, dropping to fourth after the opening lap, but was back up to third the next time by. The top-four karts would run nose-to-tail throughout the following laps and just before the ½ way point, Kirkwood made a pass into Turn 5 to take over the second position. He stayed glued to the bumper of the leader for the rest of the race and would finish second to claim a podium result in just his first WKA Manufacturer's Cup event.

Meanwhile, Kirkwood jumping back into the Yamaha Junior Lite division for qualifying, Kirkwood took the outside pole with a time of 51.389-seconds in a very competitive class of 40 karts. The Pre-Final race saw Kirkwood run as low as ninth before making a strong close and finishing sixth, netting a row 3 start for the Final.

The start of the Final saw Kirkwood make a great start, moving into fourth place by Turn 4. The top-six karts would run close together as the pack developed a gap over the rest of the

40-kart field. Kirkwood despite holding on to fourth for much of the race, it was not to be another podium for Kirkwood as he ultimately finished sixth at the checkered flag.

Having shown well on Saturday, Kirkwood hoped for similar results on Sunday as he campaigned both the the Komet Jr. Lite and Yamaha Junior Heavy classes.

Kirkwood was once again off to a fast start – qualifying third on the Komet Jr. Lite grid and finishing fourth in the pre-final to net a row 2 start for the Final.



Kirkwood had another great start in the Final, moving up to third before getting a rude introduction to the often rough and tumble WKA karting ranks as he was punted off track and fell to 17th. Showing great poise and determination behind the wheel of the No. 29 Arrow, Kirkwood stayed focused, returning to the fray to pas his way up to 10th at the finish.

The Yamaha Junior Heavy category would see Kirkwood qualify sixth and start the Pre-Final from the third row. Several karts ended up together in Turn 1 and Kirkwood emerged from the cluster of karts in 11th. Once again having to charge forward, Kirkwood put his head down to run another set of clean, flying laps and worked his way back up to finish sixth.

Starting the Final from the third row, Kirkwood got shuffled back to eighth on the start but drove his No. 29 kart back into the top-five by the third lap. As the first five karts ran in a tight pack and battled for the lead on the final lap of the race, the three karts ahead of Kirkwood got together but the young Florida karter made like Cole Trickle and maneuvered through the melee to claim second place, his second podium result of the weekend.

“I had a lot of fun this weekend,” said Kirkwood of his first WKA Manufacturer’s Cup event. “I had never driven at Kershaw before but it’s a fun track. It is very technical and hard to pass. The Yamaha class was especially fun for me and I’m really looking forward to the next race at BeaveRun. I’m already familiar with the track because I raced there last year so I can’t wait until the next one.”

The WKA Manufacturer’s Cup Series next travels to BeaveRun Motorsports Complex in Wampum, Pennsylvania May 4-6.

For more information about AJ Allmendinger, visit www.ajallmendinger.com, follow him on Facebook www.facebook.com/ajallmendinger, and on Twitter www.twitter.com/ajdinger

About Walldinger Racing, Inc.: Walldinger Racing was formed in 2006 to support AJ Allmendinger’s motorsports career by developing commercial opportunities and partnership programs.

About KartSport

Formed in August 2010, KartSport is the exclusive North American importer of Arrow Racing

Karts. Owned and operated by professional karting and racing veterans Justin Marks and Eric Jones, and operating out of a state-of-the-art facility in Mooresville, North Carolina, KartSport delivers to the karting industry a number of quality products and services. KartSport also designs and manufacturers it's own line of karting tools and components.

About Sparco

Founded in 1977 Sparco is the world leader in motor sports safety equipment. More than 35 years later, Sparco's ambition for producing the safest and innovative driving equipment possible, is still the number one priority for the company. At speeds of more than 200 mph, and temperatures above 120 degrees, a driver must be 100% confident in their safety equipment. Therefore, the world's top professional drivers choose Sparco, more than any other brand.

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