



FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE
DE MOTOCYCLISME



PRESS RELEASE

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Let Battle Commence

Qualifying Round 1 St Johann (AUT)

Qualifying Round 2 Sanok (POL)

Qualifying Round 3 Lukhovitsy (RUS)

The FIM Ice Speedway Gladiators World Championship kicks off this weekend with the Qualifying Rounds for the Final series. Rounds will be held on 28th January in Austria, Poland and Russia with only 14 riders moving on to the Final Series so tough competition can be expected and the draw has thrown up some interesting clashes.

Former international racer Toni Pilotto is among the organisers of Round 1 at Saint Johann in Austria where there are 9 countries represented. Local riders Franz Zorn and Harald Simon will command the greatest local support but they are likely to be stretched to the limit by the presence of Russians Dmitry and Vitaly Khomitsevitch along with Dmitry Koltakov, strongly tipped as a possible champion this year. Zorn, fresh from winning the first round of the Golden Spikes competition in Weissenbach last weekend, was European Champion in 2008 and is one of the few riders who have been close to challenging the Russian supremacy in this sport over recent years. Veteran Simon has been riding for Kamensk Ural in the Russian Superleague this year so will have some recent experience of the Russians' form and at 45 will be keen to emulate his younger compatriot. Sweden is represented by Fredrik Olsson and veteran 'Posa' Serenius, who had decided to sit out this year's competition. At the last minute, "Posa" stepped in for Per-Ander Lindström who had a crash last weekend. The Swedish duo may both be suffering a lack of practice as a result of the curtailment of the Swedish leagues caused the recent mild weather. The lack of ice resulted in the cancellation of the Swedish Individual Championship meeting at Malilla on Saturday.

Round 2 will be held in Sanok now established as a regular venue and the only track currently in Poland. A surprise entry is that of current World Champion Nikolay Krasnikov who last year indicated his retirement but who has now found his enthusiasm again and will be looking to win the title again for an unprecedented 8th successive time. He can expect fierce opposition from compatriot Daniil Ivanov who beat Krasnikov in a run off for the Russian Championship in Togliatti earlier this month and who will be looking for a repeat performance here. The Czech Republic is represented by Petr Klauz and Jan Klatovsky. Despite their dominance in conventional speedway, Poland is still emerging as an Ice Racing nation and their three representatives will do well to make an impression on the top names here this year

Lukhovitsy in Russia is about 85 miles from Moscow and hosts the 3rd Qualifying Round for the first time at the Spartak Stadium. The cosmopolitan field looks an interesting one with Finn Antti Aakko, Max Niedermaier from Germany and the experienced Swede Stefan Svensson. The Russians look likely to dominate again here with Igor Kononov and Sergey Karachintsev, 4th and 5th in the recent Russian Championships, favourites to secure a passage into the Final rounds.

The top 5 riders from the St Johann and Sanok rounds will join the 4 leaders from the Lukhovitsy meeting plus 1 Wild Card and 1 other nominated by FIM, in the Final Series which starts at the Zorkiy Stadium in in Krasnogorsk, Russia on 4th and 5th February.

About the FIM (www.fim-live.com)

The FIM (Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme) founded in 1904, is the governing body for motorcycle sport and the global advocate for motorcycling. The FIM is an independent association formed by 103 National Federations throughout the world. It is recognised as the sole competent authority in motorcycle sport by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Among its 50 FIM World Championships the main events are MotoGP, Superbike, Endurance, Motocross, Supercross, Trial, Enduro, Cross-Country Rallies and Speedway. Furthermore, the FIM is also active and involved in the following areas: public affairs, road safety, touring and protection of the environment. The FIM was the first international sports federation to impose an Environmental Code in 1994.



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