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CHALLENGE OF THE AMERICAS PREPARES FOR 15TH SEASON

International winter series to reach milestone mark

ORANGE, CA (July 9, 2021) – The 2022 season marks the 15th anniversary of the inaugural year of the premier west coast winter series – the Challenge of the Americas. The international program began in 2008, then under the Rotax Max Challenge banner, which was the engine platform until 2018 when COTA transitioned to the ROK Cup format. Over the last 14 years, the series has welcomed hundreds of karters from the United States, Canada, Mexico and select countries from around the world.

The series began back in 2008 with promoter Andy Seesemann having to overcome several obstacles, including the location for the first event, having to move one month before the scheduled debut. Moran Raceway in Beaumont, California was scheduled to be the location for the inaugural event, however, the facility owners sold the property prior to the race, forcing Seesemann to re-position the race at Willow Springs Raceway. The second Challenge event in Sonoma was plagued by torrential rainstorms that caused the cancellation of Sunday's races, which would eventually be made up on the Friday of the series finale. That event at the X-Plex in Las Vegas was the last official race at that facility.

“That first year was crazy, and I’m very lucky I didn’t quit right there,” stated Seesemann, reflecting on the past 14 years of the Challenge. “Moran was an amazing track and a great place to establish the Challenge, but it was just not meant to be. Weather has been our biggest hurdle over the years, with the rains in Sonoma and at our Phoenix weekend in 2009. Massive rains in the weeks leading to the event forced us to tear down and vacate the paddock every night. Yet not one session was in the wet. That, and the many other road blocks our staff and our competitors have had to overcome, has shown their resolve, understanding and dedication.”

Over the first 14 years of the program, the Challenge has been able to welcome some of the best drivers from around the world, sending racers to the international events and winning titles. Multi-time Australian champion David Sera has participated in the series. Canadian driver and current Formula One driver Nicholas Latifi is a former Challenge champion. COTA have sent drivers to both the Rotax Max Challenge Grand Finals and the ROK Cup Superfinal. Scott Campbell of Canada is a former Challenge champion and world Rotax title winner. Diego LaRoque of the USA

won the inaugural Micro Max title at the Rotax Grand Finals in 2016, the year after winning the Challenge of the Americas championship. One of the last titles here in the USA that driver Ugo Ugochukwu won was at the Challenge, as Ugo would go on to claim the FIA Karting European Championship in the OKJ division for 2020. The series is also producing some future stars in motorsports with Jak Crawford (Formula 3), Sting Ray Robb (Indy Pro 2000) and others all getting their first championship performances at the Challenge.

One of the crucial points in Challenge of the Americas history has been the transition from the Rotax Max Challenge to the ROK Cup platform. The last Rotax event was in 2017, when the series was at its lowest participation numbers. Moving to the ROK banner required some adjustment time for the loyal competitors and teams, before the growth returned. Following the low point in 2017, the Challenge has been setting new entry records at almost each event in 2020 and 2021.

“It actually shows that if you deliver a consistent and quality product, in this case our series, the name of the engine and tire really doesn’t matter. We’ve gone through two engine programs, and four different tire brands. It’s the experience that we provide that is the product. When I started the Challenge, my kids were six and three, and at the end of 2022, they will be 21 and 18. In some respects, this program has been like another child to raise. It has also brought me so many friends and memories. It’s been a great ride and I can’t wait to see what year 15 and beyond holds ahead.”

Throughout the first 14 years of the Challenge, a number of partners and long-time supporting members from the industry have helped to shape the culture and competition level. Rolison Performance Group began with one or two drivers during the first year of the Challenge, and soon became a series partner and supporter for many years. Joey Guyon from Overdrive Motorsports was among those in the beginning, traveling down from Canada to support the program, helping to fuel the support from north of the border each winter. The program has watched the build-up and growth of Forward Direction Motorsports, GFC Racing and Ron White Racing in recent years. Since the beginning, several industry partners have provided support, products and gift certificates throughout the 14 years, including AJ Whisler’s Holeshoot Group, Odenthal Racing Products, Acceleration Kart Racing, RLV and Courtney Concepts. The apparel and unique podium hats representing the Challenge have been produced by M2 Brandwear. It all began however with the support in the early years from Kerry Lynch at Gatorz Eyewear as the title sponsor, thus where the name of the series “Gatorz” originated from. And now, Mike Guasch and his crew at Royce & Baxter, the manufacturer of the best hand sanitizer on the market, helping to take Challenge of the Americas to new levels as the title sponsor.

“I and the entire Challenge have been lucky to have the support from some of the iconic names and industry members from the sport. From the late Joe Ramos and SSC Racing, who urged me to start the Challenge, transitioning to MAXSpeed and Richard Boisclair several years later, and now with OTK USA and the ROK Cup USA groups, all of that together helped define what Challenge of the Americas is.”

Details for the upcoming 2022 Challenge of the Americas is coming together. Series officials are happy to confirm the dates for the winter program that begins in six months. The program returns to final weekend of the winter months from January to March. The facilities for each date will be confirmed in the coming weeks.

2022 Challenge of the Americas Dates

January 28-30, 2022

February 25-27, 2022

March 25-27, 2022

In addition to the west coast winter program, the east coast Florida Winter Tour under the ROK Cup USA banner is preparing for the upcoming 2022 season. Both programs continue to work

together to provide the opportunity for competitors and teams to take part in each series to open the season. The ROK Cup USA Florida Winter Tour takes part prior to Challenge of the Americas each month in 2022. Details surrounding the 2022 Florida Winter Tour will be available at www.rokcupusa.com.

2022 Florida Winter Tour Dates

January 13-16, 2022

February 17-20, 2022

March 10-13, 2022

Helping to carry the momentum into the 15th season for Challenge of the Americas, the California ROK Championship is set to embark on a historic event of its own in just two weeks. The program will host a double-header event on the July 23-25 weekend at the historic Pat's Acres Racing Complex. Rounds Three and Four of the 2021 championship program will be contested at the Canby, Oregon facility, featuring a similar weekend format to the Challenge. Entries continue to come in, with major race teams committing to the race weekend. Registration deadline is set for July 11 with a direct link and information on the weekend on the [event registration page](#) at ChallengeKarting.com.

For complete information regarding the California ROK Championship and Challenge of the Americas, visit challengekarting.com. More information, videos and photos can also be found on the [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) page.