



As the second jewel in the Superkarts! USA's Triple Crown, the organization's annual King of the Streets event made its third appearance on the North American shifterkart calendar this past Labor Day weekend. Held this season as part of the Rock Island Grand Prix, this year's race would include the participation of both its former champions in addition to a strong cast of Pro drivers, insuring a serious dogfight for the throne. The field at the Rock was tough and with a total of ten nationally-ranked drivers in attendance, the crown was most definitely up for grabs.

It was the reigning champions of the King of the Streets event who were the odds-on favorites to win the weekend, however, as '98 King Joe Janowski (Trackmagic) and reigning titleholder Alan Rudolph were both in town. Janowski and Rudolph are both on Trackmagic chassis and they were each looking to return to royalty and secure the accompanying \$2000 first place prize money. But there were 13 other Formula S1 drivers in the pits with plans of their own - ideas that did not include allowing either of these drivers to take home the cash. ProMoto Tour hotshoes Bobby Wilson, Ron White and Kris Shaw had their sights set on attaining yet another title and were all riding the high of successful seasons.

The August running of the Long Track Nationals in Hallett, OK kicked off this year's SKUSA Triple Crown program, an event that was taken by Wilson for the second year in a row. Shaw was equally as impressive in the enduro event and had also turned in a top five performance at the recent Momo Grand Prix. Both drivers would be tough to beat.

With a full schedule of two and four-cycle support classes on the docket, the three shifter classes offered by the Rock Island crew would receive only two practice sessions on Saturday morning before heading into the timed qualifying sessions. Formula S1, S2 and K1 were on the schedule and a solid field of drivers was prepped to go after the win in all three divisions. White stepped up during the time trial session for the FS1 drivers and took the \$100 SKI Pole award, throwing his name into the hat for the race win. White was making his first start for Leading Edge and Mile High Karting on a Trackmagic and what a debut it was.

By the end of the weekend however, Rudolph had defended his crown and would reign over his kingdom for a second, scoring a solid victory ahead of a wild battle between Bobby Wilson and Janowski.

There is no disputing the fact that street racing requires a different breed of

driver. Without the opportunity to test on such a temporary course, hitting the set-up quickly becomes a primary concern, bringing the team's expertise firmly into the equation. The communication between a driver and his or her kart must be sharp and the transfer of this information to their mechanic immediate. Alan Rudolph has been in this game long enough to know what the kart is doing even before the chassis can provide the feedback. He's simply that good. Teamed with his brother Darron, it should not be a surprise that their communication line is fine-tuned. Rudolph was quick from the get-go and after starting on the front, a strong holeshot gave him a lead that was never challenged. There was a single attack from White, but he could only match Rudolph's pace, praying for the possibility of a mistake - a slip that Rudolph very rarely makes. It was actually White that lost his focus, tagging the haybales just before halfway mark.

Wilson and Janowski put on a wild show for the spectators as they battled all race long with Janowski trying on several occasions to dive underneath Wilson. After finally taking over the second spot with a solid drive up the frontshute, Wilson came back and retook the position for good. It was an exciting head-to-head between a rising star and a cagey veteran.

Fourth in the final tally went to Shaw (Biesse) as he outran Eric Nelson (Trackmagic) to the stripe after a great fight. Michael Bailliez (Margay) was just a half-second back in sixth with Brad Boyer (Austin) rounding out the final drivers on the lead lap.

FORMULA S2

Although not 'officially' part of the Triple Crown program, both the Formula S2 and K1 classes were included on the dance card at this year's Rock Island Grand Prix. The dice in the semi-pro FS2 division was a heated one, although the battle was not for the win. That honor went directly to Rob Thurman, the Northern California driver who is fast becoming one of the hottest young shoes on the entire circuit. Piloting the Mile High Karting Trackmagic entry, Thurman was focused on backing up his win at the Long Track Nationals, the first event in SKUSA's three-race special program. A second in qualifying kept Thurman out of the war that would eventually ensue deeper in the field. Actually, he used the unobstructed starting position to launch into the lead from the green, consistently pulling away from his competitors throughout the event to score a dominating 4.911sec. victory.