

Jack enjoys serious fun in the Florida sun

Barlow takes first and second on American debut

As part of his prize for winning the 2009 Formula Kart Stars championship, Jack Barlow had been invited to contest a round of the Florida Winter Tour, held at Palm Beach International Raceway last weekend (20/21 February).

Already billed as something of a star ahead of his arrival, he duly delivered a performance worthy of his hosts' pre-race hype. The event had also attracted IRL star and former Indy 500 winner Dan Wheldon, who commented on Jack's quality.

The spectators and a world-wide audience watching via the internet were treated to a superb battle in the Junior Rotax class, in which the Dan Holland Racing driver was competing.

The pre-race buzz was all about the massive field of 55 drivers, combined with the arrival of Jack and his compatriot, Matt Parry - also making his Florida Winter Tour debut. Their pedigrees were substantiated by the end of the first lap, as Parry led Barlow in a UK one-two. By the third lap, Jack held the upper hand.

On the seventh lap, the tension was ramped up as the English pair touched. Matt slipped to 12th with Jack also losing places and dropping to 4th. As the American commentator noted, *"the party's just starting."*

Jack made short work of the two American drivers in second and third places on consecutive laps, and now began reeling in the leader. With eight laps to go they were nose to tail, with the American Nick Neri's pace *"barely keeping him out front"*, as the commentator excitedly noted. As he pushed hard, Barlow almost ran off the circuit but demonstrated great kart control to keep his nose pointing forward. Which he was especially relieved about after hearing that alligators live in the lake bordering the circuit!

On the penultimate lap, Jack put matters beyond dispute and after again closing in on Neri, made a successful bid for the lead and crossed the finishing line a clear winner.

"That was fantastic," he gasped in the Floridian heat. *"It's a very different style of racing over here, not as aggressive as Europe - and I've had to work with completely different equipment to what I race at home. To win on my first time out here is just fantastic!"*

Sunday's final saw drama right from the start. A tangle in the first turn saw pole-sitter Neri get a clean getaway, with Jack held up in the melee.

Having dropped to 7th he quickly began to fight back, picking his way up the order, whilst Neri tried to nail home his early advantage. By lap 6, Jack was into second and chipping away at the substantial gap to the leader. Despite a sterling effort, a second victory was not to be - but he was delighted to seal his second podium in as many days.

"To be honest, the race was a lot harder than I thought it would be," he said afterwards. *"Nick (Neri) gave me something to aim for, but today was his day. There are a lot of fast drivers in this series and it's every bit as hard as racing in Europe. I must thank everyone who made this trip possible and made me so welcome - especially Mike Fiorucci (Maranello North America) who generously provided all my race equipment; Bill Wright (FWT) and Carolynn Hoy (FKS) who put the deal together for me to come out and race. I hope I made a good impression because I'd love to do this again."*

Jack kicks off his attempt to win the prestigious Euro Max championship on 27/28 March at Salbris in France. In the interim, you can also learn more about Jack and his racing career by visiting www.jackbarlow.co.uk

FOR MORE INFORMATION, INTERVIEWS & IMAGES

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