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**EMX 250 and EMX Open European Championship:
Benistant and Kutsar victorious in Riga**

Rounds three and two of the **EMX250** and the **EMX Open** Championships have concluded yesterday at the round of Riga, as **Thibault Benistant** of **Hutten Metaal Yamaha Racing** claimed his second round victory in the 250 class and **Karel Kutsar** clinched the overall in the **EMX Open** and became the new championship leader.



It was a perfect day for **Thibault Benistant** who once again put his **Hutten Metaal Yamaha** machine at the front of the field going on to claim both race victories, the overall and extend his championship lead to 24 points.



The opening EMX250 race started with drama on the first turn, which saw Jorgen-Matthias Talviku of ASA United Husqvarna getting caught up in that as well. Though at the front of the field it was Tom Guyon who was fastest out of the gate, closely followed by Benistant, Meico Vettik and the second Hutten Metaal Yamaha Racing rider Gianluca Facchetti. Rockstar Energy Husqvarna Factory's Kay de Wolf didn't have the best opening race with a big crash that saw him finish in 14th position in the race. Guyon then led the race until lap 10, when Benistant was finally able to find a way past, with Vettik keeping control of the 3rd place position throughout the race. But before that we saw a nice battle between Facchetti, Maximilian Spies and Tim Edberg, with Edberg eventually finding his past both riders to claim P5, though that's not where he finished race. Meanwhile previous round race 2 winner, Husqvarna Junior Racing Maddii rider Mattia Guadagnini was pushing hard, after not the best start the Italian had to may his way through the field from outside the top 10. He eventually finished the race in 4th position which was a great comeback for the rider. Isak Gifting, previous round podium finisher also had a tough race 1 here in Latvia. After starting outside the top 20, he spent the entire race picking off riders, in order to salvage valuable points. By the end of the race he crossed the line in P12, not where he wanted to be.

In race 2, it was Benistant with the holeshot but Bastian Boegh Damm from WZ Racing moved quickly into the lead and even led for a brief 3 laps before being passed by Benistant who was on a mission to add yet another overall victory to his championship tally. Joel Rizzi of PAR Homes RFX Husqvarna also got a good start and was running in the top 5, all while Guyon had a dramatic fall, flipping his bike before a jump in the second lap, which put him out for the rest of the race. Boegh Damm then managed to hold on to second for a couple of laps, before being caught by Isak Gifting, who was obviously keen to make a comeback from a poor first race result. Throughout the race Boegh Damm continued to fall down the order, eventually finishing in 8th place. Gianluca Facchetti also had a good start in the second race, holding on to third for a couple of laps, before eventually making a few mistakes which saw him drop down the order to finish in P12. It



was a bad race for Guadagnini who crossed the line on the opening lap in P34 having to put in a lot of work in order to collect some valuable championship points. Towards the end of the race Edberg and de Wolf had a nice battle for P4, with the young Dutch rider able to fend off Edberg despite his challenges. In the end it was Benistant who took another race win in Kegums, with a comfortable 07.259 lead over Gifting in P2 and Hakon Fredriksen of Yamaha SM Action MC Migliori J1 Racing who had a fantastic ride to finish 3rd.

Overall, it was Thibault Benistant who claimed yet another round victory with a perfect score in both races, meanwhile second overall was Meico Vettik, who claimed his first career podium in the EMX class, and last but not least, on the third step of the podium was Isak Gifting who turned things around in the second race for a strong finish.

EMX250 - Race 1 - Top 10 Classification: 1. Thibault Benistant (FRA, Yamaha), 30:36.973; 2. Tom Guyon (FRA, KTM), +0:11.612; 3. Meico Vettik (EST, KTM), +0:20.515; 4. Mattia Guadagnini (ITA, Husqvarna), +0:24.836; 5. Lorenzo Locurcio (VEN, Kawasaki), +0:31.357; 6. Maximilian Spies (GER, Husqvarna), +0:37.601; 7. Liam Everts (BEL, KTM), +0:40.914; 8. Camden Mc Lellan (RSA, Husqvarna), +0:45.080; 9. Tim Edberg (SWE, Yamaha), +0:23.998; 10. Hakon Fredriksen (NOR, Yamaha), +0:47.751.

EMX250 - Race 2 - Top 10 Classification: 1. Thibault Benistant (FRA, Yamaha), 31:07.585; 2. Isak Gifting (SWE, KTM), +0:07.259; 3. Hakon Fredriksen (NOR, Yamaha), +0:13.403; 4. Kay de Wolf (NED, Husqvarna), +0:16.449; 5. Tim Edberg (SWE, Yamaha), +0:23.699; 6. Meico Vettik (EST, KTM), +0:32.173; 7. Jorgen-Matthias Talviku (EST, Husqvarna), +0:32.693; 8. Bastian Boegh Damm (DEN, KTM), +0:36.312; 9. Maximilian Spies (GER, Husqvarna), +0:39.209; 10. Tomass Sileika (LAT, KTM), +0:40.940.

EMX250 - Overall Top 10 Classification: 1. Thibault Benistant (FRA, YAM), 50 points; 2. Meico Vettik (EST, KTM), 35 p.; 3. Isak Gifting (SWE, KTM), 31 p.; 4. Hakon Fredriksen (NOR, YAM), 31 p.; 5. Tim Edberg (SWE, YAM), 28 p.; 6. Maximilian Spies (GER, HUS), 27 p.; 7. Kay de Wolf (NED, HUS), 25 p.; 8. Mattia Guadagnini (ITA, HUS), 25 p.; 9. Liam Everts (BEL, KTM), 24 p.; 10. Tom Guyon (FRA, KTM), 22 p.

EMX250 - Championship Top 10 Classification: 1. Thibault Benistant (FRA, YAM), 129 points; 2. Isak Gifting (SWE, KTM), 105 p.; 3. Mattia Guadagnini (ITA, HUS), 93 p.; 4. Kay de Wolf (NED, HUS), 83 p.; 5. Jorgen-Matthias Talviku (EST, HUS), 77 p.; 6. Bastian Boegh Damm (DEN, KTM), 63 p.; 7. Liam Everts (BEL, KTM), 63 p.; 8. Tim Edberg (SWE, YAM), 61 p.; 9. Tom Guyon (FRA, KTM), 58 p.; 10. Meico Vettik (EST, KTM), 50 p.



In the EMX Open class, Karel Kutsar was finally able to take the overall victory with a 2nd and a win in race 2, which also handed him the early championship lead. Previous round winner, Toms Macuks had a disappointing weekend, unable to make up for it in the second race as he crashed out in the start and was forced to DNF, costing valuable points. While the weekend was looking much better for Stefan Ekerold who's 3-4 result was enough to secure him the final step of the podium alongside Kutsar and Savaste.

In the first EMX Open race, it was Kim Savaste of 137 KTM Motorsports who was the rider in the lead as the group reached the first corner. Also getting a good start was the JWR Racing rider Cornelius Toendel and PAR Homes RFX Husqvarna rider Nathan Dixon. Despite a good start, Toendel found himself in trouble early on in the race as he crashed out of second. The rest of the race didn't go so well for the Honda rider either, as he finished in P17. As Savaste continued to lead, the top three including Karel Kutsar and Toms Macuks of Rodeo Racing Team had already opened up a nice gap between themselves and the rider in 4th position, Karlis Kajels. Savaste consistently led every single lap of the race, though he was coming under immense pressure in the second half of the race, as Kustar



and Macuks were both on his tail, looking to steal P1. He did however manage to keep those two off his back and ended up with a win in the opening race. With the top three locked in battle, the race for who would come next was on. On lap 10 it was then Miro Sihvonen, Ekerold, Andero Lusbo, Dixon, Kalejs, Eugenio Barbaglia and Greg Smets who were the riders who occupied 4th to 10th positions and were all pretty close together to make for an interesting race. With a few laps to go of the race, back markers really started to play a role, as Macuks charged for Savaste, who was trying to get around the lapped riders. Despite his best efforts, Macuks was unable to pass Savaste, who went on to win the race.

In race 2, it was Toendel who was in the lead, followed by Kalejs, Kutsar, Ekerold and Domantas Jazdauskas who were in the top 5. As Toendel continued to pull away, Kutsar was wasting no time and was already up in second on the opening lap. Race 1 winner Savaste didn't have the best of starts and was fighting back from P9 ahead of Dixon who was 10th at the time. A couple of laps later and Kutsar was on Toendel for the win, with the two locked in a nice battle. At one point, just 0.3 seconds separated the two, with Kutsar eventually finding his way into the lead on lap 5.

At the same time Kalejs, Lusbo and Jazdauskas were locked in battle for P5, with Dixon quickly catching up to the group as well. Dixon nicely made his way past Jazdauskas and Kajels to move up into 6th.

By lap 10, Kutsar had an impressive 11 seconds on Toendel, who with just two laps to go crashed out of the race, eventually crossing the line in 21st and missing out on points once again. In the end it was Kutsar who claimed the race win, followed by Savaste in 2nd and Ekerold in 3rd.

In terms of podium, it was Karel Kutsar who finally claimed the top step of the podium and was joined by the race 1 winner Kim Savaste and Stefan Ekerold who also moved up to 3rd in the championship standings.

EMXOpen - Race 1 - Top 10 Classification: 1. Kim Savaste (FIN, KTM), 30:14.084; 2. Karel Kutsar (EST, KTM), +0:04.332; 3. Miro Sihvonen (FIN, Husqvarna), +0:48.130; 4. Stefan Ekerold (GER, Suzuki), +0:56.290; 5. Andero Lusbo (EST, Husqvarna), +1:05.646; 6.



Nathan Dixon (GBR, Husqvarna), +1:11.667; 7. Karlis Kalejs (LAT, Husqvarna), +1:16.847; 8. Juuso Matikainen (FIN, Husqvarna), +1:20.528; 9. Eugenio Barbaglia (ITA, Husqvarna), +1:30.858; 10. Domantas Jazdauskas (LTU, Husqvarna), +1:31.164.

EMXOpen - Race 2 - Top 10 Classification: 1. Karel Kutsar (EST, KTM), 29:30.803; 2. Kim Savaste (FIN, KTM), +0:05.842; 3. Stefan Ekerold (GER, Suzuki), +0:15.605; 4. Andero Lusbo (EST, Husqvarna), +0:36.551; 5. Nathan Dixon (GBR, Husqvarna), +0:40.976; 6. Greg Smets (BEL, KTM), +0:44.120; 7. Karlis Kalejs (LAT, Husqvarna), +0:47.860; 8. Juuso Matikainen (FIN, Husqvarna), +0:50.516; 9. Miro Sihvonen (FIN, Husqvarna), +0:54.716; 10. Rene Rannikko (FIN, Husqvarna), +1:13.437.

EMXOpen - Overall Top 10 Classification: 1. Karel Kutsar (EST, KTM), 47 points; 2. Kim Savaste (FIN, KTM), 47 p.; 3. Stefan Ekerold (GER, SUZ), 38 p.; 4. Andero Lusbo (EST, HUS), 34 p.; 5. Miro Sihvonen (FIN, HUS), 32 p.; 6. Nathan Dixon (GBR, HUS), 31 p.; 7. Karlis Kalejs (LAT, HUS), 28 p.; 8. Juuso Matikainen (FIN, HUS), 26 p.; 9. Greg Smets (BEL, KTM), 23 p.; 10. Domantas Jazdauskas (LTU, HUS), 21 p.

EMXOpen - Overall Top 10 Classification: 1. Karel Kutsar (EST, KTM), 91 points; 2. Kim Savaste (FIN, KTM), 77 p.; 3. Stefan Ekerold (GER, SUZ), 73 p.; 4. Andero Lusbo (EST, HUS), 70 p.; 5. Miro Sihvonen (FIN, HUS), 63 p.; 6. Juuso Matikainen (FIN, HUS), 54 p.; 7. Karlis Kalejs (LAT, HUS), 53 p.; 8. Toms Macuks (LAT, KTM), 50 p.; 9. Domantas Jazdauskas (LTU, HUS), 50 p.; 10. Greg Smets (BEL, KTM), 44 p.