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**SEC - Final 4: Leon Madsen is the new champion!**

In the Final 4 of the SEC - the Speedway European Championship, held in Pardubice, Czech Republic, the Dane Leon Madsen made up the loss to Janusz Kołodziej and grabbed the gold medal of the Individual European Championship. Silver went to Kołodziej, while bronze to Mikkel Michelsen.



Before the start of the meeting, Kołodziej was on the lead of the interim classification, and already in the first series he increased the advantage over Madsen. Both were scoring well, and ended the regular phase with 11 points each. That result meant, they compete in the 'last chance' heat, in which Madsen crossed the finish line as first, while Kołodziej was fourth. In the final, Madsen needed to win or to be second to win the title. And it happened. In the last heat of the whole series, Madsen took the first place and became the Individual European Champion.

Silver went to Janusz Kołodziej. The representative of Poland won rounds in Gustrow and Łódź, and he came to Pardubice as the leader of the interim classification of the series.



He was fighting not only for gold, but also for the spot in SGP 2023. The four-time Polish Champion scored 11 points in the main phase, and it seemed like the fate of the title will be decided in the final, in which he could compete with Madsen. Overall, Kołodziej took the last place in barrage and didn't advance to the final.

The fans witnessed a fascinating battle for the bronze medal. Patryk Dudek came to Pardubice with four points ahead of Michelsen, but this year's title defender reduced the gap in no time. After three series, the Dane was the only undefeated rider, and after the regular phase, he advanced to the final, while Dudek finished the meeting with only seven points. At the end, Michelsen won the meeting, scored 14 points and left Pardubice with bronze.

The fifth rider of this year's Individual European Championships is Dominik Kubera. The representative of Poland secured his spot in the next year series, racing only in three of four rounds. The battle about TOP 5 lasted till the very end. It was a great meeting for Rasmus Jensen, who after four series overtook Bartosz Smektała and was fifth, but fantastic Kubera scored 12 points and secured his spot in Tauron SEC 2023.

### Standings

1. Leon Madsen, DEN, 53 pts
2. Janusz Kołodziej, POL, 52 pts
3. Mikkel Michelsen, DEN, 45 pts
4. Patryk Dudek, POL, 42 pts
5. Dominik Kubera, POL, 33 pts

### Final 4 results

1. Mikkel Michelsen, DEN
2. Leon Madsen, DEN
3. Daniel Bewley, GBR
4. Dominik Kubera, POL
5. Janusz Kołodziej, POL

**Sidecarcross & Quadcross of European Nation:  
USA take Quad honours and Netherlands retain Sidecar title**



Sensational USA and Netherlands at doubled up at Sidecarcross & Quadcross of European Nation in Kramolin, in the Czech Republic.

**Quad Race One (Groups A/B)**

Precisely on time the gate dropped for the opening quad race. Joe Maessen from team Netherlands grabbed the holeshot from Kevin Saar and Chad Wienen third at the end of lap one. The grid was huge and the pace fierce as team USA's Wienen went ahead on the second lap. It was another surprise ride by the Belgian Randy Naveaux. He was flying ahead of Saar, with Bryce Ford scrapping with Harry Walker for fourth place.

Five laps in and Bryce Ford muscled ahead of his young British rival into fourth, but the trio in front were covered by just ten seconds.

In sixth was Petit for France ahead of McLernon from team Ireland with Maessen slipping back. The track was rough but totally rideable and there were scraps all the way down the field.



Half-distance, the lead had stretched to seven seconds, with the chasing two, Naveaux and Saar on the same piece of track, and locked together.

Then with eight minutes left before the two-lap board, Kevin Saar's Yamaha expired, much to the dismay of Saar and the Estonian team.

Team USA was now in control, with a six second match until - drama happened. Wienen was also out with a mechanical fault, with all the USA responsibility now on the shoulders of young Bryce Ford.

Into the closing stages and two laps remaining, Ford was still under pressure from Naveaux, but kept his cool to the flag. Team Ireland had a great race, with both men in the high places.

**Result** - 1/ Bryce Ford (USA), 2/ Randy Naveaux (Belgium), 3/ Harry Walker (GBR), 4/ Sylvain Petit (France), 5/ Joe Maessen (Netherlands), 6/ Dean Dillon (Ireland), 7/ Simone Mastronardi (Italy), 8/ Mark McLernon (Ireland).

### Sidecar Race One (Groups A/B)

Two rows and the mass start gave us a huge thrill as the pack streamed into the first right-hander, with local rider Lukas Cerny with Bastien Chopin grabbing the lead. Again, just the same as in qualifying, there was a pile-up on the straight, with five teams tangled up. Cerny made the most of his start, but a battling Stuart Brown/Josh Chamberlain fought like terriers on the few early bends to muscle into second place. Brown knew he had to get out front, and they were very impressive all race long. Etienne Bax had a sluggish start, down in sixth pace first time around, with work to do. The Swiss team of Marco Heinzer/Reudi Betschart slotted third for an amazing race, but the Vanluchene/Bax Belgian train was coming. From a second-row start, Marvin was incredible, and picked off first Heinzer, then Brown. It was not easy, but once in front he held a five-second margin over Brown. Etienne Bax/Ondrej Cermak were also making progress through a very fast pack, eventually becoming involved in a race-long fight with Heinzer/Betschart. The Swiss



was having none of it, losing out to Bax, only to reclaim the place. This went all the way to the flag with Bax eventually nailing third ahead of Heinzer.

Gert van Werven/Ben Van Den Bogaart were another crew playing catch-up and fought through to fifth place ahead of a great ride by the young Latvian Daniels Lielbardis/Kostas Beleckas. The French Prunier brothers were next, with Gordejev/Stupelis strong for Estonia.

Great Britain sat well in the table behind the impressive Netherlands team after the close of play in this race.

**Result** - 1/ Marvin Vanluchene/Robbie Bax (Belgium), 2/ Stuart Brown/Josh Chamberlain (GBR), 3/ Etienne Bax/Ondrej Cermak (Netherlands), 4/ Marco Heinzer/Reudi Betschart (Switzerland), 5/ Gert Van Werven/Ben Van Den Bogaart (Netherlands), 6/ Daniels Lielbardis/Kostas Beleckas (Latvia), 7/ Killian Prunier/Evan Prunier (France), 8/ Gert Gordejev/Kaspars Stupelis (Estonia)

### Quad Race Two (Groups B/C)

The two USA riders in this one were keen to make up the disadvantage from Wienen's earlier breakdown, He was destined to start further down the order, whilst his team mate Joel Hetrick was away with it at the front. As Wienen made his way through, he had a good fight with the hard-charging Norwegian Chris Tveraen and title holder Ireland team member Dean Dillon.

These four riders were opening a gap, with the USA riders clearing off.

Team Italy and team France were strong behind and began to close on Dillon. Dafydd Davies from team GBR retired at half distance after being very much in the top ten mix. Turrini had caught up well after stalling on the line and was also making his presence felt. Eight laps in, and Tveraen sat firmly third, just as a red flag came out for a big crash on the fast downhill. A result was declared, with the USA one-two.

**Result** - 1/ Joel Hetrick (USA), 2/ Chad Wienen (USA), 3/ Chris Tveraen (Norway), 4/ Dean Dillon (Ireland), 5/ Patrick Turrini (Italy), 6/ Lylia Leger (France), 7/ Adam Tucek (Czech Republic) 8/ David Cowan (Ireland).



### Sidecar Race Two (Groups B/C)

It had become decidedly colder after lunch, with the large crowd enjoying life in the beer tent and food facilities spread around. The much-publicised rain had not materialised, and extensive track repair work was carried out during the lunch break. This race was for Groups “B/C” so there was new talent on show.

An amazing hole shot by Koen Hermans/Robbe de Veene gave them the platform for a gate to flag victory in impeccable style. That did not reflect the terrific scrap going on behind. After yet another big crash off the line involving Team Italy, all the main players were safely through and fighting hard. Varik/Kunnas gated fourth behind Stuart Brown/Josh Chamberlain. The British crew did not have such a clear run as the earlier race and had to work a bit harder. They were passed by Varik, but that was it. Jason Van Daele/Eduard Soenens were attacking fiercely in second place and looked very strong once more. Despite Gert Van Werven coming from eighth place through to fourth, he could not close the gap to Brown/Chamberlain, and that is where he finished. A strong ride by Brett Wilkinson/Joe Millard had us all thinking he might ride home in tandem with Brown/Chamberlain, but it was not to be. A very rapid Gert Gordejev and Kaspars Stupelis made great progress, defeating Wilkinson/Millard on the penultimate lap. Jason Van Daele slowly faded but still scraped home in ninth place.

There was little more to be said of Hermans/De Veene other than their victory was immaculate. In the post-race interview, Koen said “once we got the holeshot we could ride our own race, and that is what we did”.

The Netherlands were heading for team honours once again, but with one race to go, team Great Britain sat second.

**Result** - 1/ Koen Hermans/Robbe de Veene (Netherlands), 2/ Kert Varik/Lari Kunnas (Estonia), 3/ Stuart Brown/Josh Chamberlain (GBR), 4/ Gert Van Werven/Ben Van den Bogaart (Netherlands), 5/ Gert Gordejev/Kaspars Stupelis (Estonia), 6/ Brett Wilkinson/Joe Millard (GBR), 7/ Maris Rupeiks/Kaspars Leipins (Latvia), 8/ Thomas Hamard/Mathis Hupon (France).

### Quad Race Three (Groups A/C)



The new kid on the USA block Bryce Ford grabbed the lead in the third and final quad race chased by the rapid Belgian Randy Naveaux and Kevin Saar. Joel Hetrick, Ford's teammate was caught on the hop and had to make his way past to set after his young compatriot. It took him two laps to make his way to the front, but with five laps gone he was still playing second fiddle to the youngster.

Chris Tveraen had been shoved wide after the start and had to do his own share of fighting back. This he did but caught up in a mid-race battle with Patrick Turrini and Harry Walker for Team GBR, making hard work of further progress.

Lap seven and Joel Hetrick was now in the lead, pulling out four seconds from Bryce Ford and a brilliantly fast Randy Naveaux. He in turn, was well clear of a disappointed Kevin Saar, who with one mechanical breakdown already, was not having his best weekend. Chris Tveraen then got stuck in, making up ground as he passed Turrini to move sixth behind Harry Walker. At the same time, Naveaux closed on Bryce Ford, and threatened hard going into the closing stages. The top four were moving away from the chasers, and down the field, McLernon and David Cowan for Ireland were well adrift in tenth and eleventh places. Two laps to go and it was job done for Joel Hetrick, with a seven second lead.

**Result** - 1/ Joel Hetrick (USA), 2/ Bryce Ford (USA), 3/ Randy Naveaux (Belgium), 4/ Kevin Saar (Estonia), 5/ Chris Tveraen (Norway), 6/ Sylvain Petit (France), 7/ Joe Maessen (Netherlands), 8/ Simone Mastronardi (Italy)

**Overall result** - 1/ United States, 2/ Ireland, 3/ France, 4/ Italy, 5/ Netherlands, 6/ Belgium, 7/ Norway, 8/ Great Britain, 9/ Latvia, 10/ Czech Republic, 11/ Czech Republic "B", 12/ Estonia, 13/ Poland, 14/ Germany, 15/ Denmark.

### Sidecar Race Three (Groups A/C)

The third and final race in what had been an amazing weekend needed to be a good one to close proceedings. Barring mishaps, team Netherlands was on target to retain the title. It was going to be hard to beat them, but Kert Varik was going to give it his best shot as he led the pack from the word go. He charged away with full steam, followed by the omnipresent Marco Heinzer/Reudi Betschart. This Swiss crew had been a thorn in the side of



the establishment all weekend, and that was not about to change. Etienne Bax/Ondrej Cermak were fourth, but not for long. They steamed by Varik on lap three, with Vanluchene/Bax doing the same thing one lap later. The pattern was then set, with Koen Hermans playing catch-up into fifth. Daniel Lielbardis/Kostas Beleckas claimed sixth initially, and as the race wore on, converted that to fifth after overhauling Heinzer. At the front, Vanluchene twice passed Bax, only to be retaken moments later.

This was a copybook ride by the new world champions, and as the race came to a close, they dropped Marvin away slightly. Varik stayed strong, with Koen Hermans climbing to fourth with his stand-in passenger.

Brett Wilkinson/Joe Millard did not start well but chipped away lap after lap gaining ground. A very creditable seventh place, with Dan Foden/Nathan Cooper eleventh, meant that team GBR finished runners-up. This was a great result and shows great promise for the new young team members.

**Result** - 1/ Etienne Bax/Ondrej Cermak (Netherlands), 2/ Marvin Vanluchene/Robbie Bax (Belgium), 3/ Kert Varik/Lari Kunnas (Estonia) 4/ Koen Hermans/Robbe de Veene, 5/ Daniels Lielbardis/Kostas Beleckas, 6/ Marco Heinzer/Reudi Betschart, 7/ Brett Wilkinson/Joe Millard, 8/ Davy Sanders/Luc Rostingt

**Overall result** - 1/ Netherlands, 2/ Great Britain, 3/ Estonia, 4/ Belgium, 5/ Latvia, 6/ France, 7/ Switzerland, 8/ Czech Republic, 9/ Germany, 10/ Austria, 11/ Ireland, 12/ Lithuania, 13/ Czech Republic "B", 14/ Italy, 15/ Denmark.