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MICRA CUP MAGAZINE



ROUND 6

CIRCUIT MONT-TREMBLANT
SEPTEMBER 25, 26, 27

**THE FINALE OF
THE SEASON!**





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OLIVIER BÉDARD WINS THE 2015 NISSAN MICRA CUP CHAMPIONSHIP

- Last two rounds of the season claimed by Marc-Antoine Demers and Stefan Rzdzinski -

This past weekend, the Circuit Mont-Tremblant was the stage for the final two rounds of the 2015 Nissan Micra Cup. Two spectacular races decided who would be crowned the very first champion in the history of the series. This honour was earned by the young Quebecer Olivier Bédard, at the end of a season that saw him at the top of the podium five of the 12 rounds.

With its colourful autumn backdrop, the Circuit Mont-Tremblant welcomed 24 Nissan Micra Cup drivers for the final outing of the season. For Bédard, the situation was simple: finish in front of, or just behind, his rival Thanaroj Thanasitnikate, the young Nissan GT Academy driver from Thailand, in one of two races, he'd be guaranteed the title. This proved to be a feasible mission for the promising 18-year-old Quebec driver.

Under Saturday's sunny skies, it seemed for a long time that the race victory would go to Bédard, but a double collision between him, the Albertan Stefan Rzdzinski, and veteran driver Richard Spénard, relegated Bédard to ninth place while Rzdzinski and Spénard were both penalized. Marc-Antoine Demers was declared the winner. This victory, his first of the season, was well-deserved as Demers was towards the front of the pack all weekend long. Behind him were Thanasitnikate,

his Nissan GT Academy teammate, Abhinay Bikkani of India, Jacques Bélanger, Antoine Bessette, Valérie Limoges, top rookie Olivier Pelletier, and Kevin Lacroix, the NASCAR driver who made his series debut as part of the Total Canada team.

The following day, the grand finale of the season was won by Stefan Rzdzinski, who finished ahead of ALBI Le Géant teammates Richard Spénard, Antoine Bessette, Olivier Pelletier and Marc-Antoine Demers - the race leader for the first half. The Top 10 was rounded out by Thanaroj Thanasitnikate, Valérie Limoges, Olivier Bédard, Kevin King and Valérie Chiasson.

In the final championship standings, Bédard finishes in the number one spot ahead of Thanasitnikate, Rzdzinski, Bikkani, Valérie Limoges, and Valérie Chiasson. Olivier Pelletier is the rookie champion, ahead of Metod Topolnik who, despite earning a super pole position during Sunday's race, succumbed to a double retirement this weekend.

With an average of 25 drivers competing in each round and continuously increasing in popularity, the Nissan Micra Cup concluded its inaugural season in great fashion. The stock vehicles (the Micra S model), identical for all and easy to manoeuvre, fun-to-drive, and extremely reliable (not a single mechanical retirement for any driver all season long), the Nissan Micra Cup entered the Canadian motorsport world in excellent fashion.

The Nissan Micra Cup will be back on the Canadian race tracks next year, with announcement of the 2016 calendar this winter.

For more information on the Nissan Micra Cup, please go to the website www.nissan.ca/micracup. Don't miss series news and updates on the [Coupe Nissan Micra Cup Facebook page](#) and live tweets/results during practice, qualifying, and races on [Twitter: @micracup](#)



IN THE MICRA CUP WORLD



MICRA FANS AT THE TRACK!

Passion has no limit! Spectators from Ontario drove at least seven hours to come to the Mont-Tremblant Circuit to support the final Micra Cup weekend. They arrived in a convoy and stood out from the crowd - all driving their own production Nissan Micras, and some were sporting Micra race car accessories. These fans were united through the forum micra-forum.com. They had the opportunity to meet GT Academy drivers Thanaraj Thanasitnikate and Abhinav Bikkani and following Olivier Bedard's incident on Saturday afternoon, they offered to supply parts from their own cars, should he need any repairs to get his car race-ready for Sunday!

MEXICAN MEDIA VISIT CANADA

The Canadian Nissan Micra, Versa Note, Sentra and NV200 are built at Nissan's award-winning Aguascalientes plant in Mexico. Since the beginning, Nissan's Aguascalientes A2 plant has set new standards, being the first manufacturing complex built in an unprecedented 19-month period. A group of five Mexican journalists invited by Nissan Mexico attended the race this past weekend, and also drove the Micra Cup race car on the track at St-Eustache. The Mexican reporters were thrilled to see the Micra show its racing car persona and further prove the flexibility and durability of the vehicle platforms the Nissan Mexico plant produces.



OLIVIER PELLETIER ROOKIE OF THE YEAR!

Arriving in Mont-Tremblant, Olivier Pelletier distanced Metod Topolnik by 17 points leading the rookie championship. Everything was going to be played out during those two races! Two races to which Olivier Pelletier finished in 7th and 4th position, while Topolnik did not finish in both races. It is Pelletier that was crowned first Rookie champion of the Nissan Micra Cup.



TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP WON BY BÉLANGER AND DARGIS

In addition to the general driver standings and the Rookie of the year title, a third championship was at stake in the Mont-Tremblant finales: the team standings, which rallies teams who had more than one driver during the season. The positions were very tight coming in those two last races of 2015, between Perry Performance (Nissan Micra No.86) and BDMS Racing (No.29). Because of the 4th position of Jacques Bélanger on Saturday, and the 13th place of teammate Paul Dargis on Sunday, team BDMS wins the title in front of Perry Performance, Albi Nissan Blainville (No.572), Total Canada (No.220), Nissan Trois-Rivières (No.88), Albi Nissan Île-Perrot (No.61) et United Auto Racing (No.77).

NASCAR, PROTOTYPE... AND MICRA CUP!

Impressed by his performance in the Nissan Micra Cup series, White Motorsports team offered Olivier Bédard a chance to compete in a race in the Canadian NASCAR series at the end of August. It was a promising debut, as the future champion of the Nissan Micra Cup finished 16th. At Circuit Mont-Tremblant, the situation was reversed as a NASCAR star driver, Kevin Lacroix (two victories in five races in this category in 2015) came to race in the Nissan Micra Cup series. Invited by Total Canada team, Lacroix completed the two races in 8th and 12th (penalty) position. Another invitation was the one received by Valérie Chiasson to drive a Stohr WF1 prototype (IMSA Lites engine) in the Formula Libre 2 category. She finished second, three tenths of a second away from the winner.



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2...3 QUESTIONS TO... **OLIVIER BÉDARD**

The season is now over! Olivier Bédard is the first champion of the Nissan Micra Cup history after an outstanding season. Here are his impressions of the inaugural season.

Congratulations on concluding the 2015 Nissan Micra Cup season with the title! Everyone is wondering about the 18-year-old racing star. What do you attribute your success?

Thank you very much, what a season it was! Teamwork is a big part of my success, it is very important to have good relationships within the team, and the fact that it is mostly my family involved eased things for me on the track. The moral support from my friends is also very important for me. What helped me a lot is my sponsors that came together in a short period of time. One week before the first race, I wasn't even supposed to participate in this series, everything was confirmed very fast. The involvement of the organization Les Amis du Grand Prix de Trois-Rivières at the beginning of the season helped me a lot too. Also, another element not to forget is the mutual respect that drivers of the Nissan Micra Cup have for each other. This series is very well regulated to prevent any drivers from causing problems for another.

What are your thoughts on the Nissan Micra as a spec-series racing machine?

I am truly happy to participate in this new series where all cars are equal; it is really the driver who makes the difference. This was the best series for me to participate in because I was able to show what I'm really made of! Nissan Canada and the people around it putted a lot of effort in the organization and it shows. It is always fun to come to the races. It is important to note that the Nissan Micra Cup is a very professional series and an affordable, allowing more people to participate, so it is very accessible. The Nissan Micra is fun-to-drive and has a lot of reliability on track. The Micra is very reliable and the maintenance is extremely cheap, unlike race cars in other series!



What has been the highlight for you in the inaugural Micra Cup season and what is next for you?

My two wins in St-Eustache are the highlight for sure! It allowed me to create a big gap in the championship, and winning twice in one day is something I had never experienced before. Also, my victory at the Grand Prix du Canada gave me a lot of confidence for the rest of the season. It is not everyday you climb on the highest step of the prestigious podium of the Grand Prix! Regarding the next season, I would like to come back in the Nissan Micra Cup series if I find sponsors. This series allows me to gain valuable experience to eventually reach new heights in racing. I now have to work hard to try and go in an international series such as the European Formula 3 series for example. This winter, I will have a better idea of where I will go, but all the visibility the Nissan Micra Cup gave me will certainly help me in my quest.



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POSTCARD



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Christian Meunier alongside driver Olivier Bédard, at the Grand Prix du Canada event.

INTERVIEW OF CHRISTIAN MEUNIER, PRESIDENT OF NISSAN CANADA

Why did you decide to move forward with the Micra Cup?

When I first heard about the idea for the Micra Cup I was so excited about the opportunity it presented. Not only was Canada in desperate need of a spec series, but we had the perfect car to launch the most affordable racing series in Canada. The track is a great place to demonstrate how fun, agile and affordable the Micra is.

I love that Nissan is a part of offering Canadians an accessible way to compete in motorsport, like those looking to transition from karting, and enthusiasts who have a passion for the sport. Nissan's mission is to offer excitement and innovation for all, and we're really delivering on that with the Micra Cup and a race car for just \$20,000!

Now that the inaugural season is complete, how do you think it went? Are you happy with the results?

I couldn't be happier with how the first Micra Cup season went! I want to congratulate everyone involved - Jacques Deshaies and the series organizers, all the drivers and supporting teams, and everyone at Nissan including our supporting dealers. It was a group effort to make this a success. Together, we all learned a lot and should be proud of the fact this series launched so well.

We had almost 30 drivers from different backgrounds - go karting, open wheel, other racing series - and some who are entirely new to racing. It's exciting to see how they compete around some truly challenging tracks and in front of huge audiences like at the Canadian Grand Prix in Montreal.

I'm also very pleased with and grateful for the support of NISMO - Nissan's global motorsport organization. From day one, NISMO has backed the Micra Cup including sending two graduates from the GT Academy to compete! NISMO, and the entire global motorsport community, recognizes the Micra Cup is serious racing. It's been a pleasure to have all eyes on Quebec - the Canadian motorsport hub - for this first season.

As we close this final race weekend, it's also a testament to the quality of the Micra that all of the cars on the grid performed well and with no mechanical failures all season. The stock Micra S was pushed to the limits by almost 30 different skilled race car drivers over 12 races, and didn't fail them.

Did anything surprise you along the way?

I'm originally from France and motorsports is a big part of our culture, so I have a good sense of the atmosphere surrounding a race. But I was really struck by the mixture of comradeship in the Micra Cup paddock. Off the track, the competitors interact in a way which I can only describe as true team spirit,

With Jacques Deshaies (left), Series promoter, and Didier Marsaud (center), Communications Director of Nissan Canada.





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but once they are all behind the wheel, even as a spectator, you can feel the intense level of competition. It makes it really exciting to watch - you can see the drivers battling it out at every turn. This is the essence of spec series racing!

How is Micra Cup part of the marketing strategy?

The Micra Cup has evolved to be a cornerstone of our marketing plans for the Nissan Micra. The Micra has proven its mettle on the track. Without any issue, the Micra has endured extreme heat, wet conditions, and over 600 collective hours on challenging race tracks, and we know this is the best proof point to Nissan's excellent reliability and durability.

Leveraging the Micra Cup on the marketing side has been a lot of fun. We have a great television spot with Éric Salvail and Alex Tagliani - featuring them both in their element! Micra Cup is a perfect complement to our national marketing activities and customers will see elements weaved into everything we do, from our TV campaign right down to our dealers' showroom floors.

What has the response been to Micra Cup in your world?

Since we first officially announced Micra Cup, it comes up daily! All Nissan employees - at our head office, in dealerships, out in the field, and many of our customers - are excited about it. People have questions. They want to know if the Micra race car is indeed really stock (which it is) and want to talk about the series in general. On social media platforms, the videos, race results and our engagement initiatives are really spreading the word about Canada's newest motorsport series - generating a lot of conversation among customers and motorsport fans in Canada and abroad.

The Micra Cup is a really big deal for everyone at Nissan, and I know from personal experience, this series and the drivers have the full support of everyone at Nissan.

Now that the season is done, what's in store for next year?

The full Micra Cup team is going to meet about how to make the series even better for next year. After an amazing first season, we're excited to get planning for the future, so stay tuned



« The Micra Cup has evolved to be a cornerstone of our marketing plans for the Nissan Micra.»

- Christian Meunier.



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THE NISSAN MICRA CUP!**



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Q&A WITH DARREN COX, **DIRECTOR, GLOBAL MOTORSPORTS** **FOR NISSAN**

Darren devised Nissan's PlayStation GT Academy - the ground-breaking driver discovery and development program - which takes gamers and turns them into real-life racing drivers. Since its launch seven years ago, GT Academy has spread across the globe, and graduates have risen through the racing ranks to Super GT, the 24 Hours of Le Mans and F1 feeder series, GP3, all the while working as ambassadors for the NISMO brand. Darren is a big supporter of the Nissan Micra Cup here in Canada.

We talked to the director, global motorsports for Nissan to learn more about NISMO, the GT Academy and its involvement in the Micra Cup...

The GT Academy competitors in the Canadian Micra Cup, Thanaroj Thanasitnitikate and Abhinay Bikkani consistently perform well each race, with Mr. T finishing second for the overall season! Did you see this coming?

Not at all, we of course recognized the natural talent in Thanaroj and Abhinay during qualification rounds and even more so at race camp. We took their inherent racing ability, and put them through the extensive driver development process where they quickly progressed to full-fledged motorsport athletes. Both Abhinay and Thanaroj have the determination and ability to succeed in motorsport, and I am delighted the launch point in their career was competing the Micra Cup!

With two GT Academy Drivers in the Micra Cup series, we're curious about the program itself. How did the GT Academy come to be?

We created Nissan PlayStation GT Academy to answer our own question: «Could a talented gamer become a professional racing driver?» I think over the last seven years we have answered that question many times over. We now have GT Academy graduates racing in Super GT, at Le Mans, in the GP3 Series, in Japanese F3... practically everywhere.



Does Micra Cup come up in discussions you have with people outside of Canada?

We certainly share the stories that come from the Micra Cup with our global media. It's great to hear the stories of on track battles, wherever they are in the world! Personally, I follow the race closely and catch live updates via Twitter where the motorsport community thrives on race day. I love the Nissan Micra Cup. It is a great idea that has been brilliantly executed. The team in Canada took an idea and turned it into a fantastic race series that is relatively low cost with a huge emphasis on fun. It's bang on brand for Micra too.

Will GT Academy drivers compete in the Micra Cup next year?

It would be great if there would be! We review the racing programmes for all of our drivers every year and I expect the Micra Cup to remain on the list of series that the winners will compete in.



MISSION ACCOMPLISHED FOR JACQUES DESHAIES!

Jacques Deshaies owner of JD Promotion and Compétition - promoter of the Nissan Micra Cup - reflects on a very positive outcome for the inaugural season. Without any doubt, Micra Cup is in the fast lane and the future seems promising...

Jacques, are you satisfied with this first season?

Very satisfied! I admit that I had doubts before the beginning of the season when we didn't know what the response from the drivers would be. I even wondered, how many registrants would we even have for the first race? By the spring, and the first tests I was reassured, drivers were confirmed in great numbers. Honestly, today we can say «mission accomplished». It is really rewarding to see that a significant portion of these drivers were beginners or young drivers. This is very promising because it proves that the Nissan Micra Cup immediately took its place in the world of the Canadian motor sport. It attracts not only new rookie competitors and drivers from karting, but also established veterans, and those somewhere in the middle of their racing career development as well.

The fact that Olivier Bédard was invited to compete a NASCAR race at the end of the summer also shows the credibility of the series...

Absolutely, because it is Olivier's performance in the Nissan Micra Cup that generated the attention from NASCAR teams. For me, as a promoter, seeing that one of our drivers attracts that kind of interest is very rewarding. I think people understand that the series -with its identical, almost stock Micra S for all drivers - showcases the true talent of future great motorsport competitors. In a certain way, it is like a school for the bigger series - the bridge between karting and a professional series.

There weren't any mechanical issues with the Micra race cars in the series. Does this further instill confidence in your decision to create a series with Nissan?

Yes, and this also proves that we worked very well with the people from Nissan and Nismo in Japan when they advised us for the preparation and tuning of the cars during the first tests we did back in fall 2014 with Jean-François Dumoulin. We were able to provide



stellar vehicles to competitors and thus show the reliability of the Nissan Micra. We cannot wish for any better testing ground than a monotype series like this, with nearly 30 drivers who are eager to win and that always push the car to the maximum.

Will we see the Nissan Micra Cup again in 2016?

Of course, it's written in the stars! The first season demonstrated that the series is already very professional. Of course there are some things to work on, to improve, but for me, the biggest satisfaction was to see the genuine interest produced by this series. We knew there was a need for a spec series in Canada, but we've proven it with the success of the Nissan Micra Cup! This is the most positive element of this first year, to see that there is really a place for a one-make series that puts the drivers' talent before the budget.

When will fans, drivers and all parties involved be able to know about the calendar for next season?

We are already working on many aspects of the 2016 season. Concerning the calendar, it will probably be richer, we are studying various options for 2016, like why not the possibility to present one or several races in Ontario. We should be able to formalize this calendar for the Montreal Auto Show, like last year.



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CIRCUIT MONT-TREMBLANT RACE 11 AND 12 RESULTS

PRACTICE SESSION

1) Stefan Rzadzinski	No.69
2) Marc-Antoine Demers	No.422
3) Antoine Bessette	No.572
4) J.Bélanger / P.Dargis	No.29
5) Richard Spénard	No.61
6) Kevin Lacroix	No.220
7) Olivier Pelletier	No.5
8) Abhinay Bikkani	No.3
9) Kevin King	No.40
10) Thanaraj Thanasitnikate	No.2
11) Olivier Bédard	No.96
12) Pierre Clavet	No.86
13) Metod Topolnik	No.78
14) Nicolas Touchette	No.55
15) Tim Hauraney	No.24
16) Valérie Chiasson	No.26
17) Yves Aubé	No.17
18) Valérie Limoges	No.4
19) Chris Sahakian	No.9
20) Mario Berthiaume	No.7
21) Wayne Marchand	No.88
22) Frédéric Bernier	No.28
23) Alex Habrich	No.75
24) Ashley Sahakian	No.77
DNS) Gabriel Gélinas	No.23

QUALIFICATION

1) Stefan Rzadzinski	No.69
2) Metod Topolnik	No.78
3) Olivier Bédard	No.96
4) Marc-Antoine Demers	No.422
5) Richard Spénard	No.61
6) Olivier Pelletier	No.5
7) Thanaraj Thanasitnikate	No.2
8) Pierre Clavet	No.86
9) Valérie Limoges	No.4
10) Abhinay Bikkani	No.3
11) Kevin Lacroix	No.220
12) Antoine Bessette	No.572
13) Jacques Bélanger	No.29
14) Kevin King	No.40
15) Tim Hauraney	No.24
16) Valérie Chiasson	No.26
17) Chris Sahakian	No.9
18) Mario Berthiaume	No.7
19) Nicolas Touchette	No.55
20) Yves Aubé	No.17
21) Wayne Marchand	No.88
22) Alex Habrich	No.75
23) Ashley Sahakian	No.77
24) Frédéric Bernier	No.28
DNS) Gabriel Gélinas	No.23

RACE 1

1) Marc-Antoine Demers	15 laps
2) Thanaraj Thanasitnikate	-3.518
3) Abhinay Bikkani	-3.909
4) Jacques Bélanger	-4.556
5) Antoine Bessette	-6.157
6) Valérie Limoges	-6.793
7) Olivier Pelletier	-7.348
8) Kevin Lacroix	-7.744
9) Olivier Bédard	-17.248
10) Stefan Rzadzinski	-29.016
11) Pierre Clavet	-30.411
12) Valérie Chiasson	-32.617
13) Kevin King	-32.954
14) Richard Spénard	-33.808
15) Chris Sahakian	-40.843
16) Mario Berthiaume	-41.211
17) Yves Aubé	-45.695
18) Wayne Marchand	-47.768
19) Alex Habrich	-1:23:00
20) Ashley Sahakian	-1:23:40
21) Frédéric Bernier	-2:04:01
22) Tim Hauraney	-9 laps
23) Metod Topolnik	-10 laps
24) Nicolas Touchette	-12 laps
DNS) Gabriel Gélinas	-----

RACE 2

1) Stefan Rzadzinski	15 laps
2) Richard Spénard	-3.263
3) Antoine Bessette	-3.656
4) Olivier Pelletier	-4.263
5) Marc-Antoine Demers	-4.732
6) Thanaraj Thanasitnikate	-4.896
7) Valérie Limoges	-5.484
8) Olivier Bédard	-7.557
9) Kevin King	-15.804
10) Valérie Chiasson	-18.135
11) Kevin Lacroix	-30.830
12) Abhinay Bikkani	Penalty
13) Paul Dargis	-37.333
14) Yves Aubé	-38.383
15) Nicolas Touchette	-40.239
16) Chris Sahakian	-41.831
17) Tim Hauraney	-50.384
18) Mario Berthiaume	-51.885
19) Frédéric Bernier	-1:03:10
20) Alex Habrich	-1:24:60
21) Ashley Sahakian	-1:29:00
22) Pierre Clavet	-1 lap
23) Metod Topolnik	-10 laps
DNS) Wayne Marchand	-----
DNS) Gabriel Gélinas	-----

DRIVERS STANDINGS

1) Olivier Bédard	394 points	19) Carl Nadeau	58 points
2) Thanaraj Thanasitnikate	366 points	20) Yves Aubé	57 points
3) Stefan Rzadzinski	303 points	21) Paul Dargis	52 points
4) Abhinay Bikkani	243 points	22) Mario Berthiaume	43 points
5) Valérie Limoges	231 points	23) Pierre Clavet	42 points
6) Valérie Chiasson	214 points	24) Martin Husar	35 points
7) Marc-Antoine Demers	194 points	25) Alex Habrich	30 points
8) Olivier Pelletier	163 points	26) Kevin Lacroix	28 points
9) Antoine Bessette	158 points	27) Carl Wener	26 points
10) Jacques Bélanger	153 points	28) Jeff Boudreault	23 points
11) Kevin King	123 points	29) Claude Veillette Jr	22 points
12) Jean-Michel Isabelle	114 points	30) Louis-Philippe Montour	21 points
13) Metod Topolnik	104 points	31) Wayne Marchand	20 points
14) Richard Spénard	91 points	32) Benoît Gagnon	16 points
15) Marc-André Bergeron	79 points	33) Martin Gray	15 points
16) Frédéric Bernier	69 points	33) Ashley Sahakian	15 points
17) Chris Sahakian	61 points	35) Elvis Stojko	14 points
18) Nicolas Touchette	59 points	36) Claude Leclerc	11 points
		37) Peter Cohen	10 points

