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MICRA CUP MAGAZINE



ROUND 8



CIRCUIT MONT-TREMBLANT
SEPTEMBER 23, 24, 25

**THE SEASON
GRAND FINALE!**



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TWO VICTORIES AND THE TITLE FOR **XAVIER COUPAL!**

- Spectacular races at the Circuit Mont-Tremblant conclude the 2016 season -

The 2016 season of the Nissan Micra Cup came to an end this weekend at the Circuit Mont-Tremblant as part of the Fall Classic, attracting thousands of spectators. Under sunny autumn skies, they were treated to two spectacular races, both won by Xavier Coupal, who earned the first title of his career in this, the second season of the Nissan Micra Cup.

Following the qualifying session leading into the first race, the anticipated duel between 2015 champion Olivier Bédard, and his teammate Xavier Coupal, caused a lot of excitement at the front of the pack. The only two drivers to break the two-minute and three second lap time, Bédard and Coupal found themselves side by side for the start of the race that afternoon. Longtime leader, Bédard, eventually conceded the front spot to Coupal, who was on his way to his eighth victory of the season.

Behind them, the battle for third place kept spectators on their toes right from the start until the very last lap. Kevin King completed the podium, ahead of Stefan Rzadzinski and Bruno St-Jacques, who made his series debut. The former Canadian

Formula 1600 champion crossed the finish line moments ahead of Valérie Limoges, who was slightly slowed down after making contact with Bertrand Godin on the last turn. Penalized following this incident, Godin gave up a Top 10 finish, therefore advancing Jean-Michel Isabelle (seventh), Normand Boyer, Yves Aubé and Marc-Antoine Demers. For the rookies, Ashley Sahakian finished first, followed by Peter Dyck and Stefan Gauthier, who was forced to retire before the race finished after a multi-vehicle accident.

The following day, it was an almost identical scenario at the front of the pack as Olivier Bédard earned the pole position and led for the first laps, before St-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec native Xavier Coupal took over, en route to his ninth victory of the season and his first title in this series. Kevin King finished third, ahead of Stefan Rzadzinski, Valérie Limoges, Jean-Michel Isabelle, Normand Boyer, Chris Sahakian, Stéfán Gauthier and Mario Berthiaume.

In the final drivers' championship standings, Xavier Coupal wins over Olivier Bédard, Kevin King, Stefan Rzadzinski, Valérie Limoges and Nic Hammann. In the rookie standings, Stéfán Gauthier, class winner of the second race, was crowned champion ahead of Peter Dyck and Ashley Sahakian.

"It was an exhilarating finale to the 2016 Nissan Micra Cup with a tight race on the track and excitement filling the paddock," said Joni Paiva, president of Nissan Canada Inc. "At the podium ceremony we crowned a new champion, Xavier Coupal, who I'd like to congratulate, once again, for his perseverance and success throughout the season. But it's not just the champion who is a winner in this series. Everyone involved, from the drivers and their teams, to the sponsors and the fans, are part of the excitement and adventure this series offers."

The Nissan Micra Cup will return in 2017, with its calendar and other news to be announced during the winter.

Pour plus d'information sur la Coupe Nissan Micra et ses pilotes, consultez le site www.nissan.ca/coupemicra. Ne manquez pas aussi les nouvelles de la série sur la [page Facebook Coupe Nissan Micra Cup](#) et les messages/résultats en direct durant les essais, qualifications et courses sur [Twitter: @micracup](#)



IN THE WORLD OF THE MICRA CUP



GREG BAKER DISCOVERS THE CANADIAN MOTORSPORTS...

Britain's Greg Baker, former chief mechanic of Renault's Formula 1 Team, who, after having spent 25 years in F1 and who is now living in Montreal, has come to Circuit Mont-Tremblant's Fall Classic, to experience on the spot a national event and to witness take the pulse of Canadian automotive sports. The discovery of the Nissan Micra Cup has thrilled him. "Circuit Mont-Tremblant is a fantastic track. There are a few hills with quick turns that remind me of Caldwell Park in the UK" said Greg Baker. "I thoroughly enjoyed attending the Nissan Micra Cup race weekend. The cars are agile and perform well, resulting in lively and very competitive races. It is truly a great series".

SEE YOU IN 2017!

The Nissan Micra Cup Series will be back on the Canadian circuits next year, with a program of six events divided between Québec and Ontario. The exact schedule will be revealed during the winter season but expect a return to the main events from this season which were great media and sporting events, such as the Canadian Tire Motorsport Park and at the Grand Prix de Trois-Rivières.

THE ALBI NISSAN TEAM #572 WINS THE TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP

Shared between Xavier Coupal (13 races) and Bertrand Godin (2), No. Team Nissan Albi's car 572 handed in an almost perfect performance in the team championship, which is reserved to cars shared between two or more drivers during the season. The fight for second place spiced the end of the season. The win goes to Perry Performance/Hull Nissan team (car #86 shared by Pierre Clavet, Jean-Michel Isabelle, Carl Wener and Patrick Dussault). Total Racing Canada team (#220) completes the standings.



FORMER F1600 CHAMPION IN THE SERIES!

Former Canadian Formula 1600 champion and one Québec's star drivers in Formula Atlantic Series in the 1990's and in the year 2000, Québec's Bruno St-Jacques made a comeback to the race circuits this weekend, having taken advantage of the offer by Team Total to make his debut in the Nissan Micra Cup Series. Having little experience with traction cars, he nonetheless learnt quickly, finishing 5th during the 1st qualifying round, prior to finishing Saturday's race in this same position, following a nice fight with Valérie Limoges and Bertrand Godin. Sunday, he qualified sixth and finished the race in eleventh position, following a contact.



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Q&A WITH JONI PAIVA, NISSAN CANADA PRESIDENT



This is your first year in Canada, and the Nissan Micra Cup was a discovery for you. What do you like about this racing series?

I think the Nissan Micra Cup is a fantastic experience, and I invite Canadian racing fans in Ontario and Quebec to visit the track and see it for themselves. If you don't experience the Nissan Micra Cup firsthand, you can't imagine how great this series truly is and how exciting it is to see these stock cars fighting on the track in service of such talented drivers.

I'd like to congratulate Jacques Deshaies, his entire team, our partners, and all of the people at Nissan Canada who make it possible to deliver such a high-quality racing experience. The organizational team behind Nissan Micra Cup is second to none, and their professionalism has driven tangible results.

Now that the second season of the Nissan Micra Cup is complete, are you satisfied with the results? How do you measure success when it comes to this series?

Yes, the Nissan Micra Cup has found its place within the Canadian motorsport landscape. We crowned an exceptionally talented champion

at the end of the season, but all of our drivers deserve praise for their driving performance, and the suspense and excitement they created for fans.

I'm also happy with our successful expansion into Ontario. We had two big events at Canadian

Tire Motorsport Park with more and more people in attendance at each race – and tens of thousands of attendees throughout the season.

We are seeing new drivers – beginners and professionals – joining the series. That's success. We're seeing larger crowds around the tracks and more interest from prospective partners. That's success. Many of our dealers across our network are engaged in the series, and we are selling cars. We've provided our fans, drivers and dealers a new, affordable outlet for their passion for racing. At the same time, we're seeing companies who are using the series as a marketing platform for their own purposes. To me, it's a great sign that the Nissan Micra Cup is growing. That's success.

And finally, globally, I know that the Nissan motorsport team in Japan looks at the Nissan Micra Cup as a global benchmark for grassroots motorsports. The idea that other organizations are looking at us as an example of motorsport being done right – again, that's success.

What impressed you the most?

A couple of things. I'm inspired by what our drivers are able to do with the Nissan Micra. Before attending my first race, I couldn't easily





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Imagine our Nissan Micra being able to move so quickly. Don't forget, these are nearly stock cars – and yet they seem so agile and at ease on a track.

Secondly, the camaraderie displayed both on and off the track is remarkable. When I was at the last Micra Cup race, I was impressed with everything from the fun atmosphere in the paddock to the engagement we've seen from our drivers, fans, and crew. Their support and commitment offers the Nissan Micra Cup a sense of family that I have rarely seen on the track elsewhere.

We have seen a lot of marketing and advertising efforts in support of the Nissan Micra Cup. How does the racing series fit within Nissan Canada's overall marketing strategy?

We have included the Nissan Micra Cup in our TV advertising for Micra and created a program with clips on TSN and RDS after each race. From a marketing perspective, these campaigns are designed to support Micra, raise the profile of the series, offer more exposure to our drivers, and showcase how dynamic the Nissan brand truly is. And it's working. We've seen a lot of passion and excitement in the media, on social media and from Nissan customers as a direct result of our marketing efforts.

At the brand level, the Nissan Micra Cup demonstrates that Nissan offers products that are both reliable and affordable, and it has been

invaluable to continuing to build the Nissan brand. It allows us to showcase Micra in a new way: that it can even be taken on a race track without having to make adjustments to the engine or the gearbox. Micra isn't necessarily the first car within the Nissan lineup that you would imagine on a race track, which is why this racing series has been so unique.

How important is the Nissan Micra Cup as an asset for Nissan Canada employees and your dealer network?

Our mantra is to provide excitement for our customers, but that has to start from within our company, so it's crucial for Nissan to excite our employees and our dealer network. We want them to feel engaged within the brand and motivated to produce their best work and spark their best interactions with customers. The Nissan Micra Cup is perfect in that it's an innovative program that employees and dealers are proud to be a part of, and that reflects in their work and engagement.

It's very important with our dealers, some of whom have raced in the Nissan Micra Cup and all of whom are passionate about cars. We have regular meetings, and more and more during these meetings, dealers are talking about the Nissan Micra Cup. They ask questions and share their experiences, and all of their feedback is encouraging.

What can we expect for next year?

Going forward, we want to capitalize on the existing success of the Nissan Micra Cup and take it even further. We have some ideas on how we want to achieve that, but we're still in the early stages of planning – so stay tuned.





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INTERVIEW OF **JACQUES DESHAIES**

Nissan Micra Cup promoter Jacques Deshaies reflects on the 2016 season and already tells us about projects for 2017!

What are your thoughts on the 2016 season?

I am very happy. The series' leading team has again learnt a great deal, we made a lot of changes to many small things throughout the season so that the Nissan Micra Cup Series be better and better. Not only do the drivers gain experience during the weekend races, but us as organizers also. I have heard some say that there seems to be a certain slowdown in media coverage during the second year of a series in car racing, because the newness has dissipated. The 2016 season has proven that this is not the case with the Nissan Micra Cup and this is a very important point for me. Media coverage is just as strong, Nissan Canada continues to invest itself in the series and the fans are more and more interested in our series.

The fact that the title is only decided by the last race is also a good thing...

It is clear that in the Nissan Micra Cup, nobody can predict who will be champion by mid-season! For the second year in a row, we had to wait until the last race of the season to know who would be the champion. It shows that with identical cars for all drivers, performance differences are so slight that it is only at the very end of the season that we can determine the champion. For me, this is extremely interesting and is one of the major objectives of the series, which is to keep the fans' interest until the end.

Speaking of Ontario, are you satisfied with the decision taken during the 2015-2016 mid-season to run races in this province?

Yes, and not only because it opened up the Ontario market to the series, bringing forward new drivers. This provided an opportunity to expose, with success, the series to thousands of spectators at Mosport for two events. I would have expected more Ontario drivers to join the series but I understand some of their reticence at the outset. We had to prove ourselves. Some people were waiting for us at the bend, arguing that



Mosport is a circuit for powerful cars and that the serie's Micra S would not be spectacular. In the end, we had four exceptionally intense races on this mythical circuit and the series conquered the fans, showing that even on large, rapid circuits such as Mosport, the Nissan Micra Cup has its place. I expect that this message will circulate in Ontario this winter.

Returning to Ontario is guaranteed in 2017?

Of course, we are now implanted in Ontario! This was not a forced passage for commercial reasons, we wanted to be in Ontario so that everyone could see the interest that the Nissan Micra Cup can garner. When I saw the paddocks filled with fans at Mosport, it was clear that it was a success. We are there to stay. There will once again be two races at Mosport next year in addition to the other highly popular event that is the Grand Prix de Trois-Rivières, in Québec. The remainder of the schedule, which will have six events, not eight like this year, will be revealed during the winter. We will work with Nissan Canada to develop the series even more. It is of course too soon to say more. Indeed, we, as organizers, are ready, but we understand that the event organizers still have certain aspects of their 2017 programs to finalize before announcing what series will take place.



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2...3 QUESTIONS TO... **XAVIER COUPAL**

« I am so happy, I feel like I am dreaming! »
Xavier Coupal reflects on winning the Nissan Micra Cup championship title...

This was your first time competing in the series. Did you expect to be fighting for the championship title at the start of the season?

I entered the 2016 Nissan Micra Cup with the goal of fighting for the championship title. From the start of the season, I was able to hold a competitive position in the championship standings, and as the season progressed, the goal of winning became more and more realistic. Of course, my most memorable moment of the season is winning the championship title, this weekend. I finished the season with two back-to-back wins on the last race weekend of the year, and on top of that, I was crowned the 2016 champion on my birthday. I couldn't ask for a better birthday present.

It must have been challenging to fight for the championship title alongside your teammate. How did you handle this during the last few events of the 2016 season?

It definitely wasn't easy. Olivier Bédard and I have been friends and teammates for the entire 2016 season. We helped each other, watched videos together and even gave each other advice. Competing against my friend



and teammate at the end of the season was a challenge, especially since the race was so tight. As teammates on the Albi Nissan team, we had a lot of respect for one another, but towards the end we became significantly more competitive.

Do you compare your battle with the Hamilton-Rosberg duel in Formula 1?

A little bit, but what makes it different is that Olivier and I have a lot of respect for one

another. We fought a tough battle and I have to give Olivier credit – he performed extremely well throughout the season. Unfortunately Olivier wasn't as lucky as me. He consistently performed well, and even though I had a few mishaps along the way, I had Bertrand Godin there to drive the car, allowing me to make up any lost points. That is why I won the championship. We must play by the rules, and I am very happy to be the 2016 Nissan Micra Cup champion.



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CIRCUIT MONT-TREMBLANT RACE 15 AND 16 RESULTS

QUALIFICATION RACE 1

1) Olivier Bédard	No.1
2) Xavier Coupal	No.5
3) Stefan Rzdzinski	No.69
4) Valérie Limoges	No.4
5) Bruno St-Jacques	No.220
6) Kevin King	No.40
7) Stéfan Gauthier	No.96
8) Bertrand Godin	No.572
9) Jean-Michel Isabelle	No.86
10) Chris Sahakian	No.9
11) Marc-Antoine Demers	No.422
12) Normand Boyer	No.11
13) Mario Berthiaume	No.7
14) Metod Topolnik	No.78
15) Yves Aubé	No.17
16) Nicolas Touchette	No.55
17) Ashley Sahakian	No.77
18) Alex Habrich	No.75
19) Peter Dyck	No.73

QUALIFICATION RACE 2

1) Olivier Bédard	No.1
2) Xavier Coupal	No.5
3) Kevin King	No.40
4) Valérie Limoges	No.4
5) Stefan Rzdzinski	No.69
6) Bruno St-Jacques	No.220
7) Jean-Michel Isabelle	No.86
8) Stéfan Gauthier	No.96
9) Marc-Antoine Demers	No.422
10) Normand Boyer	No.11
11) Mario Berthiaume	No.7
12) Chris Sahakian	No.9
13) Peter Dyck	No.73
14) Nicolas Touchette	No.55
15) Yves Aubé	No.17
16) Alex Habrich	No.75
17) Ashley Sahakian	No.77
DNS) Bertrand Godin	No.572
DNS) Metod Topolnik	No.78

RACE 1

1) Xavier Coupal	15 laps
2) Olivier Bédard	-0.293
3) Kevin King	-1.569
4) Stefan Rzdzinski	-3.146
5) Bruno St-Jacques	-5.163
6) Valérie Limoges	-5.224
7) Jean-Michel Isabelle	-7.669
8) Normand Boyer	-8.391
9) Yves Aubé	-8.852
10) Marc-Antoine Demers	-9.085
11) Mario Berthiaume	-9.624
12) Nicolas Touchette	-10.209
13) Ashley Sahakian	-11.494
14) Peter Dyck	-16.806
15) Alex Habrich	-29.557
16) Bertrand Godin	Penalties
17) Chris Sahakian	-7 laps
18) Metod Topolnik	-7 laps
19) Stéfan Gauthier	-7 laps

RACE 2

1) Xavier Coupal	13 laps
2) Olivier Bédard	-0.350
3) Kevin King	-3.698
4) Stefan Rzdzinski	-4.052
5) Valérie Limoges	-6.084
6) Jean-Michel Isabelle	-8.084
7) Normand Boyer	-9.932
8) Chris Sahakian	-10.100
9) Stéfan Gauthier	-10.395
10) Mario Berthiaume	-15.605
11) Bruno St-Jacques	-18.295
12) Yves Aubé	-24.749
13) Nicolas Touchette	-25.414
14) Ashley Sahakian	-42.802
15) Peter Dyck	-43.642
16) Alex Habrich	-44.595
17) Marc-Antoine Demers	-11 laps
DNS) Bertrand Godin	-----
DNS) Metod Topolnik	-----

FINAL DRIVERS STANDINGS

1) Xavier Coupal	470 points	14) Mario Berthiaume	114 points	27) Bruno St-Jacques	34 points
2) Olivier Bédard	456 points	15) Yves Aubé	102 points	28) Carl Nadeau	33 points
3) Kevin King	404 points	16) Brian Makse	88 points	29) Bertrand Godin	28 points
4) Stefan Rzdzinski	382 points	17) Frédéric Bernier	83 points	30) Martin Gray	27 points
5) Valérie Limoges	300 points	18) Valérie Chiasson	77 points	31) Karl Wittmer	26 points
6) Nic Hammann	284 points	19) Pierre Clavet	76 points	32) Craig Willoughby	23 points
7) Marc-Antoine Demers	262 points	20) Peter Dyck (recrue)	66 points	33) Patrick Dussault	21 points
8) Normand Boyer	210 points	21) Alex Habrich	59 points	34) Edward Wong	20 points
9) Chris Sahakian	156 points	22) Nicolas Touchette	58 points	35) Enrico Sasso	13 points
10) Jacques Bélanger	134 points	23) Ashley Sahakian (recrue)	50 points	36) Lindsay Rice	7 points
11) Stéfan Gauthier (recrue)	126 points	24) Aaron Povoledo	40 points	37) Richard Spénard	5 points
12) Metod Topolnik	120 points	25) Jeff Boudreault	36 points	38) Carl Wener	3 points
13) Jean-Michel Isabelle	116 points	26) Kirk Robinson	35 points	38) Paul Dargis	3 points

