

Overnight Change of Venue For CIK / Pro-Tour Event

The final round in the 2009 CIK Australian Karting Championship, held alongside the Rotax Pro Tour, was thrown into turmoil today as the track surface at Ipswich was deemed unsafe for racing this afternoon.

In what is believed to be a first in AKA karting, the meeting will continue tomorrow, but at a completely different venue - Greer Park Raceway in nearby Toowoomba.



Above: Grim faces all round as the Ipswich track comes apart. This is turn 2.
pic - Ash Budd, photowagon.com.au

Racing was called to a halt early this afternoon as the surface broke up on the race line. On Friday, Photowagon's Ash Budd stated that turn 1 was 'opening up like the Grand Canyon' and it is believed there was some evidence of surface damage appearing at a club meeting the week prior.

Patching the holes with quick-dry concrete and continuing the meeting under lights later in the night was considered. However, after inspecting the track and considering all options, AKA officials consulted competitors and decided to move the remaining heat races, pre-final and final to Toowoomba. Competitor safety was the key factor in the decision.

Ipswich had a brand new surface applied over the existing track in April of this year. The hot weather and the sticky tyres used in CIK and Rotax have not been kind to the new bitumen. Representatives of the company that did the resurfacing are said to be inspecting the facility on Monday to determine what has gone wrong.



Above: Through the esses
pic - Ash Budd, photowagon.com.au

The Ipswich Kart Club did everything in its power to rescue the event, however a suitable solution could not be found to allow the event to continue safely.

"It is a very unfortunate situation but I think we have made the right decision and would sincerely like to thank everyone who has moved 'heaven and earth' to ensure this event continues" said Clerk of Course Chris Robinson.

"While everyone has done everything possible to make it happen a huge thanks must go to the National Executive of the AKA and AKA QLD officials, along with Toowoomba for making their track available at such short notice.

"I'm also pleased to know that we will have every single official from today in attendance and 95 percent of the drivers have confirmed they will be there tomorrow."

An amended program, including extended practice for all competitors will begin at 8am at Toowoomba Kart Raceway.

The Greer Park Raceway is located just off the Lockyer Highway, Toowoomba just past Helidon.

Prior to the racing being suspended today, Queensland John Grother set the pace during qualifying ahead of Gillard team-mate, and championship leader, Hayden McBride, CIK debutant Matthew Waters and South Australian Tyson Pearce. He also took out the first heat race.



Above: CIK Championship leader, Hayden McBride
pic - Ash Budd, photowagon.com.au



Above: Tyson Pearce shows a piece of race track. With chunks of debris like this coming off the surface, officials had no other option than to abandon racing.
pic - Ash Budd, photowagon.com.au