

The action was fast as the first race meeting in the Barbados Karting Association Inc.'s 2008 Frutee Kart Championship saw some 19 karts come under starter's orders.

Sponsored by Upbeat, the day ran smoothly and saw some exciting racing. In the Championship class Orry Hunte set the early pace with a rapid qualifying time to take pole position from current Champion Driver Conor Roach. David Evelyn rounded out the top three a mere tenth of a second behind Conor and an impressive Mark Kinch, in his first outing in the Championship class, was fourth. Orry set the pace in the first race but, in a repeat of the first event in 2007, he cruised to a halt on the last lap with a blown engine. This let Conor Roach into the lead and he never looked back. Nicholas Gill was second until the last lap when he was overtaken by David Evelyn. The second race – always the most interesting as the starting positions are the reverse of the first race's finishing positions, leaving the quicker drivers the task of coming through the field – saw Conor Roach carve through the field from the back row to finish second, closing on a flying Nick Blades who had struggled to overcome clutch problems. An excellent, composed drive from young Mark Kinch, who had also started at the back, saw him into third place. David Evelyn, after a determined drive up the field was sidelined with a chain problem. The last two races saw Conor Roach start from pole and cruise to comfortable wins to emerge overall winner on the day with 96 points. Creditable drives were recorded by Matthew Noel in the third race when he held off David Evelyn and Orry Hunte – back in the fray with a borrowed engine – for the better part of the race to finish third and Nick Gill who, having ditched his clutch for a direct-drive setup showed the rest of the field how potent a properly driven direct-drive kart could be – finishing second behind Conor. In the last race in the Championship class both David Evelyn and Orry Hunte fought back after their earlier misfortunes to finish second and third respectively behind Conor Roach.

The 125cc gearbox class saw the Maloney brothers Stuart and Mark dominate, winning all four races between them. Stuart suffered a recurring brake problem for most of the day and did well to emerge overall winner on the day. Brother Mark was in the lead going into the last race but was forced to retire putting paid to his bid for the top spot in the class. This DNF in the last race cost Mark dearly as it allowed James Bradshaw to take second place overall on the day. James drove consistently throughout the day to earn his second place ahead of Mark Maoney, Barry Mayers and newcomer Mark Jordan

The junior classes, now somewhat thinned out without the Kelly brothers, Jacob and Joshua, saw new karter Dillon Gray finish second to Samantha Gill, now in her second year in the 230Lb class. In the 270Lb class the action was hot as Christian Hinds and Alexander Gill traded positions in the first two races. Both youngsters showed much improvement and this should be an interesting battle during the year. At the end of the day it was Alexander who emerged overall class winner.

With an observer team in attendance from neighbouring St Lucia, where there is keen interest in setting up a karting club, it was a successful start to the 2008 karting season. The BKAI would like to thank its sponsors, Frutee and Upbeat for their continued support and looks forward to Race Day 2 - carded for March 9th. Visit www.barbadoskarting.com for more information.