

Sports

Ali Makhseed hits the pedal to the gold medal, for the second year running



KUWAIT: In front of 2,500 spectators, defending champion, Ali Makhseed, managed to secure the 2018 Kuwait King of Drift title in an outstanding manner. Second place went to Fahad AlJedei, followed by Mesyar Abu Shaibah who rounded up the podium.

In celebration of ten years since the first ever Red Bull Car Park Drift event in Lebanon, drifters competed to clinch the crown. Having had hosted a successful adrenaline-filled Series Final on December 8, Kuwait was, no doubt, in the position to impress thousands of drifting and motorsport fans alike.

Red Bull Car Park Drift was organized by Basel Salem AlSabah Motor Racing Club and sponsored by Total, Falken Tyres, Drag 965, Acqua Eva, and Talabat. Media partner, Kuwait Times, covered this popular event.

The day started with motorsport spectators lining up to witness the high adrenaline spectacle and thrown-thirsty drifters going head to head for the coveted title.

The drifters then began the first heat consisting of 26 drifters on a challenging track concocted by Abdo Feghali, previous Guinness World Book Record holder for the longest drift. The top eight who broke through to round two were Ali Makhseed, Fahad AlJedei, Mesyar Abu Shaibah, Hamad Al Hajri, Abdulhadi Hjalil, Louay Abou Ayash, Mohammad Al Azmi, and Mohammad Al Otaibi. This time, only four would make it to the next round.

Spectators and drifters anxiously awaited the final round and action to resume, to ultimately crown the winner. The final four from round three, Ali Makhseed, Fahad AlJedei, Mesyar Abu Shaibah, and Hamad Al Hajri all went head to head, with one aim: to be



crowned the 2018 Kuwait King of Drift.

Consisting of top motorsport and drifting experts and athletes, the judging panel was assigned the task of evaluating the competitors. This year's judging panel table was rounded up by Fouad Abu Arja, experienced motorsports organizer, Jean Pierre Nasrallah and Issam Najadi, rally veterans, and Khaled Al Mudhaf, local racer and Kuwait's first certified FIA racing driver.

Aiming to elevate the competition after year after year, Abdo Feghali, had modified the criteria to challenge the drifters. This year their performance was determined based on car look & design (40 points), drifting skills (120 points), boxes (50 points), spiral (20 points), gate (20 points), flipper (60 points),

pendulum (50 points), car sound (20 points), and tire smoke (20 points).

Ultimately, Ali Makhseed edged past the competition and clinched the title with a jaw-dropping performance collecting an impressive 386 points. He was beaming with pride as he held the trophy and explained what it meant to him: "I am ecstatic to represent Kuwait at the 2018 Series Final, for the second year running, and aim to keep Kuwait's head held high".

Ali Makhseed will face a fierce challenge for the King of Drift title, competing against drifters from ten other countries that have participated in the series. The 2018 series kicked off in Oman on January 26 and the competition has continued since then with



qualifiers in UAE and Egypt. Qualifiers will continue in Qatar, Tunisia, Turkey, Morocco, Algeria, Jordan, Mauritius, and Lebanon. With only one drifter from each participating country, Lebanon will welcome the 2018 Kuwait King of Drift at the Series Final this September 22 where he will compete to claim the Series Final throne.

The competition, first hosted by Red Bull in Lebanon, provides drifting amateurs and professionals with the opportunity to highlight their skills and compete for the crown, while capturing the crowd's attention. Last year's Kuwait qualifier witnessed an exciting turnout, with local drifter, Ali Makhseed, claiming Kuwait King of Drift title and continuing to the Series Final to claim the King

of Smoke by Falken Tyres title. Omani competitor, Refaat Al Yahyai, secured the 2018 King of Drift crown after a stellar performance, at the Series Final, hosted in Kuwait, for the first time.

On a global level, the story of drifting goes back to the 1960s on winding Japanese mountain roads. A bunch of likeminded racers set out to beat their A to B times by exceeding the grip limit of their tires when taking sharp corners. It did not do much to help their racing times but instead evolved into an entirely different discipline. Drifting was born, and a Red Bull manager discovered the sport in 2005 and decided to spark a fire in the Middle East, a fire that still burns to this very day.

