2026 DEWALT FIM SPEEDWAY GP OF LATVIA – RIGA – BURB'S BRIEFING

Hello and welcome to Burb's Briefing! Here is some information and a few talking points which may assist your coverage of the DEWALT FIM Speedway GP of Latvia – Riga this Saturday ...

WHERE?

- Riga's Bikernieki Speedway Stadium made its debut on the FIM Speedway calendar in 2023, and this is the fourth straight season that it has staged Speedway GP action.
- The 2023 event was the first time Latvia had hosted a Speedway GP round since the 2017 FIM Speedway GP of Latvia – Daugavpils.
- The Riga Speedway GP rounds in 2023 and 2024 were won by Poland's Bartosz Zmarzlik, while the 2025 event was won by Australia's Brady Kurtz on his Bikernieki debut.
- In 2023, Riga also staged the FIM Speedway of Nations – SON2 event for the sport's top seven under-21 teams, which saw Poland win gold, with Denmark second and Latvia taking an historic bronze medal – their first FIM Speedway world team medal of any kind.
- Bikernieki is Latvia's leading motorsport venue, with the neighbouring tarmac track hosting a wide variety of two and four-wheeled sports.
- The speedway circuit there was first constructed in 1976, hosting rounds of the Soviet Union Championship before falling into disrepair. But it has been lovingly revamped for what is its 50th anniversary this summer.
- The track has undergone a major overhaul since the 2025 Speedway GP event. It has been resurfaced, with the corners widened and banking added on the corners and straights in an effort to improve the racing. The track was recently tested by members of the Latvian national side, who gave it the thumbs up.
- It was originally renovated in 2014 and was due to stage a round of the Speedway GP series that year. But the event was moved to Daugavpils – around three hours away – at the last moment, with the Bikernieki track deemed unfit for racing following weeks of heavy rainfall.
- The track has since proved itself by successfully hosting a number of FIM and FIM Europe events, as well as a regular speedway school – from which Latvian duo Francis Gusts and Ricards Ansviesulis graduated.
- Bikernieki notably hosted the 2021 European Under-19 Championship Final, which was won by Gusts on 14 points.

- A welcome addition to Bikernieki for 2024 was floodlights, meaning both of this weekend's events can get underway at 7pm local time – without any concerns over light later in the evening.

WHEN?

Saturday, August 1

- Speedway GP Qualifying – 14:00 local time
- DEWALT FIM Speedway GP of Latvia – Riga - 19:00 local time

FIM JURY

REFEREE: Jesper Steentoft (Denmark)

JURY PRESIDENT: Thierry Bouin (France)

FMNR REPRESENTATIVE: Vladimirs Ribnikovs (Latvia)

RACE DIRECTOR: Phil Morris (Great Britain)

TITLE FIGHT

- Australian ace Brady Kurtz arrives in Riga as the new Speedway GP World Championship leader after pulling level on 109 points with Bartosz Zmarzlik at the FIM Speedway GP of Poland – Lodz last Saturday.
- With both riders boasting a round win apiece – Zmarzlik from Wroclaw and Kurtz from Manchester R4 – Kurtz leads by virtue of the two second places he achieved in Prague and Manchester R3.
- Kurtz finished third in Lodz, reaching his sixth straight final. He has now achieved an incredible 15 finals in 19 SGP appearances.
- Zmarzlik's run of 14 straight Speedway GP finals, stretching back to his victory at 2025 R3 in Prague came to an end when he exited the FIM Speedway GP of Poland – Lodz, finishing second in LCQ1.
- The Pole still ended the night with 11 championship points, but it allowed Kurtz to close on top spot.
- Great Britain racer Robert Lambert also surged into the title fight with his first Speedway GP victory since he won the FIM Speedway GP of Denmark – Vojens on September 14, 2024.
- Lambert also finished second at the previous two rounds in Wroclaw and Malilla, meaning he has scored 59 points from a possible 64 over the past three rounds – including three from the Wroclaw sprint race.

- The 2020 European champion is now third in the Speedway GP standings on 101 points – eight behind Kurtz and Zmarzlik. With 68 points still up for grabs over the final three rounds, including two sprint races, Lambert still has time to complete an astonishing title charge.
- Both Zmarzlik and Kurtz have excellent Riga records. Zmarzlik won the first two Speedway GPs here in 2023 and 2024, as well as finishing fourth in 2025. Kurtz won on his Bikernieki debut in 2025 as part of his record-breaking five wins on the bounce at the end of last season.
- Lambert has never reached a final in Riga – his best result was sixth spot and 11 championship points in 2024.
- Zmarzlik is seeking to become the first rider in the sport's history to win seven Speedway GP World Championships this season.
- The historical milestones just keep coming for Zmarzlik – his final appearance in Malilla saw him move on to 77 career finals, matching the number achieved by Australian three-time Speedway GP world champion Jason Crump. Only American legend Greg Hancock on 92 has reached more.

TIGHT FOR THE TOP SEVEN

- While the frontrunners have burst clear of the Speedway GP chasing pack, a very tight contest is emerging for places in the World Championship's top seven – which guarantees riders a spot in the 2027 SGP series.
- Behind Zmarzlik, Kurtz and Lambert, Danish star Michael Jepsen Jensen is also nicely poised in the battle for qualification in fourth spot on 80 points.
- He cemented his position with fourth place in Lodz last Saturday – his fourth final appearance of 2026. He is still waiting for his first SGP victory since he won the FIM Nordic Speedway GP in Vojens as a wild card on September 22, 2012 – 14 years ago.
- Poland's Patryk Dudek made a huge move in the SGP qualification race in Lodz, topping the heat score chart to reach his first final of 2026, before taking second place. He surged from ninth to fifth in the standings in one night and is now on 69 points.
- He is being chased by Denmark's Leon Madsen on 65 in sixth and Poland's Kacper Woryna, who occupies the seventh and final automatic qualification place for 2027 on 64. But Woryna's spot in Speedway GP for 2027 is already guaranteed after he finished third at the FIM SGP Challenge in Terenzano, Italy on July 25.
- Australia's Max Fricke is eighth on 62 – just two points off the top seven – with the injured Jack Holder ninth on 55, Anders Thomsen 10th on 54 and Andzejs Lebedevs and Jason Doyle tied on 49.

QUALIFICATION PLOT THICKENS

- The qualification plot has thickened significantly since the 2026 FIM SGP Challenge took place in Terenzano, Italy on July 25.
- Great Britain hero Robert Lambert won the event to guarantee his place in the 2027 SGP series, with Australia's Rohan Tungate second to earn his first full Speedway GP season next year.
- Poland's Kacper Woryna took third spot to guarantee his Speedway GP berth for 2027, with Swedish champion Kim Nilsson producing a breathtaking final ride to take the last qualification place. He is back in Speedway GP for the first time since 2023.
- While the quartet's places in SGP 2027 are safe, if Lambert and/or Woryna reach the 2026 Speedway GP top seven, they could open the door for other riders to join them.
- Lambert is currently third in the standings and 39 points clear of eighth-placed Max Fricke. Woryna is seventh overall, but only two points ahead of Fricke.
- If either Lambert or Woryna reaches the SGP top seven, Latvia's Andzejs Lebedevs is guaranteed a spot in the 2027 Speedway GP series after he was placed fifth in the Challenge.
- If both Lambert and Woryna reach the top seven, Denmark's Michael Jepsen Jensen – sixth in the Challenge – also qualifies for 2027.
- If Lebedevs (currently 11th on 49 points) and Jepsen Jensen (fourth on 80 points) also reach the top seven, things get even more interesting.
- If three of Lambert, Woryna, Lebedevs and MJJ reach the Speedway GP top seven, Denmark's Frederik Jakobsen (seventh in the Challenge) would take his place in Speedway GP for the first time next season.
- If all four riders reach the Speedway GP top seven, British legend Chris Harris, aged 43, would make an astonishing Speedway GP comeback after finishing eighth at the Challenge. He last raced in the Speedway GP World Championship in 2016 and famously won the 2007 FIM Speedway GP of Great Britain – Cardiff with possibly the greatest final ride in SGP history.
- Speedway GP qualification is also on the line in the Speedway European Championship, with the winner guaranteed a place in SGP 2027.
- Danish star Leon Madsen won the opening round on his Polish home track Zielona Gora on July 18, leaving him level on 14 points at the top of the standings with Poland's reigning European champion Patryk Dudek. Jepsen Jensen is just behind on 13, with German racer Kai Huckenbeck on 12 and Mikkel Michelsen on 11.
- There are three SEC rounds still to race on September 5 in Gustrow, Rzeszow on September 19 and Pardubice on October 2 – six days after the final SGP round in Torun.

- The final three places in the 2027 Speedway GP series will be allocated to three permanent wild cards, chosen by the SGP Commission. But with quite an injury crisis developing, these could be in short supply.

WELCOME BACK & MISSING THIS WEEKEND

- Swedish star Fredrik Lindgren is back after missing the past six Speedway GP rounds due to the ankle injury sustained in a Polish PGE Ekstraliga meeting for Lublin in Leszno on May 17.
- Having scored 12 points at the opening round in Landshut, Lindgren is 18th in the standings. Realistically, he is out of the running for the top seven and a wild card from the SGP Commission would be his only hope of keeping his SGP spot for 2027.
- Three Speedway GP regulars sit out the Lodz round.
- Great Britain hero Dan Bewley has also missed the last six rounds after suffering a broken femur when he crashed out of a Danish Speedwayligaen meeting in Outrup on May 20.
- Australia's Jack Holder is absent after crashing out of the DEWALT FIM Speedway GP of Poland – Wroclaw on June 20, suffering multiple injuries. He missed the rounds in Malilla and Lodz.
- Poland's Dominik Kubera was a late withdrawal after suffering an arm injury when he crashed in a Danish Speedwayligaen match for Region Varde on Wednesday night. He also missed the Manchester double-header.
- They are replaced by Speedway GP substitutes Anders Thomsen, Jan Kvech and Kai Huckenbeck.

HOME HEROES

- Latvian ace Andzejs Lebedevs carries the hopes of the home fans in Riga, where he stormed to third place in 2025 – achieving only his second Speedway GP podium.
- Lebedevs qualified for the final by finishing second on the heat score chart and his form drew a huge response from a partisan Latvian crowd, which really gets behind him.
- Lebedevs hails from Daugavpils, which is Latvia's former Speedway GP host city. There, he is a local celebrity.
- Through the hard work of the local organiser in Riga, Lebedevs is now increasingly well-known on the national stage and is recognised as one of the country's leading sports stars.
- He also captains the Latvian national side for 11.lv FIM Speedway World Cup Semi-Final 2 – Riga on Friday.

- Lebedevs is joined in Riga by wild card Daniils Kolodinskis, who last raced in Speedway GP in 2024, scoring three points at Bikernieki.
- Lebedevs joined forces with Kolodinskis and second track reserve Jevgenijs Kostigovs to fire Latvia to back-to-back FIM Speedway of Nations Finals in Manchester in 2024 and Torun in 2025.
- First track reserve Olegs Mihailovs teamed with Lebedevs and Francis Gusts to take Latvia to their first-ever SON Final in Manchester in 2021. Mihailovs hopes to make his SGP debut on Saturday.

WHERE TO WATCH

Fans can catch every moment of 2026 Speedway GP and SWC action live on global broadcaster Warner Bros. Discovery's streaming platforms HBO Max or discovery+. Coverage of every Speedway GP Qualifying session is also available on these platforms.

HBO Max is available across Europe, with FIM-MOTO TV providing coverage around the world.

ACROSS EUROPE: Live on HBO Max and discovery+

BRITAIN: Live on HBO Max and TNT Sports

POLAND: Live on Eurosport 3, HBO Max and Player

SWEDEN: Live on Kanal 9 and HBO Max

DENMARK: Live on 6'eren and HBO Max

AUSTRALIA: Live on Fox Sports

GERMANY: Live on HBO Max and discovery+

ACROSS THE BALTICS: Live on Go3, TV3 Sport and HBO Max

CZECHIA: Live on HBO Max

SLOVAKIA: Live on STVR Sport and HBO Max

USA/CANADA: Live on Racer

REST OF THE WORLD: Live on FIM-MOTO TV