

# European ICE-Blokart championship

February 20th- 22th Nida, Lithuania



The superb weekend is over leaving contrast memories for us: those of freezing snowstorm and those of warm people, those in the aching muscles and those in the calmed mind. The European Ice-Blokart championship gathered 25 competitors of six different European countries (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Netherlands, Great Britain and France) to one of the nicest spots in Lithuania - Nida. Participants competed in 2 weight divisions (<85 kg and 85+ kg) and two subdivisions each.

The two racing days of the championship were held in totally opposite weather conditions. February 21<sup>st</sup> was a hardly any wind day. Ice-blokkarters could enjoy nice views to snowy sanddunes and get some suntan.



*Estonian Blokart Team waiting for the wind*

As the wind seemed to rise at noon, one start for lightweights was given. Unfortunately, it was cancelled as the wind dropped. 6 knots were not enough to sail on the snowy (3-6 cm) ice. Waiting for the wind some guys warmed up cleaning-up the ice with expectations of better speeds, but the wind dropped to zero ending ice sailing. Later in the evening everybody joined winter festivity organized by Nida municipality and could compete by throwing rings, dancing on the ice and tasting real military porrage near the fire.

While having dinner and enjoiing sauna at Blokart party on Saturday night long waited cyclone arrived. February 22<sup>nd</sup> morning we got 11 knots which picked up to 30 knots in the afternoon. Finally, blokkarters could scratch the ice!

In the heavyweights division Baltic Blokart champion '08 and Lithuanian DN champion '09 Algirdas Žižys (Vilnius) was leading. At the same time, he was

constantly given chase by Vilius Bestauskas (Klaipėda), Raul Nappa (Estonia) and Marius Ambrulaitis (Klaipėda).



*Algirdas Žižys prepares for the finals*

The wind picked up to extreme 30 knots in the afternoon and snowstorm started. Because of the safety reasons jury cancelled the last fourth race for the lightweights leaving them with 3 races completed.

In the lightweight division the tip over and a mast break for Matas Mizgiris caused his surprising loss after the first start. Also, one of the potential leaders Antanas Golubovskis (Nida) did not have an opportunity to correct similar mistake. This let steady going Darius Gerasimavičius - "Bitlas" (Vilnius) grab the lightweight champion title. Congratulations!



*Final race for heavyweights during the snowstorm*

The experience on the ice in extreme conditions seemed to influence the results. Ice-blokarters, who had come from the countries where snow or ice is a sensation, got stuck in the snow or tipped over more easily. This was the case

for Olivier Criou (France), who was very fast in the play-offs, but flipped over too often. However, Frank van Wijk (who made one ice-blokarting session in Netherlands) and event journalist for Ryanair magazine Nick Haslam (Great Britain) who only had had twenty minutes of practise on the ice made it to the finals. Thumbs up!



*Nick Haslam leading the group in the play-off race*

Many thanks for all the participants who made the First European Ice-Blokart championship so warm and enjoyable! The organisers are also grateful for referees: Vadimas Grigonis, president of Lithuanian DN association, Aleksandras Grigonis and Vilius Tamkvaitis and all others who helped with organising the event.

Together we are thinking about the next event - the World Ice-Blokart championship in 2010. See'ya on the ice!



*Prize winners at the closing ceremony of the champs (from the left):  
Vilius Bestauskas, Matas Mizgiris, Darius Gerasimavičius, Algirdas Žižys, Raul Nappa*

P.s. First European Ice-Blokart Champs was covered by Lithuania media for the weekend as one of the most exotic and interesting news. Information about the event appeared on press and web portals, footages about the event were shown in the prime-time news on main national TV programmes and live interview from the ice to national radio was given.

### Links:

Detailed results: <http://www.blokart.lt/blokart/european-ice-blo-09-rezults.pdf>

Youtube video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MAa30VlpfEI>

Delfi TV video: <http://tv.delfi.lt/video/6sDI8GMj/>

Nick Haslam's Photos: [http://foto.delfi.lt/my\\_album/15485/](http://foto.delfi.lt/my_album/15485/)

Media coverage: <http://www.blokartforum.eu/viewtopic.php?p=3320#3320>

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