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SENTRA CUP MAGAZINE



Lime Rock Park
Lakeville, Connecticut (USA)
JULY 19, 20, 2024

EVENT 3



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Summary



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Mathieu Miron Wins First Two Races During the First Nissan Sentra Cup in the United States!

Lime Rock Circuit in Connecticut Hosted Races 5 and 6 of the 2024 Nissan Sentra Cup Season; Valérie Limoges Mid-Season Champion

The Nissan Sentra Cup had its debut in the United States this weekend, with Races 5 and 6 of the 2024 season presented at Lime Rock Park Circuit in Connecticut. The event was part of the Lime Rock SpeedTour, the largest annual event on the historic New England racetrack. The two-day event

was met with sun, warm weather, along with some rain, and thousands of spectators at the edge of the track. Both Nissan Sentra Cup races were won by Mathieu Miron, his first two victories in the series.

The hierarchy set in place at the start of the season was shaken up beginning with the free practice on Friday. In qualifying, Mathieu Miron surprised the favourites, taking pole position for both races. Alexandre Fortin, the defending champion, Nicolas Barrette, Simon Vincent and Jean-François Couture completed the Top 5. For Couture, it was his best qualifying since his debut in 2023. Valérie Limoges completed the top six, identical for both qualifying.

With the summer sun shining down on the magnificent 2.4 km natural track, the Nissan Sentra Cup competitors presented their first

event late Saturday morning. A group of five drivers battled for the victory the entire race, from beginning to end. Mathieu Miron resisted pressure from his competitors perfectly, preventing others from breaking the hierarchy formed from the beginning. The driver of the 191 Motorsport team won by four seconds, in front of Alexandre Fortin. Nicolas Barrette completed the podium, ahead of Simon Vincent, Valérie Limoges, Éric Chaput, Jean-François Couture, Raphaël St-Pierre, Nicolas Lévesque and Jean Audet.

"It's by coming to drive in such an event that we measure how popular and loved motorsport is in the United States. As a driver, I really liked it, not only because I won the race but because it was truly unique and it's incredible visibility for the Nissan Sentra Cup and us, as drivers," mentioned Mathieu Miron, the first driver to win the Cup in the United States.





The second race in the afternoon took place on a drying track after a brief but intense downpour. While Alexandre Fortin was able to take the lead for a few moments, Mathieu Miron regained control and raced towards another victory. The battle for second place enlivened the rest of the race, with Fortin holding off Valérie Limoges, Nicolas Barrette and Simon Vincent until the end. Nicolas Lévesque completed the Top 6 ahead of Éric Chaput, Jean Audet, Sylvain Ouellet and Jean-François Couture. The race ended under yellow flags due to Raphaël St-Pierre's off course. He was in sixth place with three laps to go.

"This was an extremely positive experience for all our competitors, our fans and Nissan Canada. We were particularly well received at Lime Rock, the atmosphere of this event was exceptional, with thousands of enthusiasts on site and we will do everything we can to come back next year." The media impact also perfectly met our expectations, it is a total success for the debut of the Nissan Sentra Cup in the United States" confides promoter Jacques Deshaies.



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Lime Rock news

PAUL NEWMAN'S HISTORIC RACEWAY

Lime Rock Park, established in 1957, has always been a preferred track for New England drivers. One of the most famous of them, undoubtedly, was the late actor Paul Newman, who passed away in 2008 and owned a home near the track. A true motorsport enthusiast, Newman was an excellent driver and Lime Rock was his home track. He used to race and drive his classic cars for fun, including multiple Nissans. Most notably, a 280ZX V8 twin turbo with 933 hp! Lime Rock permanently honours the memory of the American actor and driver with a straight line bearing his name and paintings in the media center and VIP areas.



LEARNING THE TRACK THROUGH A RACE SIMULATOR...

While the Lime Rock track was a new experience for all the drivers in the series except Valérie Limoges, who competed in an Endurance race in 2006, some of them practised with VR instead. Mathieu Miron, for example, admitted to having driven for at least 300 hours on a simulator, through the IRacing platform. Jean-François Couture (pictured here) also practised online using Sentra settings for 4 to 6 hours per week over the last eight months, totalling about 200 hours! The settings obtained were then transferred to his Nissan Sentra race car, helping to immediately familiarize him with the American track.



A NISSAN CUP DRIVER IN TIMES SQUARE!

Renowned for its proximity to New York City, Lime Rock Park was the perfect excuse for Nicolas Barrette to visit the American city with his girlfriend the day before the practices and qualifying sessions. A visit to New York must have aided the Nissan Sentra Cup driver who had two superb races and is a 2024 title contender with Valérie Limoges and Alexandre Fortin.



MARIE-SOLEIL LABELLE AND THE WOMEN IN MOTORSPORTS COMMISSION

A young Nissan Sentra Cup driver, Marie-Soleil Labelle had a busy schedule at Lime Rock as she took part in an autograph session with American fans as part of the "Women in Motorsports North America" program. This was in addition to her regular Nissan Sentra Cup track activities. Let us recall that two female drivers are competing in the Nissan Sentra Cup this season, with Valérie Limoges competing for the title while Marie-Soleil is on the verge of the Top 10 in the championship, halfway through the season.





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Postcard from the Lime Rock SpeedTour



One of the official Nissan Pathfinders in front of the entrance to the Lime Rock Park... If the Nissan Sentra Cup made a perfect debut in the United States, let us also highlight the exceptional welcome received by fans, officials and managers of the Connecticut racetrack.

Named the Lime Rock SpeedTour 2024, the event featured both Nissan Sentra Cup races, IROC (International Race of Champions) and All Star Trans Am races, bringing together 38 legendary North American drivers. Among them, Canadian Ron Fellows, co-owner of Canadian Tire Motorsport Park in Ontario, a site where the Nissan Sentra Cup takes place twice this season.



Warm weather, blue skies and sunshine were swept away by a violent downpour just before the start of the second race. Everyone expected a cancellation but the Lime Rock Park and Nissan Sentra Cup officials never gave up and the green flag was presented less than an hour after the original schedule. A surprise for everyone, considering the intense rain that fell earlier.



Both Nissan Sentra Cup races were featured on the American SpeedTour Network and the series Facebook page. Commentators included the editor-in-chief of the Quebec magazine, Pole-Position, Philippe Brasseur and the Nissan Canada communications director, Didier Marsaud. They will also host the next two races at Grand Prix de Trois-Rivières, which will be livestreamed on the series' Facebook page.





Perfectly aligned on the pre-starting grid, the Nissan Sentra Cup drivers eager to hit the track! Created in 1956, the Lime Rock circuit, 2.4 km long and mainly composed of fast curves, was unanimously appreciated by the series' drivers.



Located in the heart of New England historic region, Lime Rock Park offers various locations for spectators to watch all the action. There were tens of thousands at the Lime Rock SpeedTour this year.



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From the Nissan Sentra Cup to International Series...

Since 2015, the Nissan Micra, and later the Sentra Cup, have introduced dozens of new drivers to the joys of motorsport on Canadian tracks. Some of these drivers have advanced their careers to international championships. Aside from the GT Academy drivers mentioned in our previous edition, notable figures include Marco Signoretti, who became champion in 2019 and later competed at the famed Daytona International Speedway in an IMSA Endurance event supporting the renowned 24 Hours. This season, Jesse Webb and Jesse Lazare can be found in this championship, while Stefan Rzdzinski, Demi Chalkias, Aaron Povoledo, and Mike Ogren are competing in various SRO America championships, and Austin Riley in prototype Radical North America series.



Stefan Rzdzinski competed in the first Nissan Cup seasons, in addition to the 2022 GP du Canada in Sentra.

Jesse Lazare started in the Nissan Micra Cup in 2018 before returning to compete for the title against Kevin King in 2020 and 2021, which was the first season of the Sentra Cup. Both times, he finished as vice-champion, securing 3 victories and 5 pole positions in 2020, then 2 victories and 7 pole positions in 2021. What memories does he have of his time in the Nissan Cup? "Looking back at my two full seasons in the Nissan Sentra Cup, I can truly say it was a remarkable experience," he says.

For him, the best moment was undoubtedly "that this series was focused on close racing. Every race was a battle, and it was a pleasure to race wheel to wheel with the other drivers." The Québec driver has since become a standout in the IMSA Michelin Pilot



Marco Signoretti, pictured here with Nissan Canada President Steve Milette, was the 2019 Nissan Micra Cup champion.

Challenge series. He currently drives a McLaren Artura GT4 with Motorsports In Action (MIA), a long-time partner of the Nissan Cup, with which he won the 2023 season finale and the race at Laguna Seca, California, this past spring.

In 2018, American Mike Ogren finished seventh in the championship, achieving ten Top 10 finishes in 12 races (with a best result of 4th place), making him an expert at being consistent during his only season in the series. At the SRO events, although he is not racing this season, he is one of the official drivers providing hot laps to guests between official sessions.

Ontario native Demi Chalkias achieved a Top 12 finish in her first race in the series back in 2019. She later competed in GT Ontario and SportsCar Canada (SCCC) before participating in the highly sought-after GT4 America series in the United States this season, driving a Mercedes-AMG GT4. While she was

no stranger to road racing when she joined the Nissan Micra Cup, she admits that her time in the series "was an incredible opportunity and probably one of the best spec series in Canada to compete in. The Nissan Micra Series really teaches you a lot about extracting everything out of a car, developing good race craft, and knowing when to make a pass. Making calculated moves has definitely helped me in my professional career now in the Pirelli GT4 America Series and SRO, where we are always searching for the last bit of performance from the car.

"Every time we're out on the track, we are trying to find ways to go faster. With large fields of GT4 cars, we really have to have good race craft to compete at this level. I'd say the Nissan Micra Series is one of the best series to learn all of the foundations you need to go pro racing," she added.

Jesse Webb made a significant impact in 2021, during the inaugural season of the Nissan Sentra

Jesse Lazare was the last runner-up of the Micra era... and the first runner-up of the Nissan Sentra Cup!



Cup. He claimed the Rookie of the year award thanks to his third place in the championship that he achieved with 4 podiums, 1 pole position, and a stellar victory at the Canadian Tire Motorsport Park on September 5, 2018. The young British Columbia driver was a shining example of the new Sentra's reliability that year, finishing all his races in the Top 10. His time in the series gave him the media boost needed to aim to race in the United States. In 2024, Jesse is also racing in IMSA, driving a Mercedes-AMG GT4.

Albertan Stefan Rzadzinski took several victories in Micra before returning to drive, for fun, in a Sentra at the 2022 Grand Prix du Canada. Rzadzinski was one of the big players in the early seasons, even



Rookie of the year in the series in 2021, Jesse Webb is now competing in IMSA GT4.

Austin Riley, the first competitor on the spectrum in the series went on to have a successful career in prototypes series afterwards.



fighting for the championship in 2015. This year, he competed in a few races in GT4 America series, in a Nissan Z NISMO GT4.

In 2017, the series welcomed Austin Riley, the first Nissan Cup driver on the spectrum to line up on the grid... and the first to earn a podium finish a year later at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park, in 2018. Austin has since gone on to have a successful career in Radical prototypes, racking up multiple victories. This season, he's competing in the Radical North America Championship.

Finally, Aaron Povoledo raced in the Nissan Micra Cup in 2016, achieving great success in two rounds at the Canadian Tire Motorsport Park (finishing 10th and 4th). This year, he competes in the highly competitive GT World Challenge America series, driving a Mercedes-AMG GT3. He is also a driving instructor and a former Player's Driver Development Program participant.



Results and standings

■ Lime Rock Park - Event 3

QUALIFICATION RACE 1

1) Mathieu Miron	#191
2) Alexandre Fortin	#1
3) Nicolas Barrette	#427
4) Simon Vincent	#91
5) Jean-François Couture	#7
6) Valérie Limoges	#777
7) Raphaël St-Pierre	#419
8) Nicolas Lévesque	#50
9) Éric Chaput	#116
10) Jean Audet	#22
11) Sylvain Ouellet	#99
12) Daniel Fortin	#95
13) Christian Thibault	#46
14) Marie-Soleil Labelle	#27
15) Stéphane Pouliot	#210
16) Steve Poulin	#37

RESULTS RACE 1

1) Mathieu Miron	32 laps
2) Alexandre Fortin	-4.198
3) Nicolas Barrette	-4.393
4) Simon Vincent	-4.727
5) Valérie Limoges	-5.125
6) Éric Chaput	-29.047
7) Jean-François Couture	-29.590
8) Raphaël St-Pierre	-29.868
9) Nicolas Lévesque	-41.154
10) Jean Audet	-53.383
11) Sylvain Ouellet	-1:06.168
12) Marie-Soleil Labelle	-1 lap
13) Christian Thibault	-1 lap
14) Stéphane Pouliot	-1 lap
15) Daniel Fortin	-1 lap
16) Steve Poulin	-2 laps

QUALIFICATION RACE 2

1) Mathieu Miron	191 Motorsport
2) Alexandre Fortin	Ste-Foy Nissan / Fix Auto
3) Nicolas Barrette	Groupe RM
4) Simon Vincent	Vincent2 racing team
5) Jean-François Couture	Céramique O-Nivo
6) Valérie Limoges	Groupe Gabriel / BetGRW.com Racing Team
7) Raphaël St-Pierre	Sensei Groupe-Conseil
8) Nicolas Lévesque	Lévesque Motorsport
9) Jean Audet	Grand Times Hôtel
10) Éric Chaput	Groupe Gabriel / Mallette
11) Sylvain Ouellet	Ouellet Motorsport
12) Daniel Fortin	Ste-Foy Nissan / Fix Auto
13) Marie-Soleil Labelle	Musée Gilles-Villeneuve
14) Christian Thibault	Équipe Christian Thibault
15) Stéphane Pouliot	Équipe Stéphane Pouliot
16) Steve Poulin	Nissan Thetford

RESULTS RACE 2

1) Mathieu Miron	30 laps
2) Alexandre Fortin	-0.892
3) Valérie Limoges	-1.401
4) Nicolas Barrette	-2.209
5) Simon Vincent	-3.002
6) Nicolas Lévesque	-3.601
7) Éric Chaput	-4.520
8) Jean Audet	-6.142
9) Sylvain Ouellet	-7.776
10) Jean-François Couture	-8.590
11) Christian Thibault	-9.366
12) Steve Poulin	-1 lap
13) Daniel Fortin	-1 lap
14) Stéphane Pouliot	-2 laps
15) Raphaël St-Pierre	-5 laps
16) Marie-Soleil Labelle	-25 laps



Results and standings

■ Lime Rock Park - Event 3

CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS

Position	#	Driver	Races	Points
1.	777	Valérie Limoges	6	247
2.	427	Nicolas Barrette	6	244
2.	1	Alexandre Fortin	6	244
4.	91	Simon Vincent	6	216
5.	191	Mathieu Miron	6	206
6.	95	Daniel Fortin	6	160
7.	50	Nicolas Lévesque	6	155
8.	116	Éric Chaput	6	151
9.	99	Sylvain Ouellet	6	143
10.	192	Nicolas Miron	4	134
11.	7	Jean-François Couture	6	131
12.	22	Jean Audet	6	129
13.	419	Raphaël St-Pierre	6	127
14.	46	Christian Thibault	6	114
15.	210	Stéphane Pouliot	6	101
16.	27	Marie-Soleil Labelle	6	99
17.	37	Steve Poulin	6	94
18.	63	Frédéric Chaput	3	78
19.	08	Martin Harvey	4	63
20.	63	Mario Charette	1	14





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The next event will take place on August 9, 10 and 11 and will mark the series' return in Quebec when the 54th edition of the Grand Prix de Trois-Rivières will be contested. The Nissan Sentra Cup will once again be one of the major series of this always popular event bringing tens of thousands of spectators annually.



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