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Teenage Russian Karter Sacked Over 'Nazi' Salute

By AFP

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Artem Severiukhin, 15, has had his contract terminated. **Ward Racing**

A 15-year-old Russian karter has been kicked off his team and is being investigated by the International Automobile Federation (FIA) after making what appeared to a Nazi salute after winning in Portugal.

Artem Severiukhin, competing under an Italian license because the FIA has banned Russian competitors, struck his heart twice with his fist before extending his right arm in a gesture suspected of being a Nazi salute. He then burst out laughing on the winner's podium at Portimao.

"The Federation Internationale de l'Automobile confirms that it has launched an immediate investigation into the unacceptable conduct of Mr. Artem Severiukhin that occurred during the podium ceremony for the OK category at Round 1 of the 2022 FIA Karting European Championship at the Kartodromo Internacional do Algarve in Portugal," the FIA said in a

statement on Monday.

Embed:

> FIA is launching a investigation into the incident where Russian driver Artem Severiukhin (competing under the Italian flag) showed a nazi salute at the World Karting Championship.
>
> pic.twitter.com/XqJaJivIsy
>
> — F2.Addict (@AddictF2) April 11, 2022

His Swedish team, Ward Racing, said they had fired the driver in an Instagram post on Monday.

"Ward racing is deeply in shame of the pilot's action," it posted on Instagram, adding that it had made clear its opposition to the Russian invasion of Ukraine by putting 'No War' stickers on driver helmets and has three Ukrainian refugee families traveling with the team.

"On the basis of these considerations Ward Racing sees of continued cooperation with Artem Severiukhin and will proceed with terminating his racing contract."

Severiukhin said he had been misunderstood.

"I won the round of the European Championship and was very happy," he was quoted as saying by a Russian Automobile Federation spokesperson according to Motosport.com.

"I'm from Russia. I thanked the team and my relatives from Russia. Someone saw a bad gesture in my actions, but it's not. I just thanked them. I am Russian, I am from Russia and I stand by my country."

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The site also quoted the Russian Automobile Federation as saying they too were investigating "a gesture that some perceived as the 'Roman salute'."

They pointed out that the driver was competing under the Italian flag and the Italian anthem was playing as he made the gesture.

"We also report that we consider unacceptable any, even an accidental manifestation of fascism and Nazism in Russian motorsport and among Russian athletes," said the Russian body.

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