



Max Maeder Claims Third Formula Kite World Title As Singapore's Kite King Makes History In Portugal

Description

He won it in Paris. He has won it on the world stage before. And now, in the Atlantic wind off the coast of northern Portugal, Maximilian Maeder has done it again.

Singapore's kiteboarding superstar claimed his third Formula Kite World Championship title at Viana do Castelo in mid-May, completing a medal race that left him "by his own admission" in tears. The result was never in serious doubt for those who follow the sport closely, but the magnitude of the achievement hit Maeder visibly the moment he crossed the finish line.

"Obviously you can see I'm in tears," Maeder said after the race. "It's simply fantastic."



Maximilian Maeder (SGP) and Gian Stragiotti (SUI) congratulate each other after the medal race in Viana do Castelo. © IKA media/Robert Hajduk. Source: International Kiteboarding Association (IKA) official website (kiteclasses.org)

The Final: A Dramatic Medal Race In Viana Do Castelo

The Formula Kite World Championships at Viana do Castelo drew the sport's elite to the Portuguese coast for a week of racing across the Atlantic swell. Maeder navigated the fleet racing phase with characteristic precision before the medal race – the winner-takes-all finale that makes Formula Kite one of the most dramatic formats in Olympic sailing.

The men's podium saw Maeder take gold ahead of his Swiss training partner **Gian Stragiotti**, who claimed silver in what proved to be a remarkable one-two for their programme. **Valentin Bontus** of Austria rounded out the podium in bronze.

For Stragiotti, sharing the podium with the man he trains alongside daily made the result all the more special. "It can't get any better than that, with my teammate on top!" the Swiss rider said.

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Racing action from the Formula Kite World Championships 2026 in Viana do Castelo, Portugal. © IKA media/Robert Hajduk. Source: International Kiteboarding Association (IKA) official website (kiteclasses.org)

Women's Title: Nolot Triumphs For France

In the women's competition, **Lauriane Nolot** of France claimed the world title, demonstrating the technical brilliance that has made her one of the sport's most consistent performers. The Frenchwoman finished ahead of **Jessie Kampman** (Netherlands) in silver and **Elena Lengwiler** (Switzerland) in bronze.

The women's result adds to what has been a stellar season for French kite racing, with Nolot having targeted this championship as her primary goal following a consistent run of results across the European circuit.



Gian Stragiotti (SUI) in action at the Formula Kite World Championships 2026. The Swiss rider claimed silver behind his training partner Maeder. © IKA media/Robert Hajduk. Source: International Kiteboarding Association (IKA) official website (kiteclasses.org)

Three Titles And Olympic Gold: Maeder's Remarkable Legacy

To understand just how exceptional Maeder's achievement is, consider the context. Kitefoil racing only entered the Olympic programme at Paris 2024 and Maeder won that gold too, becoming Singapore's first individual Olympic champion. He is, by any measure, the greatest Formula Kite racer in the history of the sport.

His three world titles place him in a category of his own. The discipline demands a combination of physical fitness, tactical intelligence, technical skill on the foil and the mental fortitude to execute under pressure in a medal race format where a single mistake can cost everything. Maeder has demonstrated all four qualities across multiple championship cycles.

Singapore first fell in love with Maeder when he began appearing on the podiums of international Formula Kite events as a teenager. The national pride his victories generate is immense he occupies a rare space in the Singapore sporting consciousness, a genuine world-beater in a technical discipline that has grown significantly since its Olympic inclusion.

What's Next?

With the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics on the horizon, Maeder will now turn his attention to defending his Olympic title. Formula Kite is expected to feature again in LA28, and having already proven himself the world's best on both the Olympic and world championship stage, Maeder will be the name on every rival's lips as they plan their build-up.

For now, though, he can savour a third world title claimed in the most dramatic fashion in tears, on the Atlantic coast, with his training partner on the step below him. It does not get much better than that.

For more Singapore sport, see our recent profile of [Shanti Pereira's Asian Games 2026 campaign](#). We also [previewed Maeder's world championship title defence](#) ahead of the Viana do Castelo event.

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