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Karun @ British F3 Chandhok does the double at Oulton Park

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India's Formula 3 star Karun Chandhok scored a memorable double race victory at the Oulton Park race circuit in Rounds 13 and 14 of this year's British Formula 3 championship (scholarship class). **This brings his tally up to six race victories this year, more than anybody else competing in the championship.**

The weekend started fairly well for the 19 year old when he was 2nd after the test session on Friday. At the end of the test he said, *"At the start of the day I was quite some ways off the pace. We were lacking all round grip really, but the team and I worked really hard together and by the end we had the car fairly well balanced. Oulton has never been one of my favourite circuits, but after today I think we should be quite strong this weekend"*.

Qualifying on Saturday was a different story. In the first session, Chandhok was caught out by the grip levels in the circuit changing dramatically and ended up 3rd place but still upbeat about his prospects later that afternoon in the 2nd session. In that 2nd session, Karun put in a storming lap of 1:32.390 seconds which was fast enough for pole position but then had the lap disallowed because the session had been stopped just seconds before he crossed the line due to a car that had spun off. This left him 3rd on the grid and not pleased about the situation. *"I had to really dig deep and work hard to close the gap to pole position after the first session. It's very frustrating having done the laptime and then to find out that it's not been allowed because someone else spun off causing the session to be stopped. On the positive note I now know that I have the pace to fight with Viso and Kane tomorrow (Ernesto Viso and Steven Kane had taken one pole position each in qualifying.)"*

There was a huge crowd on Sunday to watch the action at what is largely reputed as the ultimate drivers circuit in the championship. With temperatures creeping up to 35 degrees centigrade, the teams and drivers alike were concerned about tyre degradation in these unusually warm conditions. At the start of race one, Viso and Kane collided at the first corner sending Kane spinning off to the inside. Viso carried on but had Chandhok breathing down his neck as they went up the long back straight. Into Island Bend at over 200 Km/h, Chandhok went for the outside line and pulled up alongside Viso.

Chandhok describes what happens next *“ I was on the outside at Island but I knew if I could hang on then I'd be in the right position for the next hairpin. It was really exciting running just inches apart at that speed. We braked together for the hairpin but then I managed to stop the car in time and he didn't and ended up in the wall.”* With his two main rivals out of the running, Chandhok reeled off the laps to score one of his most comfortable victories of the year ahead of Can Artam and the recovered Kane.



Race 2 was not quite as straightforward for the T-Sport driver. Starting alongside Kane on the grid he followed his team-mate down to the first corner. Ahead of them was chaos. Karun takes us through *“As we got to the first corner I could see dust flying which was from one of the championship class cars ahead. I could see Steven and Viso going to the left of the circuit and I decided to go to the right. As I came around the corner I saw a small gap and went for it and it worked perfectly. I had to take to the grass a little bit but I came out ahead of both of them. It was really nail-biting stuff for sure and it was very important to place myself in the right part of the circuit.”* From there on the Madras born driver pulled steadily away from Viso and scored his second double-race victory of the season.

Chandhok was delighted with his day's work *“Last night I couldn't sleep, I was so angry with what happened in second qualifying, but I guess what comes around goes around. We really deserved to be on pole yesterday and today I was determined to put that right. We've had our share of bad luck this year and today the god's were smiling on me !! I really have to thank the team and my sponsors JK Tyres, in association with Kingfisher, Rolon, UCAL, Amaron and Parx for their continued support. The two wins today are exactly what we needed to get out championship aspirations back on track.”*



With Kane not finishing the 2nd race, Karun has moved back up to second in the championship standings and has closed the gap from 37 points down to just 11. The championship now heads to the Rockingham speedway in 3 weeks time. Looking ahead to the next two rounds, Chandhok said, *“I’m looking forward to Rockingham. It’s a great circuit and the racing is always good there. We’ve got a pretty long break now before we go there. Most of the other guys are going to be out testing but due to our budget constraints I’m going to have to wait till the Friday test before I get my next run which is going to make things quite hard but we’ll see what happens.”*

Results –

Round 13

1. Karun Chandhok 29:17.245 seconds
2. Can Artam + 9.47 seconds
3. Steven Kane + 1 lap

Round 14

1. Karun Chandhok 18:55.184 seconds
2. Ernesto Viso + 0.59 seconds

Championship standings –

1. Steven Kane 196 points
2. Karun Chandhok 185 points
3. Ernesto Viso 163 points