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ARMAAN EBRAHIM
finishes 3rd overall in his first International Karting Championship



Armaan who ventured out to Malaysia in March this year at the tender age of 13 to take part in the **Malaysian Endurance Championship** and the **Malaysian Rotax Max Championship** finished 3rd overall in the Senior and Junior category along with his Malaysian Partner T.L.Sih. The final round of the Endurance Series was held on 30/8/03 at the Sepang Go Kart circuit- Malaysia. Armaan and partner Sih were placed 4th overall in the points standings before the race and the points gap between the 2nd and 5th placed teams were extremely close.

Qualifying went well for the team as Armaan who outpaced his partner in testing, was given the responsibility of qualifying the kart. Armaan clocked a time of 49.619 secs. and was placed 6th overall on the grid and 4th amongst the Championship contenders. Championship leaders Shafyq Ali and James Russel qualified 4th overall and 2nd amongst the Championship contenders with a time of 49.599 secs. The Indian Junior pair of N. Hanif and Sahil Shelar qualified 19th with a time of 52.069 secs and the Indian senior pair of Surjit and Nilesh did not qualify and had to start last on the grid.

The start was good and the first corner went thru without any incident. Armaan maintained a steady pace to move into 4th before the first change over with his partner took place. Half way thru the second session Sih started to loose about a second a lap and it looked as if the race was over for the Indo-Malaysian pair. Sih was pulled in for an early pit stop and on inspection, it was found that the chassis had a crack thereby destroying the front tyres and giving the kart no front end grip. The team decided to carry on by changing the front tyres every two pit stops and with some clever driving by both drivers they managed to finish the race in 3rd place amongst the Championship contenders. With this result they missed out on finishing second in the Championship by 1 point and had to settle for a very well earned 3rd place. This was a great achievement for the young Indian who turned 14 last month as it was his first International Championship Podium.

Going by his fathers record of being the first Indian to race in an International Championship, starting from Formula Ford to the British Formula 3 Championship, Armaan has set the tone by being the first Indian teenager to notch up an International CIK inscribed Championship podium finish.

With this performance, Armaan has got the Go Ahead to participate in the final round of the Australian CIK run Junior Inter Continental A (JICA) event in Geelong, Melbourne-Australia. The engines used in this event are the 100 cc Piston Port Direct Drive engines developing about 30 BHP with speeds in excess of 130 kmph. The event is on 18th and 19th of October. Armaan is expected back in India after completing round 4 of the Rotax Max Championship in Malaysia on the 8th of September to source some sponsorship to enable him to participate in the Australian event.

Akbar, who has had a long stint with Ajit Kumar and Raj Viradhan in Korea with the Formula BMW series managed to stop over in Malaysia to witness the final race and on being quizzed about his sons performance had this to say : ***“I am extremely happy on the progress being made by Armaan and he more importantly than his results is proving to be a mature driver. The training stint of making him drive with a different chassis and an old engine is definitely proving to be to his advantage and for this all credit goes to his coach and manager Wai Leong. Its nice to talk about records, but in my opinion records are always a story of the past. Yes it has its own sublime value and definitely deserves a mention, but in the ideal world it is more important to learn how to cope with the present and prepare for the future.*”**

I am also extremely happy with the progress made by Indian Juniors Sahil Shelar and N. Hanif who drove an excellent race to finish 6th in the Endurance race and 4th and 5th respectively in the mini Junior sprint race held prior to the Endurance.”

10 year old Parth Gorphade from Kohlapur also made a fantastic debut in the Cadet class by finishing 6th and he looks to have a promising career ahead of him.