

NARAIN KARTHIKEYAN AIMS TO CONTINUE HIS PRE-TESTING FORM AT TELEFONICA WORLD SERIES CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGE AT JARAMA

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India's top racing driver **Narain Karthikeyan** launches his Telefonica World Series title bid with the first two races of the championship at Spanish circuit Jarama this weekend. **Karthikeyan**, largely supported by the **Tata Group** along with additional backing from **JK Tyres** and **Amaron Batteries**, hopes to make it big in the 2003 championships this year.

Although the Nissan-supported Telefonica World Series (TWS) was only started last year, it has already replaced Formula 3000 as the leading feeder series for Formula 1. Three of last year's top TWS drivers have Formula 1 contracts – Minardi Grand Prix driver Justin Wilson, Toyota F1 test and reserve driver Ricardo Zonta and Renault test driver Franck Montagny.

Karthikeyan, who is the only Indian ever to have test driven a contemporary Formula 1 car, has moved to British team Carlin Motorsport for this season. He first drove for Carlin in 1999 and 2000, winning high-profile victories in the prestigious British Formula 3 championship for the outfit.

Carlin has already established itself as one of the top teams in the Telefonica World Series, and **Karthikeyan** and team-mate Bruce Jouanny have been setting excellent lap times in pre-season testing.

"Testing has been going very well," says Karthikeyan. ***"Carlin is a new team to the championship, and it is learning very quickly. I have been involved with them for a long time, and they are like a family to me."***

Karthikeyan is likely to challenge for top-three finishes in this Sunday's two races at the circuit where he recorded his best finish of 2002.

"Even though Jarama is not my favourite type of circuit, because it is very slow and bumpy, I still finished third in one of the races there. This year we're definitely aiming for at least a podium finish and possibly a win this weekend. We'll do the best we can this season and fight to win races, then we shall see how the championship takes shape."

Qualifying for the two races takes place this Saturday afternoon, with the two races running on Sunday. TEN Sports is carrying the race live on Sunday. Telecast begins this Sunday at 5pm with a repeat on Monday at 10:30am.

The Telefonica World Series by Nissan visits nine different circuits across seven different European and South American countries.

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