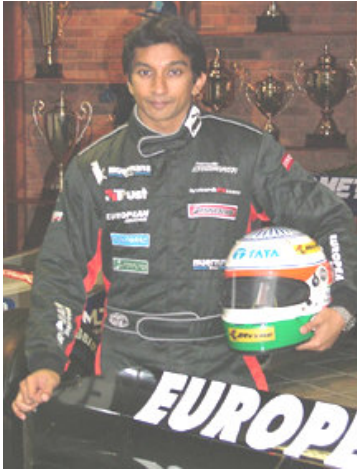


FORMULA ONE OPPORTUNITY FOR NARAIN KARTHIKEYAN

FAENZA, ITALY, December 9, 2003



European Minardi Cosworth today confirms that India's top motor racing driver, **Narain Karthikeyan**, will take part in the team's three-day test at the Vallelunga circuit, near Rome, later this week. The 26-year-old, from Chennai, is scheduled to drive one of the Faenza squad's PS03 chassis on Friday, December 12.

The team has been following **Karthikeyan's** career closely in recent years and, impressed with his on-track performances, wishes to take this opportunity to evaluate him in a current Formula One car. If the session goes well, there is a strong possibility the Indian driver could be asked to join the team in 2004.

European Minardi has developed a deserved reputation as the "team of choice" for talented young drivers looking to launch their Formula One careers, such stars as Fernando Alonso, Jarno Trulli, Giancarlo Fisichella and Mark Webber all having raced for the Faenza squad in their first season in the sport. In fact, at this year's Italian Grand Prix, eight of the 20 competitors who lined up on the starting grid at Monza were either former or current Minardi drivers.



The Vallelunga test is certain to be European Minardi's busiest ever, as the team will run two cars each day, one to be used for an extensive technical development programme, and the other, for driver evaluation.

"This is clearly a great opportunity for me, and to be offered this test by European Minardi demonstrates that people in Formula One have been taking notice of what I have been doing," comments **Karthikeyan**. *"It will be great publicity for India and for Indian motor sport."*



European Minardi Team Principal, Paul Stoddart, says, *“We have been watching Narain over the last couple of years, and we’re pleased to be able to give him this opportunity to show what he can do in a Minardi. He has performed very well in the Superfund World Series, and was unlucky not to have secured second place in the Championship this season. The World Series has some very good drivers racing in it – a point that became clear to us when Justin Wilson was competing there, in 2002. Narain is undoubtedly the most talented driver from India currently on the international motor racing scene, showing tremendous commitment every time he is behind the wheel. We believe he has great potential.”*

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