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Malaysians up for the challenge this time

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MALAYSIAN karters have been ripping up the Morac International Karting Circuit in Langkawi since last week to prepare for the 2002 Rotax World Finals on Jan 24-27.

With less than three weeks to the Finals, which will also serve as Malaysia's motorsports 2002 season opener, local drivers Ferhan Fauzy, Raja Razman Idris, Rodney Magness, Mahathir `Bob' Ngaau and Martin Druhan are making sure of a strong local contingent.

"We have been training very hard and we should get everything together by this Friday," said Razman when contacted in Langkawi yesterday.

"This time is much better from our first time because for one, we have five drivers to count on instead of just three.

"There's also home ground advantage, which basically means that we have the local weather on our side.

"And we are getting a lot of time on the track, as we were forced to arrive and drive when we took part in Puerto Rico."

Razman, Ferhan and Rodney represented Malaysia in the inaugural Rotax World Finals in Puerto Rico in 2000.

However, as the team from Puerto Rico have been disqualified for this year's race in Langkawi, Malaysia, as the hosts, won the privilege to replace them with local entries.

Ferhan and Razman emerged top two in the 2001 Malaysian Max Challenge to qualify for the Finals, while Druhan, an expatriate from Australia, made the cut as the best-placed locally registered over-35 year-old karter in the qualifiers.

Rodney and Ngaau, who ended third and fourth in the five-round Max Challenge, will replace the Puerto Ricans in the 53-nation field.

"We should have some advantage after the tests as the track, which is divided into the old and new sections, will be very tricky," said Razman.

The prestigious Finals is organised by Mofaz Motorsport, the Langkawi Development Authority (Lada) and the Langkawi Motorsports Club (LMC).

The premier edition in Puerto Rico was won by Gavin Grinje from South Africa.

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