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Rain threatens to wash out races

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THE local weatherman is predicting thunderstorms for the Rotax World Finals at the Morac International Karting Circuit in Langkawi on Sunday, which could pose a few problems to more than 70 international karters.

Irrespective, Malaysia's campaign could also be dampened as the national drivers have only tested on the 1.3km track only in the dry for the last three weeks.

"My friend, who is working at the meteorological station in Gunung Raya, has informed me that the weather will be cloudy with slight drizzles in the next two days," said Malaysian karter Ferhan Fauzy in Langkawi yesterday.

"But the bad news is, he also said that they are expecting thunderstorms on race day (Sunday). Should this be true, then we will all be struggling to get the right set-up for the karts, and I have never tested this chassis in the wet before."

Ferhan, the top qualifier in the Malaysian Max Challenge, will be joined by teammates Raja Razman Idris, Rodney Magness, Mahathir Bob Ngaau and Martin Druhan.

Druhan, an Australian expatriate who holds a Malaysian racing license, will represent the home nation in the over-35 year old category having qualified as the best-placed veteran in the five-round Max Challenge.

Based on the tests results, Ferhan should emerge as the Malaysian favourite as the only karter who managed to lap below the 1:03-minute mark.

Razman, who emerged as Malaysia's best bet at the inaugural Finals in Puerto Rico last year, is hoping to recover from muscle strains on his ribs after conducting tests last week.

"It's not that I don't like to race in the wet. Actually, I enjoy racing in the wet, but the problem is that there could be too little time to find the best setting for the kart," added Ferhan.

Aside from Malaysia, the field will be made up of karters from Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Holland, New Zealand, Norway, Philippines, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Britain and the United States.

As the series is based on the standard Rotax FR125 engine, which can be fitted to any 100cc homologated chassis, the competition will be fairly balanced. There will be strictly no modifications allowed on the engines, which were distributed to karters fresh from the box yesterday. The international competitors, who have all arrived in Langkawi, will get their first feel of the track today.

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