

28/01/2002

It's a step forward for local drivers

THOUGH Malaysia had four karters who qualified for the Rotax World Finals at the Morac International Karting Circuit in Langkawi yesterday, the results proved that the odds were still too great for our local heroes to succeed at the highest level.

It was Ferhan Fauzy who emerged as the first Malaysian to finish the 25-lap race, but his 25th overall position still puts Malaysia near the bottom-half of the Finals list comprising 34 drivers from 19 countries.

"I would have loved to finish higher but I'm not too disappointed as I managed top-25 in the world," said 25-year-old Ferhan, the eldest son of events organising chairman and Mofaz president Fauzy Abdul Hamid.

"It was quite a hard race because I was fighting against some really good drivers but this should also boost my confidence and I hope to do better should I get to qualify for the Finals next year," added Ferhan, who plans to compete in the first Formula Malaysia Championship in March.

But in the broader picture, Malaysian drivers are technically about one-minute behind the South African, British and Australian drivers who dominated the three-day event, as, judging by the stopwatch, Ferhan was 55:56 seconds behind eventual champion Claudio Piazza-Musso from South Africa.

Top-10 qualifier Rodney Magness checked in two laps behind Musso in 27th position, followed by Mahathir Bob Ngaau in 28th. Raja Razman Idris, who clinched the last ticket for the Finals in the second-chance race on Saturday, was forced to retire after just five laps.

But then again, the fact remains that its a step forward for Ferhan, Rodney and Razman to book a place in the main race after having failed to do so at the inaugural Finals in Puerto Rico last year.

Had things worked out better for Rodney, who faced overheating problems during the race, Mahathir Bob, who lost his engine's power-valve, or Razman, who found himself trailing the field by almost a lap after recovering from a crash just two laps into the race, what had happened is part and parcel of racing.

And hopefully, Malaysians can produce improved results at the third World Finals to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa next year.

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