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## G1-Meritus Porsche trioclinch victory

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THERE wasn't much incidents, but the adrenaline ran high in the fourth edition of the Merdeka Millennium Endurance Race (MME) at the Sepang Circuit yesterday. And to cap it all, history was made.

Off the rolling start, the Amprex Motorsport's BMW M3 of Matthew Marsh, Genji Hashimoto and Charles Kwan broke away with BSA Motorsports' Radical SR3 of Stuart Moseley, Simon Moulton and Kozi Kalaitzidis and the BSA Porsche GT3 of Jimmy Low, Wolf Henzler and Marco Seefried giving chase.

The hottest period of the race was between 3.0pm and 4.0pm, an eventful hour in which the BSA Radical pitted with engine problems, needing 35 minutes of service. They rejoined in 37th position and had a hill to climb.

Incidentally, the Amprex M3 also suffered mechanical problems and their pit stop was made even worse by the pitlane air compressor failure. In fact, during that period the air compressors in all pits failed due to the heavy workload.

The Crest Jaseri Porsche of Datuk Mokhzani Mahathir, Alex Yoong and Faizal Hakimi Jaafar, which was running without problems, eased into a one-lap lead ahead of the BSA Porsche of Low, Henzler and Seefried.

The Honda Racing Integra of Takahashi Kunimitsu, Hidetoshi Mitsusada and Hiroki Kato was running well ahead of the Class A field in fifth overall, and even ahead of the Naza Porsche of Tunku Hammam Tunku Sulong, Nigel and Craig Albon.

In the seventh hour, the Amprex M3 was moving up and gained second place after the G1-Meritus Porsche of Firhat Mokhzani, Eric Yeo and TJ Chin pitted, BSA's Porsche however, was able to break into a one-lap lead.

Honda Racing's Takahashi Kunimitsu, Hiroki Kato and Hidetoshi Mitsusada were leading Class A and running sixth overall, having completed 191 laps. Class B was led by Proton Satria GTi drivers Kok Pak Chiang, Ng Pui Choon and Yasuhiro Morita, who had completed 182 laps.

With less than three hours to go, BSA's hopes were almost shattered as the Porsche pitted with mechanical problems and into the lead for the first time went the G1 Meritus Porsche of Firhat, Yeo and Chin.

But Crest Jaseri, in a desperate attempt, put Yoong in the driver's seat with orders to catch up. They were two laps behind and Yoong was making up ground at a rate of two seconds per lap. An exciting finish was on the cards.

The Amprex M3 meanwhile, began to falter and dropped to 11th after a lengthy pit stop.

The stage was set for an all-Porsche battle to the finish with the Naza Porsche in third just one lap behind Crest Jaseri.

Firhat had to go until the final 50 minutes and Chin would be given the task of bringing the car home, and etch his name into Malaysian motorsports history as the youngest ever winner of the MME.

Entering the final hour, Naza overtook Crest Jaseri for second spot, and they were lapping at least eight seconds faster than G1 Meritus, but the latter was still a lap in front. But with just 30 minutes left, it began to drizzle.

Then came the drama in a three-car pile-up which included a Class C Honda Civic of Azman Hussin that crashed into the Crest Jaseri Porsche with Yoong at the wheel. The safety car was brought out but Crest Jaseri's race was over, but Azman got off worst having had to be rushed to the

hospital.

Naza too pitted their Porsche, and G1 Meritus changed plans and allowed Yeo to complete the maximum five hours per driver regulation, and he brought the car home without incident to complete the car's 268th and last