

Mascarenhas aims consistency as National Rally Championship flags off

ASHIM SUNAM @ Bengaluru

AS the South India Rally — the first stage of the revamped Champions Yacht Club-FMSCI Indian National Rally Championship 2019 — flagged off in Chennai on Friday, Dean Mascarenhas remained calm and composed. He is not thinking too far ahead and wants to concentrate in his own category, INRC2, for 2019.

Despite having been around the circuit for around eight years or so, the 26-year-old has not been able to win the overall INRC championship. His best

finish was in 2017 when he won the INRC3 category and finished second with Gaurav Gill standing atop.

As of now, Mascarenhas, who is supported by JK Tyre Motorsports and Team Champions, just wants to start well in Chennai and aims for consistency. The other five rounds are set to take place in Coimbatore, Rajasthan, Kochi, Bengaluru and Chikmagalur over a period of five-and-half months and finishing top in his category is his sole objective.

“There is a need to get into some sort of top rhythm early

on. One also needs to strategise accordingly, as there are six rounds in the championship. Starting well is important, so is getting maximum points from the initial stages if you want to win. You have to be consistent. It is very important that I collect good points throughout the six legs. I want to focus on my category and if it goes well, maybe I can have a look at the INRC, but the objective is to win my category,” Mascarenhas told this daily.

It goes without saying that several participants in INRC 2, 3 and 4 have a deep desire to



Dean Mascarenhas topped INRC3 and finished overall second in INRC in 2017 edition

win the overall championship, which is not easy with the competition being top notch. Participants at the top with quality teams and cars have an obvious upper hand.

Having been hailed as the next big thing early on, he has not been able to live up to those ‘great expectations’. However, his performances have not been bad either. In his debut year (2011) he secured the first position in the Rally Star Cup in a Maruti Suzuki Esteem and has won several rallies and stages after that, which proves his potential. But with the

sport growing and sponsors coming in, he hopes to deliver the goods. Initially, it was not easy without sponsors, but things have changed now.

“My family used to fund my rally career, but now that the sponsors have come in, it is benefiting me a lot as well. I know I have the talent to deliver the goods with such support. I will do well in the future and make everyone proud,” said Mascarenhas, who will drive a Volkswagen Polo in the championship along with his navigator Shruptha Padivel.