

Sethu slips, recovers but slips again

Senthil Chandrasekaran finishes 18th in Race 1

ARRC

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It was a day of mixed emotions for IDEMITSU Honda Racing India with Rajiv Sethu finishing 22nd and Senthil Chandrasekaran 18th in Race 1 of the FIM Asian Road Racing Championship Round 3 here on Saturday.

Before the start, the mood in the camp was one of delight and optimism after Rajiv finished a career-best seventh in qualification for the Asian Production 250 category, with a personal best 1:53.573s at the Chang International Circuit.

Costly error

In a race that's done and dusted in 10 laps, one mistake can make a lot of difference – as Rajiv found out.

Mistiming the clutch release in the opening lap forced him into an impressive but unnecessary wheelie which saw him drop 14 positions.



Mixed day: Rajiv Sethu fought his way up to 10th before a crash sent him spiralling down. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Despite being forced to go wheel-to-wheel with the chasing pack, he held his nerve and fought his way up to 10th by the final lap – a position he and his team were aiming for. Looking for the slipstream at turn 3 to further move up the order, the 21-year-old lost control of his bike and crashed. He dropped places again, 12 this time, to finish a disappointing 22nd.

Teammate Senthil Chandrasekaran, placed 20th after qualifying, moved up two places to finish 18th heading into Sunday's

Round 2.

Rajiv was visibly upset about not making the most of an excellent qualifying but was determined to leave Thailand with a good performance in Race 2.

"It was not what I expected, but there is a lot to learn," he said, adding, "I had a bad start, managed to recover but after the crash at the end, my aim was to just finish the race. Tomorrow is a new day, a new race. I hope to make amends."

(The writer is in Buriram at the invitation of Honda Racing India)