

Dhruv makes a strong impression

Along with teammate Karthik staves off Arjun's challenge

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Dhruv Mohite of Volkswagen Motorsport stamped his class winning the opening race of the premium Indian Touring Cars (ITC) class with ease in the MRF MMSC FMSCI Indian National Car Racing Championship at the Kari Motor Speedway in Chettipalayam here on Saturday.

It was the kind of start that the VW team wanted as it could build the confidence of the young boys for the rest of the season.

Pole sitter Dhruv, the Ameo Cup winner last year, got off to a cracking start and so did his teammate Karthik Tharani.

The duo was aware that the seasoned campaigner Arjun Balu (Race Concepts), who started third on the grid, could upset their plans.

But Arjun slipped a gear at the start and was pushed to fourth place. He did not give



Super show: Dhruv Mohite's Volkswagen hugs a curve on way to victory in the Indian Touring Cars class on Saturday. ■ M. PERIASAMY

up and moved rather quickly to third.

Braking problems

The top three moved at great pace even as the skies threatened to open up. But the VW duo smartly maintained its position all the way to the flag.

For Arjun, his brakes let him down midway through but he managed it all hand-

braking to the third position.

"I have never driven an ITC car before nor had I been part of the testing process.

"For me, it was just a learning curve and whatever results we are getting is surely because of the efforts that the team has put in," said Dhruv.

"We knew we were in a comfortable position to challenge the experienced driv-

ers in the fray. Arjun has been racing more than my age.

"It always stays on the back of your mind but luckily everything worked the way we wanted," he added.

Earlier, Jeet Jhabakh chalked up a fluent lights-to-flag victory after starting from pole position, in the Volkswagen Ameo Class race, while Bangladesh's Ai-

man Sadat topped the junior class.

Unfortunately, the day's schedule came to a screeching halt due to heavy showers. That eventually led to the cancellation of the Formula LGB 1300cc races soon after Race Concepts team made a clean sweep in the Super Stock race with Rithvik Thomas, Prateek Benya and R. Rajashekar finishing in that order.

The results (provisional, all 15 laps unless mentioned): Indian Touring Cars: Race 1: 1. Dhruv Shivaji Mohite (VW Motorsport) 17: 20.105secs; 2. Karthik Tharani (VW Motorsport) 17:27.062; 3. Arjun Balu (Race Concepts) 17:44.280.

VW Ameo Class: Race 1: 1. Jeet Jhabakh 17:48.937; 2. Anmol Singh Sahil 17:52.579; 3. Saurav Bandyopadhyay 17:55.182. **Junior:** 1. Aiman Sadat (Bangladesh) 18:14.077; 2. Viraj Jairaj Jhala 18:15.882; 3. Chetan Surineni 18:04.139, 14 laps).

Super Stock: Race 1: 1. Rithvik Thomas (Race Concepts) 22:21.408; 2. Prateek Benya (Race Concepts) 22:23.462; 3. R. Rajashekar (Race Concepts) 22:24.390.