

SOLID STARTS FOR VISHNU, CHIRAG

Coimbatore: India's premier racer Vishnu Prasad and young Chirag Ghorpade sparked on Day 1 of the 22nd JK Tyre FMSCI National Championship here on Saturday, winning their races in contrasting styles. Syed Muzammil Ali proved to be the other hero of the day, cruising to victory in the first round of support race, the JK Tyre Suzuki Gixxer Cup.

In the revamped opening round of the championship, the focus was on younger talent and they didn't disappoint with as many as 27 lining up for their first real shot at glory. Fourteen-year-old Chirag from Bengaluru, and Momentum Motorsports, was the most impressive, taking the pole position in the morning and winning his first race in the Novice Cup. Chirag clocked 13:37.912 minutes to beat the aggressive field by 0.338, leaving his teammate Aaroh Ravindra and Mohamed Ryan (MSport) fighting for the other two places on the podium. The youngster, who exhibited speed and skill, brought in his 14th birthday in style, winning Race 2 as well. Aaroh was left chasing him in this race too but Parikshit Dardhalli (DTS Racing) upstaged Ryan for the third place. The Formula LGB 4 boasted of a star-studded grid, with seven national champions in fray. The race began as a three-way tussle between Vishnu (MSport), Rohit Khanna (Dark Don Racing) and Ashwin (Dark Don Racing). Ashwin shot into the lead, going past MSport's Sohil Shah who began on pole at the first opportunity. He hung on to the lead all the way to the final lap. But the safety car, that came out a couple of hours earlier, hurt his momentum and saw him slip to the third place. — *Agencies*