

# Honda boss reposes faith in new class

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SUNDAY was a fruitful day for Honda at the Madras Motor Racing Track as their riders took home the honours in multiple classes at Round 4 of MMSC FMSCI Indian National Motorcycle Racing Championship.

Their dominance was particularly evident in the PS165 and PS201-300 classes, where their riders completed a clean sweep of the podium places. Rajiv Sethu won his sixth straight race in the PS165 class. He was followed by Sarath Kumar and K Kannan. Anish Shetty, Abhishek V and B Aravind took the first three spots in the P201-300 class.

Looking on in delight was Minoru Kato, president and CEO of Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India. He would have



Winners of the NSF250R class of the Honda India Talent Cup

been even more encouraged by the performances in Honda's one-make championships. In the NSF250R category, fourteen-year-old Mohamed Mikail, who Honda is sponsoring in the Thai Talent Cup, rewrote the record track time in the section that he himself had set. Geoffrey, another 14-year-old, came second.

"Honda has been involved in

racing for more than 60 years," Kato said. "And I believe that the younger generation is showing immense promise. We just started the India talent hunt last year and we have already found some potential riders. This time, there is a 12-year-old in the NSF250R category."

Kato, who took over Honda India two years ago, believes

that the NSF250R bikes — which are Moto3 grade — are the best way to groom talented young riders. "From our experiences in Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia, NSF250R is the best way to develop young riders. When I first came to India, I asked the team to focus on developing young riders. We were finally able to convince the government to let us export the 250R bikes."

Prabhu Nagaraj, vice-president (brand and communications) at HMSI was also pleased with how his riders had developed. "Round 4 has added 10 more podiums including four wins to Honda's championship kitty," he said. "Both Rajiv and Anish are leading with their right racecraft. What's most promising is that our riders are now not challenging competition but themselves."