



Ashwin emerges champion

DC CORRESPONDENT

A second-place finish saw Ashwin Datta of Momentum Motorsport emerge champion in the Formula LGB 1300 category with a race to spare in the fifth and final round of the MRF MMSC fmsci Indian National Car Racing Championship at the MMRT on Saturday.

On a day of hectic scramble for points, Mamallapuram's Raghul Rangasamy eked out a two-point lead over Bengaluru teenager Sohil Shah in the premier MRF F1600 category with a win and a fifth-place finish in the two races run today. Faridabad's Manav Sharma was the other winner. With two more races to be run tomorrow, Rangasamy has 142 points to Shah's 140 while Mumbai's Nayan Chatterjee (121) is placed third.

Likewise, in the popular Indian Touring Cars category, Dhruv Mohite (Rayo Racing), driving the Volkswagen factory-supported Vento, moved within four points of leader Arjun Balu (Race Concepts) who retired in today's race due to a freak incident (tyre deflation) in



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the very first lap. Mohite went on to finish second behind Volkswagen guest driver Daniel Rowe (South Africa), but earned full quota of 25 points. Balu has 148 points as against Mohite's 144 going into tomorrow's final race which will have a reverse-grid start.

Pole-sitter Balu (Race Concepts) pulled out a good lead in the very first lap, but lost the power-steering by Turn-3 when the belt came off. Soon after, the power-steering pulley fell and hit the rim of the

left rear tyre leading to deflation and retirement. Up ahead, Rowe and team-mate Mohite, and former National champion Arjun Narendran (Arka Motorsports), a non-registered driver, were involved in a three-way battle. The trio finished the race in that order.

Datta, who turns 21 in November, needed just one point to seal the championship going into this weekend and he managed to come in second behind team-mate Deepak Ravikumar and ahead of Mohamed Ryan (M Sport) in the

eight-lap race that was run behind a Safety Car in the mid phase due to on-track incidents involving three cars.

The result took Datta's tally to 163 points, well clear of Sohil Shah (M Sport, 95) who opted not to race in his races in the MRF F1600 class. Lying third in the championship is Chirag Ghorpade (Momentum Motorsport, 85).

"It feels great to win the championship with one race to spare. I had a good race today, starting from 11th position as I could not post a time in the qualifying session due to some problems with my car. After about three laps, three cars in front of me, went off the track and later, myself and Mohit Aryan were dicing for first and second. However, both of us went off the track under late braking in the last lap. In the process, Deepak Ravikumar capitalised and won the race ahead of me," said Datta.

Mumbai's Saurav Bandyopadhyay, following a third-place finish behind two South African Guest drivers, Jeffrey Kruger and Tasmin Peper in the Volkswagen Ameo Class race,

maintained his top spot on the leaderboard with 357 points, ahead of Pratik Sonawane (334) from Pune and Hyderabad's Jeet Jhabakh (328) with two more races to be run tomorrow.

The results (Provisional, all 8 laps unless mentioned): MRF F1600 (Race-1):

1. Raghul Rangasamy (Mamallapuram) (13mins, 29.135secs); 2. Sohil Shah (Bengaluru) (13:30.653); 3. Yash Aradhya (Bengaluru) (13:34.392). **Race-2 (7 laps):** 1. Manav Sharma (Faridabad) (14:48.254); 2. Nayan Chatterjee (Mumbai) (14:48.848); 3. Vishnu Prasad (Chennai) (14:48.857). **Indian Touring Cars (Race-1):** 1. Daniel Rowe (South Africa) (15:25.637); 2. Dhruv Shivaji Mohite (Kolhapur) (15:27.894); 3. Arjun Narendran (Coimbatore) (15:28.264). **Formula LGB 1300 (Race-1):**

1. Deepak Ravikumar (Momentum Motorsport) (18:56.445); 2. Ashwin Datta (Momentum Motorsport) (18:57.279); 3. Mohamed Ryan (M Sport) (18:57.770). **Volkswagen Ameo Class (Race-1):** 1. Jeffrey Kruger (South Africa) (15:36.052); 2. Tasmin Peper (South Africa) (15:38.620); 3. Saurav Bandyopadhyay (Mumbai) (15:39.554).