

Pepper — adding spice to the tracks

MOTORSPORTS

S. DIPAK RAGAV
CHENNAI

The final weekend of the MRF MMSC-FMSCI Indian National Car Racing Championship saw an exchange programme with three racers from South Africa taking part in the various races for Volkswagen.

The contingent included 29-year-old woman racer Tasmin Pepper who won the final Ameo Cup race and finished third in the race held in the morning. Pepper, an accomplished driver in South African touring cars, has had an eventful 2019 where she was part of the inaugural edition of the W series, an all-women racing single-seater championship with Formula 3 cars being used.

Criticism

The series initially had received criticism when it was announced from a few top women drivers competing in



Pepper... running hot.

different championships for trying to segregate women. Since then Jamie Chadwick, the inaugural champion of the series has gone on to be signed up by the Williams F1 team as a developmental driver.

Speaking about her experience, Pepper, who finished 10th in the W series said, "I think everyone was a little bit negative about W series to start off with. But now they see, it is creating a space for us to gain exposure and improve our career.

"The biggest problem a lot of the time is, if there is a guy and girl doing similar lap-times, the guy gets picked. So this series gives us the platform to show what we can do."

About the "segregation criticism, Pepper said, "They are not separating us as they are not stopping us from racing elsewhere. What the series is doing is giving us more track time to gain experience.

"Just because we are competing against women does not mean they are less competitive compared to men.

"This is probably the most competitive championship I have ever been a part of and I have been racing against men since I was six years old," she said.

Pepper added that with FIA super license points to be given from the next season and the fact that the series goes to some of Europe's F1 tracks means it is a great series for aspiring women drivers to showcase their talents.