

## A taste of F1 racing for M'sian teens

By [ROWENA CHUA](#) | [EDUCATION](#)

Sunday, 27 Jun 2021



A scale model of Velionne Racing's car next to the award.

CARS in sleek designs speeding down a racetrack had students from across the globe on the edge of their seats recently. It wasn't a Formula One (F1) world championship that they were witnessing, but it offered just as much thrill, if not more, for the 280 competitors at the F1 in Schools World Finals 2020(21).

After months of preparation, the 43 teams from 18 countries came together virtually over five days early this month to prove their mettle in the global science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) challenge hosted in the United Kingdom.

Malaysian teams Velionne Racing and Keris Racing were among those watching with bated breath as their self-manufactured miniature cars, powered by CO2 cartridges, raced down the 20m track alongside their competitors’.

At the end of the finals, Velionne Racing – comprising three girls from SMK Sultanah Hajjah Kalsom, Kuantan, Pahang, and three boys from China’s Shanghai Pinghe Middle School – won the Chair of Judges Recognition of Achievement Award, and a nomination for the Best International Collaboration Award.

Keris Racing from SMK Seksyen 9, Shah Alam, Selangor, on the other hand, came away with a nomination for the Research and Development Award.

They also placed 25th and 27th in the overall ranking, respectively, as they accumulated marks for different aspects which included design and engineering, project management and verbal presentation. Prior to their appearance at the World Finals, the first-time participants had won the judges over at the National Finals in December last year, with Velionne Racing emerging as first runner-up and Keris Racing being crowned national champion.

At the World Finals, held from June 4 to 8, Malaysia was represented by five teams. Besides Velionne Racing and Keris Racing, the other teams were Fabulous9 from SMK Dato’ Undang Musa Al-Haj, Jelebu, Negri Sembilan; Rimau Racing, also from SMK Seksyen 9; and Raya Racers from Kolej Sultan Abdul Hamid, Alor Star, Kedah, and Madrasah Idrisiah Kuala Kangsar, Perak. They achieved 16th, 29th and 40th positions in the overall ranking, respectively.

Launched in 2000, F1 in Schools is an annual competition challenging students aged 11 to 19 in multidisciplinary areas which include physics, aerodynamics, information technology, design, manufacture and marketing.



*Triumphant trio: (from left) Nazrah Umairah, Nur Hadfina and Nur Anis bagged an award at the F1 in Schools World Finals 2020(21).*

## **Velionne Racing: 'Kingfisher' takes flight**

In an email interview with StarEdu, Velionne Racing's Nazrah Umairah Nazrin Effendi, Nur Hadfina Abdul Majid and Nur Anis Ayuni Ishamudin described their participation in F1 in Schools as a "blessing".

"We joined our school's F1 team as juniors in January 2019. Back then, we didn't get the opportunity to represent our school in the competition," the 16-year-olds shared.

It was exactly a year later that the trio were selected to compete at the national level.

Part of what drew them to the competition was their seniors' success in it.

"Our seniors had taken part in the World Finals five times. Qualifying for it fills us with pride," they said, adding that their school's F1 team is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year.

Coupled with that was their interest in product designing, which was sparked when they were studying the Design and Technology subject in Form Three.

The girls' journey to the World Finals was, however, almost cut short when the team from China they were originally paired with withdrew from the competition after three months of collaboration.

Having secured a new pairing in April this year, the team had to overcome language barriers as their peers from China could not communicate in the English language.

They also had to grapple with the paired team's limited Internet access – for instance, blocked Google services in China.

"It was challenging but it gave us a precious experience. We learnt to share information via WeChat and use translators," they said, adding that the Covid-19 situation restricted their movements in conducting research and marketing activities.

On what made their car unique, the science students said its wings and wheels were built from Velionne Plastic, a new type of plastic which they created in collaboration with Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP).

In addition, it was inspired from the flight patterns of the kingfisher.

"We designed body curves for the top and the bottom of our car, since this allows it to go down the wind flow with minimal impact.

"Besides, the pointed nose-cone shape pierces air resistance smoothly so that it can channel the air flow well," they said.

Reflecting on their hard-earned journey, the team was thankful for those who had lent their support.

Among them were school principal Yusof Kassim, teacher advisor Hasfasuriazal Hasman, team patron Tengku Arif Temenggong Pahang Tengku Fahd Mua'adzam Shah Sultan Ahmad Shah, main sponsor

Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah, who is the Indera Mahkota MP, and Prof Ahmad Razlan Yusoff of UMP.

Moving forward, the team will pass on their knowledge through their ongoing “first touch programme”, which aims to encourage more teams from other schools to take part in F1 in Schools.



*Gains aplenty: (from left) Aiman Daniel, Iman Nuraina, Wan Ilhan Erina, Wan Qistina and Ammar Khalish benefited from their participation in more ways than one.*

### **Keris Racing: Winners despite setbacks**

Although national champion Keris Racing did not manage to scoop any award at the World Finals, they were grateful for the insights gained.

Speaking to StarEdu via a video call, team manager Wan Ilhan Erina Wan Zulkifli likened their participation at the international level to entering a new world. “It was very eye-opening and exciting. There were many talented young students taking part. It was great to be in the same environment, although not physically. We could feel their strong presence,” said the 16-year-old.

Ammar Khalish Abdul Rahman, the team’s design engineer, took responsibility for their car’s breakage at the World Finals.

“I designed the car itself. The durability and the design were up to me.

“During our race with a team from China, our car broke. It hit the end of the track.

“The nose of our car was too long, too slim and lacked support. It was a learning experience for me,” said the 17-year-old.

He added that his participation in the F1 in Schools competition has improved his presentation and communication skills, besides leading him to discover his interest in engineering. Aiman Daniel

Muhammad Hussain, 18, cherished the feedback he received from the judges on his team's pit display which he was responsible for. An avid fan of F1, he expressed regret for not being able to meet F1 drivers personally due to the pandemic.

"It's sad that this year's World Finals was held virtually. Usually, it's organised at an F1 Grand Prix, and participants get to meet the drivers and see the cars face to face," he said.

Aiman Daniel's father is one of the lecturers from Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) advising the team of five throughout their participation in the competition, together with the school's teacher advisors Kashnani Mohd Noor and Amirul Izham Ishak.

Also supporting the team were two main sponsors: Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau and Les' Copaque.

"They made it happen for us," said Wan Qistina Wan Abdullah, 17.

Iman Nuraina Mohammad Faizal, also 17, urged students to have courage in broadening their horizons through F1 in Schools.

"Just go for it! We created a lot of memories and gained a lot of knowledge through this competition," she said.

The team's commitment was Kashnani's source of pride. "Keris Racing is superb. They gave their all for the competition. They are winners in my heart," said the Technical Communication Graphics teacher.