



Ferodo announces 2011 racing team

Gennaro Bonafede, who was an impressive runner-up in Class T of the 2010 Bridgestone Production Car Championship in his first season of senior circuit racing, will head a three-man Ferodo-backed team in 2011.

The 20-year-old Pretoria University Engineering student, son of multiple former National Champion Rally Co-driver Vito, will again be at the wheel of the Ferodo Volkswagen Golf GTi. His team-mates, both of whom will contest the Engen Volkswagen Cup, are rookie Kelvin van der Linde and the experienced Lee Thompson.

A former Engen Volkswagen Cup Rookie of the Year, the tall youngster made a big impact in his first season of Bridgestone Production Car racing after two seasons with Team Ferodo Young Drivers in Volkswagen Cup, winning five races on his way to second in class and giving notice that he will be a strong title contender in the new season.

Van der Linde, who turns 15 on June 20, will be the youngest driver in senior circuit racing in 2011 and is the third generation of the famous Van der Linde racing family. His grandfather Hennie won three national saloon car championships in the 1980s, his father Shaun won five titles in Formula GTi, touring cars and production cars from 1992 to 2004, and his uncle Etienne won national championships in karting, Formula Vee and Formula GTi in South Africa and in Formula Opel in Europe and Germany in 1998.

The Dainfern College grade 9 pupil has acquired an impressive list of achievements since his first kart race as an eight-year-old in 2004. In 2008 he and his younger brother Sheldon made South African motor racing history when they both won National Karting Championships in the same year. Kelvin was both National and Northern Regions Mini Max champion in the Rotax Max Challenge. Last year he won two karting championships, taking the honours in the Engen National Karting Junior Rok class and also in the Northern Regions Rotax Max Junior Max category. He missed out on a third title by a mere three tenths of a point in the Rotax Max Junior Max class.

Thompson is a former National Formula Vee champion (in 2001) and VW Cup champion (in 2007) and will contest the Masters' category in the VW Cup in 2011. The 31-year-old, who runs his own racing car preparation business at Zwartkops Raceway near Pretoria, won the Northern Regions Goldwagen Challenge (class A) last year after taking overall and class A honours in 2009. He also had a few outings in a Class A BMW 330i in the Bridgestone Production Car Championship.

“We have a great blend of youth and experience in our team for next year,” said Ronnie Erasmus, Motorsport Manager of Federal-Mogul, manufacturers of Ferodo brake pads. “It has always been Federal-Mogul’s intention to recognise young talent in motorsport and assist with its development, so we are delighted to have the latest racing Van der Linde champion in our team. I’m sure he will learn a lot from his more experienced team-mates. Gennaro enters his fourth season with us and has done us proud. We extend a warm welcome to Lee and Kelvin and look forward to a great new season ahead.”

“We will also be continuing our support, for a third year, of Gavin Wilkin, who races a V8 Ford in drag racing’s Senior Eliminator class, and uses Speedpro and Felpro engine components and Champion spark plugs. In karting, we will be supporting Sheldon van der Linde, younger brother of Kelvin, who will be contesting the Engen Junior Rok national championship. His Birel kart will be in Ferodo team colours.”

Long time supporters of motorsport in South Africa and, in recent years, of exciting young talent, Federal-Mogul's Ferodo brake pad and Champion spark plug brands are world famous and used by top competitors in all branches of motor sport. They are official suppliers to both the Engen Volkswagen Cup series and the Formula Volkswagen single-seater championship. The factory Volkswagen Polo team, winners of the last six national rally championships, rely on Champion spark plugs.

The opening round of the 2011 WesBank Super Series, which hosts both the Bridgestone Production Car Championship and the Engen Volkswagen Cup, will take place at Kyalami on March 5.

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