



Bonafede enters 2011 as a Production Car title favourite

It's hard to believe that it was almost a year ago to the day that Gennaro Bonafede made a sensational entry into the hard fought Bridgestone Production Car championship.

With backing from Ferodo he raced a Golf 5 GTI turbo and displayed a rare blend of verve and mature determination that belied his age.

At the season opener on 20 February 2010, the 20-year-old won the feature race at Kyalami and confirmed his status as one of South Africa's brightest young motorsport talents.

Consistent performances throughout the season saw him scoop more trophies and end the year as runner up in the championship behind the highly experienced Graeme Nathan.

"I had a brilliant year," remarked Bonafede who is a third year Industrial Engineering at Pretoria University. "Second in the championship was something I honestly never expected to do in my first year in Production Cars so a big thanks must go to Ferodo and the team who made it possible."

This year he will be aiming for the Class T title, but knows he is facing stiff competition. "Last year was quite nice, but I'm expecting stiff competition now that I'm no longer a new kid on the block. The competition is tough but I'm looking forward to it."

Bonafede will start 2011 in the same car which he is familiar with although the new Golf 6 GTI is expected to appear by the third round. Once again Derrick Irving has been tasked with engineering the car.

In another development, Bonafede was recently signed as South Africa's first car racing Monster Energy Athlete. "That's quite an honour for me because there are some big names under the Monster umbrella."

Bonafede is one of the new breed of drivers who are slowly but surely changing the image of a race car driver. Forget about Formula One for a moment and picture the average South African driver of a decade or more ago. In contrast, the modern driver is clean cut, intelligent, well mannered and diagnoses problems on a laptop rather than discussing them over a beer.

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