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# so far so good

***After the exciting Winter Cup weekend in Lonato, Peter de Brujin shared his thoughts on the start of the racing season with us. And he explained his support to the new KF engines***

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How exciting must have been for Peter de Brujin – PDB boss – to experience such a positive start of the new racing season. His top driver, Michael Christensen, took KF1 win in Lonato after the exciting battle – followed by the accident - between Mancinelli and Piccioni. But it wasn't just luck! Michael proved to be consistent all weekend, making 3rd in the heat and 4th in the semifinal, despite the fact that he had only 1 day test with the new engines under his belt.

*For Michael it was almost a new experience – says Peter - because we only got the new engines 10 days before the race, and he tested it only once before coming to Lonato. For this reason I did not have any expecations, also because it was the first race of the season and last year we didn't start very well at all. We had a fantastic end of 2006, with Michael finishing 2nd at the FA World Championship, then winning the Macau GP, and we are continuing on the same wave. I trust Michael 100% because I know perfectly well his great ability as a driver, and I knew he would have done his best. He was in the right place at the right time, and he proved to have the skills to the win in this kind of situations.*

Picking up from this, Peter told us how his material performed in Lonato, and he couldn't hide his satisfaction for a true allround success. He was particularly happy about the reliability his materials demonstrated on track, and then introduced us to a new perspective on the KF engines discussion.

*I can't really say everything will be fine with the new engines, but karting is never without problems! Of course I'm very happy for Michael's win, but I'm also very satisfied of the feedback I received on the weekend. For one thing the chassis worked well with the new engine. It's the same as last year, but you can never rely on these things when such changes (engines) are implemented. So far I can say that the new engine didn't affect the way our chassis works and responds, and this is positive! Secondly, out of 16 drivers who entered the Winter Cup with me, only two had mechanical problems, which however were not related to the engine, but were caused by a defective piston. This is obviously to do with the fact that the new engine regulations help a lot the reliability in the lower categories. You need to look at the KF2 and KF3 class in order to have a realistic feedback. Of the 34 drivers in both KF2 and KF3 final grid, only 7 did not finish in KF2 and 5 in KF3. Last year, with the 100cc, 14 out of 34 in JICA and 12 out of 34 in ICA didn't see the chequered flag. We should also take in consideration the actual causes (accidents and so on), but frankly I think numbers speak for themselves. I think that this increase in reliability will be a great incentive for kids to enter as many events as possible.*

*Of course, if you look at KF1 final (15 out of 34 didn't finish) the Lonato race says something else. But it doesn't make sense to take in consideration the Formula1 of karting for a realistic feedback, because KF1 – just like FA last season – is about pushing the limit. And it's not possible to know the limit at the first race! Tuners and manufacturers have gone a bit too far with an extreme set-up probably...*

Peter's approach does make sense, and it's difficult not to agree with him. After all, everyone knows that former FA, now KF1 category is the essence of extreme karting, and tuners are obviously keen to push the boundaries to find the edge on the competition. But we thought the case for the new engines presented some grey areas, like the reliability of the added components (i.e. electric starter, internal water pump, clutch, balance shaft, digital ignition) and the costs associated with repairing or replacing them every time they break. It seems obvious that the more components you have, the more you are likely that something breaks up.

*I don't entirely agree – says Peter. I don't think the water pump, the electric starter or the balance shaft can break up so easily, and I don't really see the costs of replacing a water pump. I am still making this case based on the lower categories (KF2 and KF3) and I can say with some degree of certainty, from what I've seen so far, that with the new regulations we can race 2-3 weekends without changing the engine, and to me this is cost effective.*

*I give you more numbers: at the Winter Cup all my drivers (16) started with 2 engines each (total 32), and only two suffered mechanical problems. Bottom line is, as long as rpms are not raised too much, engines will work fine. On the other hand, if we apply this concept to KF1 at this stage, we forget the pioneering nature of the category.*

Quite unexpectedly, Peter showed particular enthusiasm for the new KF engines, so we ask him one final comment on CIK decision to introduce a single tyre supplier on international CIK events.

*Even though in principle I'm for a free market, because it promotes higher quality (at lower costs), a single tyre supplier in karting can do a lot to help teams and drivers cutting costs, and will level the playing field. At some point you start thinking that karting is not rich enough to afford a free market in the tyre sector, and you leave principles aside hoping this will help the quality of the competition. On this too, at this stage, I'm with the federation.*