

**EXCLUSIVE****BRADLEY:** A Brit who is now doing Singapore proud. TNP PICTURE: CHERYL TAY

# Driving under the Singapore flag

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REPORTING FROM SEPANG

**H**E RACES with a Singapore flag on his car, but he is not Suriya Bala Kerisnan Thevar, the only Singaporean racing in the 2010 Formula BMW Pacific championship.

Richard Bradley is a renowned British kart champion back at home, but has since moved to Singapore to make his foray into single-seater racing.

Currently living in Singapore, his racing licence is issued by the Singapore Motor Sport Association, and hence the Singapore flag on his car.

After racing at Super KF1 (Karting Formula 1) – the highest level of go-karting – the 18-year-old Englishman has had to cope with racing in single-seaters for the first time and also adjusting to the move from London to Singapore.

“I came over last November to join my father who was posted to Singapore for work in January 2008. My aim is to win the Formula BMW Pacific championship this year and move to F3 next year,” he said.

With 21 drivers on the grid this year (25 this weekend with the addition of guest drivers), the number of participants has doubled from last year, increasing the level of competition.

Funded by his father – a lawyer based in Singapore – the 1.88-metre-tall teenager is looking good as he finished second during the practice session yesterday.

Although this is his first time racing in Malaysia, it is not his first time racing in Asia having raced at the

Suzuka World Cup and the CIK FIA Asia Pacific KF1 Championship in Macau.

However, irrespective of the type of motor racing, the differences in the motorsports culture between Asia and Europe are very distinct.

“It’s tighter, faster and harder to race in Europe. The people there work very, very hard. I’ve raced with the best kart racers in the world at the Super KF1 level where some are twice my age and are very experienced.

“I’ve raced alongside a guy who won the world championship even before I was born!” said Bradley whose girlfriend is coincidentally his competitor in the same championship – 17-year-old Malaysian Natasha Seatter, the only girl in the 2010 Formula BMW Pacific season.

## Well-versed

With a diploma in motorsport engineering, he knows his technical and mechanical stuff very well and is able to tell exactly what is obstructing his racing line.

Other than racing in Formula BMW Pacific this year, Bradley is also coaching at the newly-launched Kartright Academy.

Hoping to help and contribute to the local motorsports community with his expertise and experience, the Michael Schumacher fan is keen on teaching kart enthusiasts the correct and proper techniques of karting, as well as the other aspects of karting such as the mental and psychological factors.

“I realise a lot of people pick up their techniques from the Internet. There’s a world of information out there but some of the things that can be found online severely lack credibility and accuracy. It’s appalling how some people use the most outrageous methods.”

## Ferrari slow? Don't worry

CHAMPIONSHIP leader Fernando Alonso played down Ferrari's relatively slow performance in the first two practice sessions for the Malaysian Grand Prix yesterday.

McLaren's Lewis Hamilton topped the timesheets in both the morning and afternoon sessions, while Alonso and his team-mate Felipe Massa struggled in the mid-division almost a second behind the pace set by the British 2008 world champion.

“It’s pointless to look for any significance in Friday’s classification. I’m seventh but I could just as well have been second or last and it would not have changed anything,” said Alonso.

The Spaniard, who won the season-opening race on his Ferrari debut in Bahrain and finished fourth in Melbourne last week, shrugged off yesterday’s sluggish display as nothing more than a typical practice session.

“It all depends on the difference between the programmes adopted by the teams,” he said.

“From our side, we are reasonably happy with what we

have done and first impressions would be that there is no reason to expect a different picture to the one in Bahrain and Melbourne.”

Alonso highlighted a number of factors that would determine the winner tomorrow. “It will not be easy but there is no need to be pessimistic,” he said.

## Control

“The temperature of the engines, the brakes, tyres and last but not least the drivers will be of the utmost importance. We will have to keep them all under control.”

Massa lies second in the standings after finishing second in Bahrain and third in Melbourne.

The Brazilian said: “What is clear is that Red Bull and McLaren seem to be going very well. Let’s wait and see what we can do in qualifying and especially in the race,” he said.

“The car handles reasonably well, we just need to work a bit more to improve our outright performance but we don’t have problems in any particular area.” – Reuters.



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