

# Going all out to start them young in Singapore

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ORGANISERS of the SingTel Singapore Grand Prix have gone into overdrive to reach out to youth in this year's race, the first in its second five-year deal with Formula One.

Many schoolchildren have featured in the build-up to this year's iconic night race, both in events staged by race organiser Singapore GP and by the sport's many partners and sponsors.

Since July, Singapore GP has visited 15 secondary schools where some 14,000 students got a basic introduction to F1, the most glamorous form of motor racing.

Three-day Zone 4 Walkabout passes, valued at \$228 per ticket, were given away so that some students could attend the event.

Then, there was a special guided tour of the Marina Bay Street Circuit for 120 students, which was part of Singapore GP's Rev Up Singapore! initiative aimed at bringing F1 closer to the public.

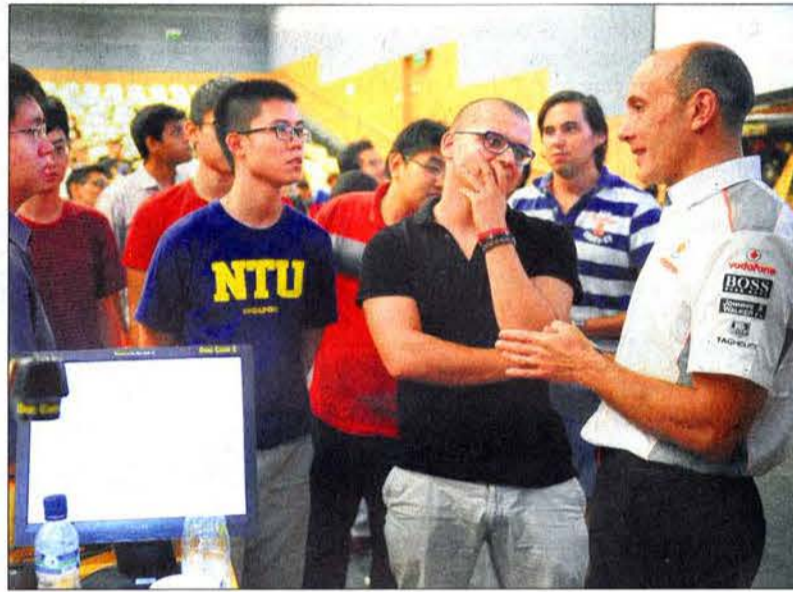
The experience saw the kids even going to some of the "hallowed parts" of the track, such as the team garages and race control room - places that fans attending the race or watching on TV have no access to.

Singapore GP has also a long-standing collaboration with the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) to provide students and staff with training and paid working opportunities at the sport's only full night race.

At tertiary level, it also organised the Formula 1.101 Innovation Talk. It saw 400 students from local universities, polytechnics and junior colleges gleaning insights from esteemed faces in the sport on Wednesday at Nanyang Technological University.

The speakers included Tom McCullough, head of track engineering at Sauber; Philip Prew, chief engineer with the McLaren team; and Paul Hembery, motor sports director with Pirelli Tyres.

Jonathan Hallett, director at Singapore GP, explained: "Singapore GP has always placed a keen emphasis on enriching the motor sports culture in Singapore and



Philip Prew (right) of McLaren was among the teams' engineering heads who spoke to students at the Formula 1.101 Innovation talk. PHOTO: SINGAPORE GP

growing the local fan base."

He added that leveraging on the technological innovation that is synonymous with F1 "made perfect sense" in terms of organising the talk, where about 80 per cent of the crowd were engineering undergraduates.

"Hopefully, through the talk, we are able to inspire the next generation of technology entrepreneurs and motor sports enthusiasts," he said.

UBS, which is a global partner of F1, also had a networking event for undergraduates.

More than 100 from the National University of Singapore, NTU and Singapore Management University attended an interactive session with 13-time F1 grand prix winner David Coulthard earlier this week.

Moirra Roberts, head of human resources, UBS Singapore, said the Swiss bank organised the event because "we recognise the importance of developing the local talent pool for the financial sector".

She added: "Our global partnership with F1 presents us with a unique platform to engage with potential hires.

"It gives them a chance to know more about our global partnership with F1 and how this ties in with who we essentially are as a firm."

Several sponsors also involved the younger set in their events.

For example, ExxonMobil Asia Pacific gave 22 students from the South West District a rare chance to meet Jenson Button of McLaren on Wednesday, during celebrations of its 120th anniversary in Singapore.

Wearnes Automotive tied up with Assumption Pathway School to organise a design-a-helmet contest for students.

The two winners, Muhammad Irsyaduddin and Muhammad Mikhael, got a joy ride from Infiniti Red Bull racer Mark Webber to an evening cocktail reception in town.

Said Wee Tat Chuen, Assumption's principal: "It is experiences and platforms like these that add up to affirm (the students) of their uniqueness and how much life can offer if they make full use of the opportunities that come their way."

Colin Syn, Singapore GP's deputy chairman, had revealed that one of the aims of the organisers' outreach programme was to have youngsters "grow together with F1".

This concerted effort to "start them young" has only just begun, in hopes that Singapore can one day have a bigger presence in F1 than merely hosting a night race.

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