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YOUNG RACERS' CAR GOES UP IN FLAMES

08:00 - 09 July 2008



Photo 1 of 2



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An electric-car racing team went out of a competition in a blaze of glory when a fire dramatically stopped them in their tracks.

The Abbey Racers, representing Faversham's Abbey School, were part-way through a race at Bayford Meadows kart circuit in Sittingbourne when flames started coming from the car.

Technology teacher Gary Parsons, the team leader, said: "We were just before the halfway mark when other drivers started alerting our driver to the flames. It was an electrical fire. The red flag came out straight away. This is the sort of thing that happens in Formula One, so we suffered the same fate as the professionals." Driver Alex Bass, 14, escaped unharmed.

The pupils were taking part in the Greenpower south-east heat against 11 schools from across Kent. Each team was given identical batteries and motors supplied by the organisers, including the Institute of Mechanical Engineers.

The car, put together by members of the Green- powered Car Club, had taken a year to design and build during weekly sessions. It was made from state-of-the-art carbon Kevlar tubing with a fibreglass body. Trial runs had gone well, so the fire surprised the team. Mr Parsons said: "It is one of those things you cannot foresee. Now we're famous. It was the first fire the event has ever had. It's part and parcel of the adventure."

Mr Parsons said work towards the 2009 race has already started last week. He promised: "We'll be coming back next year with a vengeance. The enthusiasm of the team is amazing. It's a great experience of engineering."

The race, a four-hour test of endurance, was won by a team from Bexley. The final will be held at Goodwood in October.

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