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RACE TO GET THERE

PRESS RELEASE

14th March, 2012

VPD Racing brings the world & Euro #1 Ukyo Sasahara to Europe

VPD Racing has announced today that they will bring twice Junior Max world number 1 and the reigning European champion, Ukyo Sasahara, to be part of their 2012 driver line-up as the 15-year old relocates to Europe in an effort to pursue his future Motorsport career.

The Japanese driver, who originally came to race in Europe with the Austrian-based team in 2010 after winning his first World title in Juniors, made his memorable debut by claiming the Rotax Winter Cup in Spain and then finished a very credible 6th overall in the competitive Euro Challenge series. The following season, Sasahara raced with a British team and succeeded in becoming the Euro champion, later adding the World number 1 status yet again to his long list of impressive results representing Japan at the Rotax Grand Finals in the United Arab Emirates.

Sasahara now makes the shift to Senior Max with VPDR, as he relocates to Austria to study at an international school situated close to the Rotax team near the city of Salzburg. The young driver's heart beats only for racing and this is now his life. From the age of 7 when he began, he has won eight Japanese titles in various classes and been vice champion four times. Add this to his outstanding international highlights and Ukyo's brilliant record tells the story.

Now, he has his sights firmly set on his new plans, *"I'm really looking forward to living in Austria and have always wanted this chance again after I stayed with the team in my school holidays in 2010. I have now learnt more about the style of racing in Europe the last 2 years and enjoy the high level of competition with so many good drivers. I will do my best together with my team at VPDR to win the European title this year and lift the spirit of the Japanese people. For me, to have this experience will be an asset in my life and I really want to thank everyone who is supporting me."*

For team manager, Ernst Penninger, the choice Ukyo made to join VPDR out of the options he had before him this year, is a welcome start to the season as they prepare for 'Euro' round 1. *"It's come as a nice surprise that we have Ukyo with us again, as we had actually not planned this for 2012. However, knowing now that we can assist in helping him as we did two years ago when he made his initial step into international racing is something we now find quite exciting. He was very young with much to learn, but already had incredible ambition back then and clearly showed his dedication and sheer determination in achieving what he has until now. He's worked hard."*

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“This year, we have an opportunity to work closer with Ukyo in developing his race craft and driving skills in seniors in international competition seeing he will be living full-time in Europe, while focusing on other aspects he needs as an essential part of his progress into formula cars. It’s very exciting to have this extremely talented young driver back at VPDR in a year when we have also made a significant change to use DR Kart to enhance our team’s future. Ukyo has made this decision with his family after considering his options and will be a valued member of VPDR. Our ‘Race To Get There’ philosophy will also provide a solid platform along with our partner network.”

The first round of the Rotax Euro Challenge takes place at the Karting Genk circuit in Belgium from March 28th to April 1st, where Sasahara will join his VPDR team mates, including two other junior Japanese drivers, and the Senior Max class has a fully subscribed field of 90 drivers.

For the latest VPDR news and updates - visit www.racetogether.com & www.vpdracing.com



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