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Formula Zero Emissions-Free Racing Takes Off

By [Ariel Schwartz](#)



Vehicle racing is at its core an unsustainable sport--we have enough trouble finding the resources to power utility-driven vehicles--but that hasn't stopped enterprising Formula One lovers from going ahead with the second annual hydrogen-powered car race.

Formula Zero [1], otherwise known as the first zero-emissions motor racing championship, launched last week in Surrey, U.K. with a group of go-karts that go up to 45 mph on a track that measures about half the size of a standard soccer field. The teams participating in the knock-out trials included engineering students from the University of Delft, University of Zaragoza, and the University of Leuven. While the Delft car squeaked by in third place (after the first place University of Leuven engineers and the second place Zaragoza team), the [team](#) [2] has received recognition from Formula Zero organizers for unveiling the first go-kart made out of 70% bio-renewable materials, including natural fibers and bio-based resin.

For now Formula Zero racing is a niche sport, but all components used in the competition are Formula One certified, and the race's Dutch designers hope to have full-size hydrogen cars zipping around the track by 2011.

Formula Zero is only a small part of the racing industry's attempt at going green--an attempt that is probably driven by the knowledge that the sport won't survive if it doesn't adjust to dwindling fuel availability. The IndyCar series already runs on ethanol, and the FIA (the sport's governing body) recently set up the [Environmentally Sustainable Motor Sport Commission](#) [3]. By 2011, the FIA [plans](#) [4] to harvest exhaust gases and heat for propulsion. But perhaps the most intriguing sustainability-minded racing vehicle is the [Worldfirst ecoF3](#) [5]--a car made out of vegetables that runs on chocolate-derived biofuels.

[Via [UK Independent](#) [6]]

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