

## Green tech in 'Formula Zero' race

**The world's first international hydrogen-powered motorsport race was held in Rotterdam this weekend.**

Dubbed the Formula Zero championship, the contest pitted teams from five countries against each other in a zero-emissions go-kart race.

Each team's entry was powered by a commercial fuel cell that produces electricity from hydrogen.

A Dutch team won the endurance event, while a Spanish team clinched the award for fastest lap.

### Peak power

Founded by Dutch motorsport enthusiasts Godert van Hardenbroek and Eelco Rietveld, Formula Zero is already recognised by the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile, the world's motorsport governing body.

The championship consisted of several events, with teams from the UK, US, the Netherlands, Spain, and Belgium competing for the top honour: zeroth place.

The events included a sprint race, won by a Spanish team called EuplatechH2 with a lap time of 36 seconds. In the endurance event, the Greenchoice Forze team from Delft University took the zeroth place on the podium.

That puts the Delft team on top in the standings. In third place was Imperial College London's team Imperial Racing Green, who proved to have the most reliable entry if not eventually the fastest.

"In 10 years if the motorsport industry as a whole hasn't engaged in zero or low emission principles, it probably won't be around," said Greg Offer, who headed up the Imperial team. "Teams that embrace this new technology early on will succeed, and those that don't will fall by the wayside."

Racing excitement won't suffer, though; Dr. Offer says that fuel-cell powered vehicles don't represent a compromise in performance over traditional petrol-fuelled engines.

"With a combustion engine, you have to reach three or four thousand rev[olutions per minute] to get your peak power," he says. "With an electric vehicle, it's all there from standing, and they're more efficient."

It is expected that the class will grow to Formula Three standard and then full-size racing class as interest in green motoring escalates. The next event will be held in the US in March. In 2009 the Formula Zero championship will comprise four races.

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