

A quest for fame in Sri Lanka

He walked into a TVS showroom like any other bike-crazy novice. But one gutsy race ride on a dirt track convinced Team TVS Racing that the Bangalore lad would go far in the world of motorsport.



C. Vijayakumar: all for victory

TWENTY-TWO-year old C. Vijayakumar of Team TVS Racing has carved a niche for himself in the world of motor sport. The gutsy lad, the lone Indian in the fray, made the two-event Sri Lanka Motocross Championship his own, winning the Lake Cross 2003 at Nuwara Eliya, and the Fox Hill Super Cross at Dahitalawa, with a lot to spare. In the process, he became the first Indian to do so in an international event.

Vijayakumar, on the rolls of the Team TVS Racing since 2001, has made a mark for himself on the national front. He was biding his time to break into the international arena.

At the picturesque, but, at times, treacherous terrains in Sri Lanka, the Bangalore lad graduated to international class in style.

In the Lake Cross 2003, held on April 17, at an altitude of 6,400 ft above sea level, at Nuwara Eliya, and temperatures dropping to nine degrees, Vijayakumar virtually set the tracks on fire with his blazing speed and driving skills to win all the three categories — 125cc, up to 250cc, and the Open class.

Riding his RM 125cc bike with aplomb, Vijayakumar showed his class and courage with a start to finish effort in the Fox Hill Super Cross 2003 at Dahitalawa on April 19, once again winning the three races with absolute ease.

Organised by the Sri Lanka Military Academy, the Fox Hill race, supposedly the toughest in the Island nation, had a few tough customers, but the talented Indian with flawless riding carried the country's colours to dizzy heights.

With international experience behind him, and astounding success coming his way, Vijayakumar intends to continue the winning streak at the third leg of the Asian Motocross Championship at Macau on June 6. However, Vijayakumar will be tested during the MRF National Championship at Pune on May 10.

That Vijayakumar could fulfil his dreams is largely due to the systematic process of training put through by the TVS Racing Team.

Team TVS Racing, under the watchful eyes of Venu Srinivasan, MD, TVS Motor Company, envisaged the need to create first a two-wheeler racing scene in the country and opted to race motorbikes in order to understand and improve on their products before reaching the customers.

In the process, there were many firsts to its credit: creation of a rally kit for converting normal commuter bikes into rally bikes; first team to have bikes racing in the four stroke category in the country; introduction of Race `a' Bike scheme in Chennai for circuit racing where a novice could ride on a TVS machine for a nominal fee and get complete training.

And Vijayakumar was one such find. "Having participated in a dirt track event near Yelahanka (40 odd kms from Bangalore), in which I finished second best, riding a TVS Fiero, Nippinder Singh `Nippy' spotted me and called me to the factory. I started off in the Novice category and having performed well moved on to the foreign category in 2002 and since then I have been riding on the 125cc and 250 cc TVS machines," Vijaykumar recalled his formative days. "There has been no looking back since," he says with pride.

He is now looking to a top three finish in the Asian rounds and then return to Sri Lanka for the Kurnaikule Super Cross in August.

TVS for its part is not resting on its laurels. Having dominated the country's two-wheeler racing in events such as the Para Dirt Track race meets, JK Tyre Millennium Grand Prix, Dirt Track 2000, Raid De Himalaya 2000, MRF National Motor Cross, Great Desert Himalayan Raid, and the National Road Racing Championship, to name a few, the Team TVS Racing has been putting its Research and Development wing to the test in the true sense. Nippinder Singh Jassy, Roopesh B.C. and D. Barguje are among the top three Team TVS Racing riders.

Here's wishing Vijayakumar and Team TVS Racing the very best.

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