

Vrooming ahead to the top, with Defianz

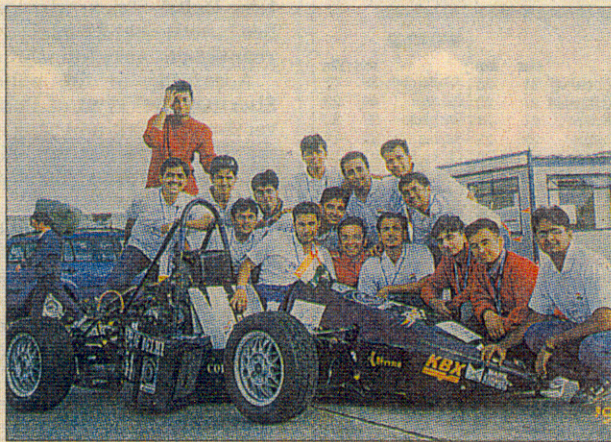
.... at 120 km per hour with just Rs 35 lakh in the pocket

By Nistula Hebbar
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Defianz 2003. An apt name for a car designed by 16 students of Delhi College of Engineering, which got the better of 58 other university teams to win the Formula Students car design competition, held at Leicester in UK, on July 7.

The team of students from Delhi, which calls itself Defianz Racing, not just designed the car, they did it literally in defiance of all odds: Lack of sponsors, tepid response from their college and general skepticism.

Defianz 2003 was a dream of 16 batchmates in one of Delhi's premier engineering colleges. "We heard about the competition, organised by the Institute of Mechanical Engineers and Society of Automobile Engineers (SAE) annually, a year-and-a-half back and decided to participate," says Nischint Gangahar, one of the team mem-



bers. The competition is sponsored by Aston Martin, Cosworth Racing, Ford, IBM, Jaguar and Shell. It is also a hunting ground for companies like Arrows F1, McLaren, Renault and Jaguar.

The team is the first from Asia to participate in the event. Comprising 11 mechanical engineers, two civil engineers, one chemical en-

gineer, one electrical engineer and one product engineer, the team collected the Rs 30 lakh they needed by saving on their pocket money, taking loans from family members, asking the organisers to sponsor their stay and automobile companies to sponsor parts.

"We almost gave up at the outset, as we had no money, but decided to hang on once

the engine, a Yamaha bike engine, was imported," said Akshay Kakkar, a team member. The 600 cc engine was modified to fit the formula car model of an open wheel and open cockpit vehicle. "The main thing is the modification and fixing of circuits, the car can race up to 120 km per hour," he adds.

For the team, the car is a living, breathing labour of love. "Most other teams had their universities or corporates sponsoring them, we took Defianz 2003 there and she delivered," says Jitesh Lohchab proudly.

The prize money of 250 pounds sterling is nowhere near covering their total expenditure of over Rs 35 lakh, but the team is hopeful that winning the prize will attract more sponsors.

Their dream now is to improve on the car and take it to the competition again next year. This time, they need a sponsor.