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## Monkey business a wheel winner



Pine Rivers State High School students Megan Gaskell and Josh McClennan show off the spoils of victory from the F1 in Schools Challenge national final in Melbourne.

Members of the Nitro Monkeys have gone bananas after they booked themselves a trip to Singapore by winning the national final of the Formula One in Schools Challenge in Melbourne.

The awesome foursome from Pine Rivers State High School – Greg Mills, Alysha Limmer and Josh McClennan and Megan Gaskell – were the Apprentice Class champions of a competition in which students replicate the running of an F1 team.

They will now combine forces with a national champion from another country to contest the F1 in Schools world finals in Singapore in September.

“We were going down there to have a lot of fun and make new friends and hopefully win,” Josh said.

“Once we found out we won we were so excited. We’re not the kind of people who go around and brag. Winning to us was a bonus.”

Pine Rivers project co-ordinator Corey Gieskens said the Nitro Monkeys, who also won Best Engineered Design for their class, made a big impression at the competition, run in conjunction with the Formula One Grand Prix.

“Most people thought they were a professional team and were shocked to find out they were an apprentice team,” he said.

“When we arrived down there on the day for the competition we thought we could finish at the pointy end, but to have a first and a second (place) was very exciting and a bit overwhelming.

“I know how hard the students have worked over the past 14 months and for them to be rewarded is really great.

“It’s not about winning, it’s about creating opportunities to learn and inspiring students, but when you win it is a bonus.”

Josh said Nitro Monkeys, who toured Formula One pit lane as part of their prize, were able to achieve their goal of improving on their winning effort at the Queensland finals, including breaking their own track record.

The team twice bettered their previous fastest pass of a 20m track, recording a national record time of 1.048 seconds before being outpaced by a rival team by 0.03 seconds late in the competition.

“We knew our car was going to be fast but during testing we never got near that time, so we were stoked,” Josh said.

Meg said she intended to take part in the F1 in Schools program, in which students design, market and race their own model racing cars, for another year.

“The whole experience of going to Melbourne was awesome and just being there was lots of fun,” she said.

Fellow Pine Rivers High team Red Hawk Racing, made up of Laura Wilkinson, Sam Bryant, Zoe Power, Matt Kachel and Joshua Smith, finished second in the Professional Class behind Basilisk Performance, from Ballarat’s Sebastopol College.

Mr Gieskens said the team, which took out the Best Team Marketing award, could well have won their class if not for their carbon dioxide-powered model car finishing ninth fastest.