

FAU racecar team places in first year at nationals

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For Jason Bivens and the 12-member team of Florida Atlantic University engineering students who participated in an international competition to build a Formula 1-style race car, it was their finest hour.

Overcoming naysayers and limited financial backing, Bivens and his team placed 53rd out of 106 college and university teams from throughout the United States and several countries in the overall competition and 41st in the 22-lap, 13.6 mile endurance race at the Ford Proving Grounds in Romeo, Mich.

"It was pretty intense

competition. Getting through the technical competition was our finest hour," said Bivens, the team captain and a senior mechanical engineering major at FAU.

Like a lot of little boys, Jason Bivens dreamed of being a race-car driver. What he never dreamed was that he'd actually become one. Bivens, 27, said he became a car buff "out of necessity."

"Since I could walk I was looking over my dad's shoulder, watching him fix and restore all of our own cars," he recalled. "We couldn't afford to go to a mechanic so we had to do it ourselves."

As captain of the Formula SAE (Society of Automotive Engineers) team, Bivens no longer had to go it alone. He



REVVED UP TO RIDE: FAU President Frank T. Brogan takes a seat in the school's Society of Automotive Engineers formula race car. Staff photo/Janet Paredes

and his team of engineering students designed and built a small Formula 1-style race car - like the kind that recently ran in the Indianapolis 500. The

university's SAE car competed in the U.S. Formula SAE competition last month, the first time FAU participated in the four-day event where 140 colleges and univer-

sities from all over the world competed.

Bivens admitted his team was up against some stiff competition. Many schools, like the University of Florida and Cornell University, have a whole program and entire facilities dedicated to Formula SAE projects. And unlike FAU, they have solid funding that ranges from \$40,000 to \$60,000.

Though winning the competition could have meant more interest and support, Bivens' aims were not so lofty: "My personal goal is that we finished every event since more than half the cars in the competition don't even finish. That alone would be a major accomplishment for a first-year team on a shoestring budget."