A MALAYSIAN sailor will be able to challenge the best at the Monsoon Cup in three to five years if the inaugural Malaysian Match Racing Circuit, which gets underway next month, lives up to its promise.

The three-leg circuit has attracted some of the best sailors in the country who will vie for the right to represent Malaysia in the World Match Racing Tour’s season-ending Monsoon Cup in Pulau Duyong, Terengganu on Dec 4-9.

The circuit, organised by T-Best Events in partnership with the Malaysian Yachting Association (MYA), aims to raise the standard of match racing in the country while providing a platform for development of local talent.

“Since 2006, we have been holding a one-off qualifier for Malaysians to compete in the Monsoon Cup. But that only happens once a year and with more sponsors coming in, we have been able to organise a circuit for the first time which will provide all-year round practice for our sailors to try to match the world-class teams.

“Give it three to five years, and I believe, we will have the talent to match the best. T-Best and MYA are going to work together to develop talent and focus on the future.

“We do not want our talent to go to waste like what happened to our (2006) Asian Games gold medallist (Ruffina ‘Tan),” said T-Best director and MYA vice-president Datuk Wan Hisham Wan Salleh at the launch of the circuit in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

The circuit will begin at the Royal Malaysian Navy Base in Lumut on May 11-13, followed by the second leg at the Pulau Indah Marina in Klang on June 29–July 1 and concluding at Ri-Yaz Heritage Marina Resort and Spa in Duyong on Sept 20-23.


The others are Navy duo Zaidi Pardi and Masyuri Rahmat and former national laser sailor Romzi Muhammad of Universiti Putra Malaysia.

“Six sailors have confirmed their participation and ahead of the closing of registration in two weeks, we hope to get two more,” said T-Best operations manager Shafique Iqbal.

Meanwhile, Wan Hisham said he is confident the Monsoon Cup will continue after the expiry of the current four-year agreement with the 2012 race despite the criticism by Sports Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek last year of the lack of Malaysian sailors coming through.

“We have yet to hear from the Sports Ministry but we have done all that they have asked for including exposing more young sailors to the Monsoon Cup. Our focus too has changed from promoting Terengganu through the event to developing sailing,” said Wan Hisham. By Devinder Singh
T-Best director and MYA vice-president Datuk Wan Hisnam Wan Salleh (left), T-Best senior operations manager Muhamed Shafique Mohamed Iqbal (right) and Royal Selangor Yacht Club secretary Jeff Harris at the launch of the Malaysian Match Racing Circuit in Bangsar yesterday. Pic by Yusni Ariffin