

Media Release

A1 TEAM LEBANON COMPLETES FIRST OFFICIAL RACE PRACTICE AT BRANDS HATCH

23 September 2005.../A1 Team Lebanon, the first ever national racing team to represent the country in international motor racing, took to the race track at Brands Hatch today for the first day of the inaugural A1 Grand Prix race weekend. Completing two practice sessions, the team's two drivers, Basil Shaaban and Khalil Beschir, each took a turn behind the wheel for A1 Team Lebanon.

Shaaban drove the A1 race car in the first session, with dry weather providing the young Lebanese with a good opportunity to gain more experience with the car and familiarize himself with the Brands Hatch Grand Prix circuit. For the second session the weather changed drastically, with heavy rain at the start. Beschir took over driving duties, but the rain, and a number of red flags due to track incidents, forced him to a limited number of laps.

Shaaban started the session well, posting lap times just outside of the top ten. As the session progressed, he dropped back, with the more experienced drivers starting to show their form, finishing 18th fastest as the session concluded. He reflected on his day, saying, "It's been a special day for me. Leaving the pitlane with the Cedar tree behind me was quite an emotional moment, although as soon as I was out on track, I was focused on gaining more experience of the car and learning the Brands Hatch Grand Prix circuit. The team has certainly improved the car since our last test at Paul Ricard and I feel more comfortable with the car each time I am behind the wheel. "

Beschir was disappointed to have limited track time, but remained upbeat after the session, saying, "I struggled to put together a good lap, because the weather was very bad, and due to red flagged incidents. I started to get quicker, but I had to return to the pits a number of times because of the red flags. It was difficult, but I did experience the A1 race car in the rain, which maybe useful for Sunday if it rains!" Beschir, completing only 12 laps, recorded 20th fastest time.

Team Principal, Tony Snook, added, "Basil ran in good conditions this morning and drove consistently, while Khalil suffered from appalling weather which made it difficult for him to settle in and put a clean lap together. All in all, a reasonable day, but I think, for whichever driver we select, tomorrow will be a tougher day. There is only one more practice session, then we go into four qualifying 'flying lap' runs. Tomorrow is forecast to be dry, so I hope we'll have a better idea of how competitive we are."

Official Practice Session 1 (13.00 – 14.00)

A1 Team	Driver	Time	No. Laps
USA	Scott Speed	1m16.516	19
Brazil	Nelson Piquet Jr	1m17.156	13
France	Nicholas Lapierre	1m17.216	20
Great Britain	Robbie Kerr	1m17.463	21
Malaysia	Alex Yoong	1m17.579	17
Australia	Will Power	1m17.673	30
Switzerland	Neel Jani	1m17.731	22
Portugal	Alvaro Parente	1m17.740	19
Netherlands	Jos Verstappen	1m17.970	20
Mexico	Salvador Duran	1m17.997	27
New Zealand	Matt Halliday	1m18.157	24
Germany	Timo Scheider	1m18.344	13
Canada	Sean MacIntosh	1m18.470	28
South Africa	Stephen Simpson	1m18.640	21
Japan	Ryo Fukuda	1m18.859	27
Pakistan	Adam Khan	1m18.932	14
Czech Republic	Jan Charouz	1m19.396	20
Lebanon	Basil Shaaban	1m19.491	24
Ireland	Michael Devaney	1m19.542	16
Austria	Mathias Lauda	1m19.674	14

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Indonesia	Ananda Mikola	1m20.126	16
Russia	Alexey Vasiliev	1m22.905	14
Italy	Enrico Toccacelo	1m25.320	5
China	Quinghua Ma	1m26.555	15
India	Karun Chandhok	1m28.607	2

Official Practice session 2 (16.00 – 17.00)

A1 Team	Driver	Time	No. Laps
Brazil	Nelson Piquet Jr	1m25.122	14
Great Britain	Robbie Kerr	1m25.361	21
Portugal	Alvaro Parente	1m25.639	15
South Africa	Stephen Simpson	1m26.294	16
France	Nicolas Lapierre	1m26.328	18
Canada	Sean MacIntosh	1m26.346	21
Ireland	Michael Devaney	1m26.540	14
USA	Scott Speed	1m26.665	14
Germany	Adrian Sutil	1m26.817	15
Switzerland	Neel Jani	1m26.947	15
Mexico	Salvador Duran	1m27.553	20
Pakistan	Adam Khan	1m27.738	17
Italy	Enrico Toccacelo	1m27.890	17
Japan	Ryo Fukuda	1m28.109	21
Austria	Mathias Lauda	1m28.154	20
Malaysia	Alex Yoong	1m28.193	9
Indonesia	Ananda Mikola	1m28.241	18
New Zealand	Jonny Reid	1m28.350	17
Netherlands	Jos Verstappen	1m28.594	7
Lebanon	Khalil Beschir	1m28.806	12
Czech Republic	Jan Charouz	1m28.827	17
Australia	Christian Jones	1m29.346	12
Russia	Nikolay Fomenko	1m30.207	12
China	Tengyi Jiang	1m35.767	9
India	Karun Chandhok		0

Notes to Editors

A selection of A1 Grand Prix images can be downloaded from www.sutton-images.com/a1gp.

1. A1 Grand Prix is the first opportunity in any area of motorsport for nations to compete with other nations on an equal basis. Up to 25 national teams will race identical cars with no electronic driver aids. Performance is determined by human bravery, skill and excellence.
2. A1 Grand Prix will deliver 12 weekends of exciting race action outside of the traditional motorsport season, kicking off at Brand Hatch in the UK on 25 September 2005, before travelling to Germany on 9 October, Portugal on 23 October, Australia on 6 November, Malaysia on 20 November and United Arab Emirates on 11 December, Indonesia or Singapore, South Africa, Mexico, both east and west coast USA and China will follow after the winter break. Full details of the provisional race calendar can be found at www.a1gp.com

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