

TOUGH QUALIFYING FOR A1 TEAM LEBANON IN A1 GRAND PRIX OF NATIONS DUBAI

10 December 2005.../Track action continued at the Dubai Autodrome today, with the A1 Grand Prix teams taking part in final practice and qualifying sessions for tomorrow's two races, a 30 minute Sprint race and a one hour Feature race which includes a mandatory tyre change pit stop. Basil Shaaban, driving this weekend for A1 Team Lebanon, lines up in 23rd place for the grid of the Sprint race.

Shaaban is on his first visit to this new track which was built to Formula One standards less than two years ago. On a dusty circuit which caught out a number of experienced drivers, the best two times from his qualifying runs were aggregated to determine his grid position for tomorrow's race, although Shaaban was unable to complete his fourth run due to electrical problems which forced him to abort his flying lap.

Shaaban said after the qualifying session, "It's a very fast, technical track that is not easy to learn quickly, so it's taken me some time to settle in here. I pushed too hard on my first run and spun, but kept it going. I then put in two respectable times and then in the final run I was pushing harder, until electrical problems forced me to abort my run.

Tony Snook, Team Principal, A1 Team Lebanon added, "The circuit is very dirty from wind-blown sand, which penalises even the smallest mistakes as we've seen with many experienced drivers who have spun out. It's a very technical track as well, so it's been a tough challenge for Basil, with only two hours of practice in the A1 car before qualifying. It was unfortunate that a technical problem prevented him from completing his final run, as he had new tyres and we were confident that he'd be able to qualify further up the grid. Tomorrow is the most important day though, so we'll be looking to improve on this grid position in the races as we have done in previous A1 Grand Prix.

A1 Team Lebanon is one of 25 national teams represented on the A1 Grand Prix grid. The A1 racing cars for each team are identical, presenting a level playing field, and bringing the focus to the expertise, skill and bravery of the drivers. The Series visits 12 venues through the winter, travelling to the Middle East, Asia, Australia, USA, South America, South Africa and Europe.

Ends.

A1 Team Lebanon photographs are available for download from www.a1gp-photo.com/lib

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