

## BEST QUALIFYING PERFORMANCE SO FAR FOR LEBANON IN SOUTH AFRICA



Basil Shaaban recorded Team Lebanon's best start position of the season so far for tomorrow's Sprint race with the eighteenth fastest time in this afternoon's qualifying session. The weather made a complete turnaround today for final practice and qualifying ahead of the first street race of the A1 Grand Prix series with bright sunshine and high humidity replacing yesterday's heavy rain, and bringing fresh challenges for Team Lebanon.

Shaaban started his weekend with a strong performance in the wet and ninth fastest time in the second practice session. The dry track in the final practice session this morning saw quicker lap times and a number of red flags with track action suspended from track incidents. Shaaban was nineteenth fastest at the end of this session.

In afternoon qualifying Shaaban had two sets of new tyres and two used sets for the four 'flying lap' runs, with his best two lap times aggregated to set his grid position. In his first run Shaaban used his worn tyres and driving conservatively to record a time. Changing to new tyres for the second run, Shaaban was able to improve his time by over two-tenths of a second. With his third run on another used set of tyres, he consolidated his position, before the fourth run with his final set of new tyres, which saw many of the teams delayed by two red flags due to on-track incidents and left many cars using the last few minutes of the session to set their final qualifying time. Overtaking a slowing South African car on his hot lap, the Team Lebanon car spun on a dirty part of the track and slid Shaaban into the tyre barriers. Despite this end of session accident, the previous qualifying laps were quick enough for eighteenth fastest qualifying time.

Shaaban reviewed his first experience of street race qualifying saying, "It was very hot out on the track today and very different from my experience yesterday. I'm pleased that I've been able to improve my lap times as the day has progressed. It's the biggest challenge I've faced so far, with the need to be so precise – there's very little margin of error and if you get it wrong the tyre barriers and concrete walls are very close, as I've found out a couple of times. It's going to be very exciting racing in this unique environment. There's been a good crowd today, so I expect the grandstands to be packed full tomorrow. It'll be a great atmosphere."

Tameem Auchy, Seat Holder of A1 Team Lebanon, added, "Basil drove well today and we've seen a welcome improvement in our qualifying pace. This street circuit is technically challenging and he coped well with the additional pressures of this tight track. I'm sure that tomorrow's race, with the complete grid racing hard through these narrow streets will be a great spectacle, but also a daunting task for the team. We'll be hoping to run until the chequered flag and possibly we could see our first points being scored for Team Lebanon."

Tomorrow's A1 Grand Prix of Nations, Durban will be the first ever street race in the capital city of Kwazulu-Natal province and has been embraced by the race fans of South Africa, with an expected crowd of 50,000 spectators. The first race of the two-race programme will be a 30 minute Sprint Race featuring a rolling start. The main Feature race is one hour duration with a compulsory tyre change pitstop. The A1 Grand Prix series visits eleven countries through the winter season, with Indonesia, Mexico, USA and China following on from the South Africa event.

For further information on A1 Team Lebanon visit the official website at [www.a1teamlb.com](http://www.a1teamlb.com)