

STRONG RUNNING FOR LEBANON BUT OUT OF LUCK IN SOUTH AFRICA



Team Lebanon had a weekend of strong running in Durban, South Africa for the seventh round of the A1 Grand Prix series, but were out of luck in both races today, with a rear wheel nut problem in the Feature race and an unavoidable accident in the Sprint race denying Shaaban finishes in both events.

Team Lebanon was classified in 17th place for the Sprint race after being an innocent victim of a rival's accident which forced Shaaban to retire from the race with a punctured tyre. In the feature race the team was

classified in 15th, but were forced to retire after a rear wheel problem in the pitstop.

Starting from eighteenth, the team's best grid position in the season so far, the Sprint race began with the rolling start and a race to the first corner, a tight hairpin. Shaaban was keen to stay out of trouble but a spin on the first lap pushed Team Lebanon down to 20th place.

As the race settled down Shaaban moved up the order, running in 17th and catching the Chinese car ahead of him. With only three laps to go Team China slid wide into the tyres as he rounded the hairpin. With Shaaban close behind and unable to see the Chinese car blocking the racing line, the Lebanese driver did well to avoid a major accident but caught the rear wing of the rival car, which punctured the tyre, damaged the wheel supports and front wing, and put him out of the race. The Team Lebanon crew, with less than an hour until the start of the Feature race, worked against the clock to repair the car.

In the Feature race, Shaaban was forced to start from the pitlane with the team working tirelessly to ensure he was able to compete. He started well and improved position to 13th by the third lap, with many teams opting to pit early. Moving up the order to 4th by the time of the first safety car period, Shaaban was running well. Green flag racing resumed and Shaaban drove hard to maintain his strong pace. As the challenging street track caused a number of incidents for many drivers, Shaaban continued running within the top ten for much of the race. A late safety car period was used for the Team's mandatory pitstop, but problems with the rear wheel resulted in a lengthy stop. The team managed to put Shaaban back into the race, but brake problems forced him to retire.

Shaaban commented, "That was a tough day for us, but we've gained so much experience here. We've improved our race pace and risen to the challenge of the Durban street circuit. My thanks go to the crew who worked so hard and fast to get my car back out for the Feature race."

The A1 Grand Prix series will return to race action next month with the A1 Grand Prix of Nations, Indonesia which will be held from 10 – 12 February. The event will take place at Sentul Circuit, a 3.9 kilometre track with 11 turns and promises to be another weekend of action-packed racing.

Follow the progress of A1 Team Lebanon by visiting the official team website at www.a1teamlb.com