



### **BAD LUCK BRINGS EARLY END TO BASIL SHAABAN'S IMPRESSIVE PERFORMANCES IN BRITISH F3**

Basil Shaaban competed this past weekend in the eighth round of the 2006 British F3 International Series at Brands Hatch GP, one of Europe's most historic and challenging circuits. Brands Hatch was set to host the final races in Shaaban's three-round attack on the British F3 series with sponsor BRICC, but bad luck in qualifying brought a premature end to the Lebanese racer's weekend. Nonetheless Shaaban's performance in only his third British F3 weekend relative to his more experienced competitors served only to underline the young talent's potential.

Through the Friday practice sessions Shaaban progressively approached the limits of his Comtec Racing F3 car in the unforgiving, blind, high-speed corners at Brands Hatch GP, steadily lowering his lap-times in preparation for Qualifying.

Saturday's Qualifying sessions began with frustration for the Lebanese talent. Three red-flag stoppages due to competitors' accidents and persistent traffic in the first of the two 30-minute Qualifiers blocked Shaaban from recording a full flying lap in the session. Shaaban commented, "Seventh position is definitely not the result that we had aimed for in first-Qualifying. The circumstances only allowed me seven laps, none of which was a complete flying lap. My sector-times show we had the speed to qualify in the National Class top-four this morning. This simply calls for patience and a big push to get the job done in second-Qualifying this afternoon."

The second Qualifying session commenced one hour after a heavy rain shower, creating a tricky situation where the racing-line was dry, yet offline the asphalt was still moist. Through the notorious 160 km/h Westfield corner, this moisture caught-out several experienced drivers whose accidents forced the second session to also be stopped twice. When the session was restarted for the third and final time, Shaaban showed his potential by posting the second quickest National Class lap-time, another milestone in the Arab talent's career. Alas, the following lap while trying to go even quicker Shaaban suffered a major accident on the exit of Westfield corner. Shaaban escaped with minor cuts and bruises, but the damage to his Comtec Racing F3 car was beyond overnight repair and the team was forced to withdraw from the races on the Sunday.

Shaaban describes: "I was lapping over one second quicker than I had all weekend and was lying in second position. But as the circuit was drying lap after lap I knew I



had to go even quicker just to maintain that position. Pushing for a better lap-time, midway through Westfield the car snapped sideways. Though I caught it, it had slid offline onto the moisture which sent me straight into the barrier. These things can happen on the limit in difficult conditions, but I'm disappointed not to be able to compete in what were going to be my last races of 2006 British F3. In any case I wish to thank BRICC for sponsoring my challenging learning experiences in F3 this summer. I can't wait to be back in an F3 car to continue improving towards my ultimate goal."

Martin Donnelly, Comtec Racing F3 Team Manager, comments: "Basil did a very impressive job all weekend, it was a shame that he could not gain more experience and show himself in the races. Even in the difficult conditions of second Qualifying he again showed his skill and confidence to set some very quick lap-times. The whole team has enjoyed working with such a focused driver and we hope Basil gets the support he needs to continue developing his abilities."

Alongside the Arab athlete's racing and testing duties for A1 Team Lebanon, over the coming months Shaaban will be working to find the sponsors to partner his historic drive on the ladder towards Formula One.

Ends.