

For further press information please contact

Tony Lewis / Ahmad Huzayen

Total Communications

Tel: + 971 4 336 9909 Fax: + 971 4 336 9905

Email: tony@totalcompr.com / ahmad@totalcompr.ae

SHAABAN SAVOURS LIFE IN THE FAST LANE EN ROUTE TO BRANDS HATCH VIA FRANCE

Arab driver keeps up hectic schedule for F3 Euro Series after flying visit to Middle East

Dubai, UAE, and 14th May, 2007: Basil Shaaban is enjoying life in the fast lane as he continues the build-up to his second excursion on the Formula 3 Euro Series at England's legendary Brands Hatch circuit next month.

The Lebanese racing driver raised in Abu Dhabi begins two days of testing in France tomorrow morning (Tuesday) as part of a hectic ongoing schedule which will see him commute regularly between Europe and the Middle East over the next few months.

Shaaban, who has barely had time to catch his breath since signing a key sponsorship agreement with Shell in Dubai last month, joins up with his Austrian-based team, HBR Motorsport, for more valuable F3 acclimatization at the Nogaro Circuit.

“Every lap of testing is a crucial part of my learning experience, and the next two days are particularly useful as they're taking place on the circuit which stages the penultimate round of this year's F3 Euro Series in September,” he said.

Shaaban arrived in France after a whistle-stop two-day visit to the Middle East where he guest-commentated on the FI Grand Prix of Barcelona from Doha followed by a review meeting with sponsors Shell in Dubai.

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He said: “I look forward to a lot of traveling this year, as being on the move is all part of honoring the commitments surrounding being a racing driver and it’s something you have to take in your stride if you want to achieve your goals.”

Shaaban, who is aiming to become the first Arab driver to compete in Formula 1, is testing in France for the second time in a fortnight along with several other F3 Euro Series teams, including championship leader Sebastian Buemi from Switzerland.

The HBR mechanics have been working extensively to fine-tune his Shell-sponsored Dallara-Mercedes-Benz since its debut at Hockenheim which was hindered by problems traced to a bad set of brake pads.

“I gained a lot of useful experience at Magny-Cours two weeks ago in varying weather conditions,” said Shaaban. “I did particularly well in the wet, and being in the top ten for an entire morning session was good for my confidence.

“The car is very sensitive and these circuits are extremely technical, so I have a lot to learn. I am now approximately just under one second off the quickest guys, and it is this second that is the hardest to close. But I am confident in myself, and I have a very professional team behind me, so together we’re going to get the most out of the next two days to put us ready for Brands Hatch.”

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