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RACING LEGENDS INSPIRE SHAABAN AT BRANDS HATCH

Arab driver aims to show he's going places on return to action in F3 Euro Series

Dubai, UAE, 7 June, 2007: Some of the greatest names in motor racing history will confront Basil Shaaban when he returns to action in the F3 Euro Series this weekend, and the Arab driver hopes the experience will inspire him.

Shaaban takes his Shell-sponsored Dallara-Mercedes-Benz into the second round of the F3 season at Brands Hatch, England eager to prove to himself, and his team, that he is a driver who is going places.

Almost every twist and turn of the famous Kent circuit has been named in honour of racing legends such as Jack Brabham, Nigel Mansell, Graham Hill, John Surtees, and Jim Clark, all former world Formula One champions.

“Every lap is like a journey through the Who’s Who of motor racing, and I can’t help but feel some extra motivation this weekend,” said Shaaban, who was born in Beirut and raised in Abu Dhabi. “This place is steeped in the history of the sport, and if you want to make a name for yourself as a racing driver this is one of the best circuits to do it.

“But I’m not trying to make a name for myself overnight,” he added. “This is the most competitive F3 series in the world, and I have a lot of catching up to do on most of the opposition in terms of driving time and experience.

“Starting with the practice and qualifying sessions, I’ll be looking to close the gap between myself and the front runners in terms of lap times.

Shaaban 2

“I’ll be looking for consistency, a little more aggression from the race start, and definitely aiming to minimise mistakes. I’m not expecting too much in terms of my finishing position yet because this is only my second race in the series, but I’m looking to make progress after Hockenheim.”

In the seven weeks since the season-opener at Hockenheim in Germany, Shaaban has had two test sessions in France at the Magny-Cours and Nogaro circuits which feature later in this year’s F3 Euro Series race calendar.

His Austrian-based HBR Motorsport team mechanics have been working hard on the Shell-Dallara-Mercedes to make sure there is no repeat of the braking problems which plagued him in Germany, and a new gearbox should also help improve the car’s performance.

With championship leader Sebastian Buemi from Switzerland leading the way, the weekend’s action begins with a one hour free practice session tomorrow (Friday) morning. This is followed by a 30-minute afternoon qualifying session ahead of two races on Saturday and Sunday, both of approximately 110 km with a maximum 40 minutes duration.

Ends