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## **SHAABAN KEEPS FOCUS ON TRACK FOR MONACO-STYLE TEST**

### **Streets have no fear for Shell-backed Arab driver as F3 Euro series takes German twist**



*Basil Shaaban: well on course in his Shell Dallara-Mercedes-Benz to achieving first season goals in the world's most competitive F3 series*

Dubai, UAE, 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 2007: Basil Shaaban will avoid getting caught up in the festival mood when the F3 Euro Series takes to the streets of Nuremberg in Germany tomorrow (Saturday) for the championship's version of the Monaco Grand Prix.

Shaaban faces a challenge with a difference when he takes his Shell Dallara-Mercedes-Benz into action in front of a huge crowd of spectators gathered beside the compact Norisring street circuit for one of the biggest events of the season.

The Arab driver, born in Beirut and raised in Abu Dhabi, says: “As portions of the circuit are usually used for public transport, it will be very dirty initially, with the grip increasing with every lap. This means it’s crucial to adjust to the increasing grip.

“A key challenge with street circuits is that they’re lined with walls, so mistakes are punished heavily. With the large grip differential between the racing-line and other parts of the track, particularly towards the end of the weekend after a lot of rubber has been put down, sliding off the racing-line means a high probability of hitting the walls.

“As always, I’ll be focusing on driving as quickly as possible, with as few mistakes as possible. And while I know there will be a big crowd of spectators close by, I’ll be concentrating so hard on what’s ahead of me that I won’t notice them.”

Built on the former Nazi party rally grounds, the Norisring was revamped after Mexican racing driver Pedro Rodriguez died there in 1971 when his Ferrari hit the bridge wall and burst in flames.

Norisring 2

Racing at the Norisring these days is a big family affair, and the F3 Euro Series shares this weekend’s race programme with the DTM touring car championship, creating a festival-like atmosphere for the two days of racing.

Shell-backed Shaaban aims to continue getting closer to the pace of the leading drivers in his first season in the world’s most competitive F3 series.

“I have never been to the circuit before this weekend, but it is not too technical, only 2.3 km long, and is effectively two straights with hairpins on the end, with the back-straight having a medium-speed chicane in the middle,” he said.

“This puts an emphasis on braking late and well, and then accelerating early and well. One of my challenges is that we will be running a low-downforce set-up which will lengthen braking zones and make the car less stable in the critical braking zones. But this will give me a higher top-speed with the overall effect of lowering the lap-time.”

**2007 F3 Euro Series leading positions after 2 of 10 events:**

1. Sebastien Buemi (SUI) 22pts;
2. Romain Grosjean (FRA) 20pts
3. Nico Hülkenberg (GER) 14pts
4. Yelmer Buurman (NED) 12pts
5. James Jakes (GBR) 11pts
6. Edoardo Mortara (ITA) 10pts
7. Kamui Kobayashi (JAP) 10pts
8. Franck Mailleux (FRA) 7pts

Ends