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SHAABAN TRACKS PACE SETTER BUEMI IN ITALY

Arab driver continues along the learning curve as F3 Euro Series arrives at halfway point



Basil Shaaban continues along the learning curve in Italy at the wheel of his Shell Dallara-Mercedes-Benz.

Dubai, UAE 6th July, 2007: Basil Shaaban will be capitalizing on the lessons learned at Magny-Cours to close-in on the performance of championship leader Sébastien Buemi when the 2007 F3 Euro Series arrives at the half way point in Italy next week.

The Swiss star managed to stay in front in the title battle despite finishing 19th in last weekend's second race at Magny-Cours following a collision with Frenchman Tom Dillmann.

Shaaban, who went out of the same race following a collision with his Russian team-mate Sergey Afanasiev, is determined to quickly shrug off that setback when he takes his Shell Dallara-Mercedes-Benz back into action at Mugello in the season's fifth of ten rounds from 13-15 July.

“It was a big disappointment because I was producing my best race-pace of the season so far at my first event at Magny-Cours,” said the Arab driver, who has been in Dubai this week for meetings with sponsors Shell. “But these things happen to the best of drivers, especially when the grip levels are changing with the light rain shower we had, and you are trying to go quicker and find the limits at every point on the circuit.

“Because we were sharing the circuit with F1 and the French Grand Prix we had no free practice and just a 30-minute qualifying session, so it was always going to be a testing weekend for all the F3 drivers on what is a very technical circuit.”

F3 Euro Series 2

Added Shaaban: “We’re all trying to minimise mistakes, but it’s inevitable that they happen from time to time when you are on the limit, and the important thing is that you learn from them and move forward to become a better driver. Overall I had a great experience at such a challenging race-weekend, and I’m stronger now than ever.”

In qualifying at Magny-Cours Shaaban was 17th quickest in the 24-car line-up after the first set of tyres before a lack of experience relegated him to the 11th row on the grid for the first race.

“On my second and final set of tires, when you are supposed to get your quickest times, I started pushing the speed too early when the tires were not fully up to temperature,” he explained.

“We were in the coolest conditions we have been in all year long and my inexperience caught me out as I needed to do at least one more warm-up lap than normal. I’ll definitely make sure that doesn’t happen again.”

2007 F3 Euro Series leading positions after 4 of 10 events:

1. Sebastien Buemi (SUI) 42pts;
2. Romain Grosjean (FRA) 39pts
3. James Jakes (GBR) 25pts
4. Yelmer Buurman (NED) 23pts
5. Kamui Kobayashi (JAP) 22pts
6. Nico Hülkenberg (GER) 20pts

Ends