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SHAABAN AIMS TO STEER CLEAR OF TROUBLE AND MAKE HIS MARK IN HOLLAND



Basil Shaaban hopes for a trouble-free weekend in his Shell Dallara-Mercedes-Benz at Zandvoort

We all live with fear of accidents, says Arab driver as F3 Euro Series arrives at Zandvoort

Dubai, UAE, 26 July, 2007: After a week in which Lewis Hamilton's terrifying 175mph horror crash in the European Grand Prix has dominated motor sport headlines, Basil Shaaban has said that all drivers experience the fear of high speed accidents.

"It's something that naturally comes to a racing driver's mind from time to time, but a driver's fear is something to be quieted and controlled, allowing us to get the most from ourselves, our cars and every opportunity. Nevertheless, accidents like Lewis's at the Nurburgring underline how dangerous this sport can be," said the Arab driver, in the countdown to rounds 11 and 12 of the 2007 F3 Euro Series in Holland at the weekend.

“Thankfully he wasn’t badly hurt, and that says a lot for the advancements that have been made in safety measures to protect drivers. But the fact remains that things can go wrong even for the best, making it vitally important for teams and drivers to work very closely together to make sure all possible precautions are taken to avoid accidents.”

As he prepared to take his Shell Dallara-Mercedes-Benz back into action in free practice at Zandvoort tomorrow morning (Friday), Shaaban had extra reason for needing to balance his desire to go faster with a requirement to steer clear of trouble.

In the previous F3 Euro Series event at Mugello, Italy a fortnight ago he suffered two punctures before being sucked unluckily into a multi-car pile-up.

But he also earned a tribute from his Austrian-based HBR Motorsport team for the mechanical input he provided which helped lift the performance of the team’s three cars.

The same kind of feedback will be of high value to the team at Zandvoort, a circuit built among the dunes on Holland’s North Sea coastline which has been the scene of several fatal accidents, including one which claimed the life of English Formula One driver Piers Courage, heir of the Courage brewing dynasty, at the 1970 Dutch Grand Prix.

The circuit’s most famous corner is the *Tarzanbocht* (Tarzan corner) which offers good overtaking opportunities. It was reportedly named after a local character nicknamed Tarzan who refused to give up his vegetable garden in the dunes unless the track's designers named a corner after him.

Having replaced Swiss Sebastien Buemi as championship leader, French driver Romain Grosjean will be attempting to build on his advantage at the weekend, and with a significant gap to Japan’s Kamui Kobayashi in third place, the title race looks to have become a two-car affair.

Shaaban intends to make more progress in his Shell Dallara-Mercedes-Benz, after being 13th fastest in qualifying at Mugello before a puncture dropped him to the back of the field.

“You just have to put those sort of setbacks behind you in racing,” said Shaaban. “I’ve gradually been increasing my pace and am hoping for a trouble-free weekend at Zandvoort to be able to set a good qualifying time and race position to underline the progress I’ve made since the start of the season.”

2007 F3 Euro Series, leading positions:

1. Romain Grosjean (FRA) 55pts
2. Sebastien Buemi (SUI) 50pts;
- 3 Kamui Kobayashi (JAP) 33pts
3. James Jakes (GBR) 30pts
5. Yelmer Buurman (NED) 24pts
6. Franck Mailleux (FRA) 23pts

Ends