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SHAABAN GEARED UP FOR RING OF COURAGE



Basil Shaaban faces a tough test in his Shell Dallara-Mercedes-Benz at the Nürburgring.

Arab driver faces stern Nürburgring test as Grosjean aims to extend lead in F3 Euro Series title race

Dubai, UAE, 30th August, 2007: Basil Shaaban is geared up for one of the toughest tests of his racing career when the F3 Euro Series roars back to life at the famous Nürburgring circuit in Germany on Saturday.

The 2007 championship resumes after a five-week break, with Frenchman Romain Grosjean looking to build on his nine-point lead in the title race from Swiss Sebastien Buemi, while Shaaban continues along the learning curve in the world's most competitive F3 series.

The Arab driver takes his Shell Dallara-Mercedes-Benz back into action after a productive test session at Hockenheim earlier this week with his Austrian-based team, HBR Motorsport, in preparation for rounds 13 and 14 of the series on Saturday and Sunday.

“We had a very good test at Hockenheim,” said Shaaban. “We ran through a variety of setup changes, and I was able to give the team very detailed and precise feedback.

“While I don’t have a lot of experience in this area I’ve developed a lot of sensitivity which allows me to feed back quite a lot more than the team expected in my first season. This is something I obviously want to develop because the end result is that it will help me go quicker.”

Added Shaaban: “After arriving at the Nürburgring we did some more work on the car to suit my driving style, and on Wednesday after a fitness session in the gym I walked the circuit and set a technical strategy with the team for the weekend.”

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Five weeks ago Shaaban emerged from the treacherous, sand-blown Zandvoort circuit in Holland with 19th and 20th place finishes at the wheel of his Shell Dallara-Mercedes-Benz in the 23-car F3 Euro Series line-up.

Underlining the progress he is making in his F3 debut season, he clocked the 14th quickest second sector time in race two, his highest-ranked sector time so far in his debut season in the series.

He now faces a stern test at the legendary Nürburgring, which has been the scene of a great deal of motor racing drama, courage and controversy in its history.

Built in the 1920s around the village and medieval castle of Nürburg in the Eifel mountains, south of Cologne, the circuit originally featured four track configurations.

One of these, the 22.8km Northern Loop, was nicknamed The Green Hell by former world Formula One champion Jackie Stewart.

Another former world champion, Niki Lauda, proposed a boycott of the circuit in 1976 because of the safety arrangements. The other drivers voted against the idea and when the race went ahead Lauda was badly burned when his Ferrari crashed. While the current circuit has undergone many changes it is still considered the toughest and most demanding purpose-built race track in the world.

2007 F3 Euro Series, leading positions:

1. Romain Grosjean (FRA) 70pts
2. Sebastien Buemi (SUI) 61pts;
- 3 Kamui Kobayashi (JAP) 41pts
3. James Jakes (GBR) 32pts
5. Nico Hülkenberg (GER) 29pts
6. Franck Mailleux (FRA) 27pts

Ends