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RAIN IN SPAIN DRIVES SHAABAN ON FRENCH MISSION



Basil Shaaban – back in action in France in his Shell Dallara-Mercedes-Benz this weekend.

Arab driver aims to continue his rise as F3 Euro Series moves towards climax

Dubai, UAE, 27th September, 2007: After having his fastest display so far in the F3 Euro Series dampened by the rain in Spain, Basil Shaaban is hoping for another wet weekend in France as the championship enters its penultimate leg.

Shaaban take his Shell Dallara-Mercedes-Benz back into action on Nogaro's 3.6km Circuit Paul Armagnac tomorrow looking to supply further proof that he's a driver on the rise in the world's toughest F3 arena.

In qualifying 15th out of 25 challengers at Barcelona's demanding Circuit de Catalunya last weekend he took another step towards his long-term goal of becoming the first Arab Formula One driver.

Shaaban's fastest lap was within 0.158 seconds of Swiss star Sebastien Buemi and a top ten qualifying spot, 0.456 seconds of championship leader Romain Grosjean and 0.671 seconds of the time which gave Nico Hülkenberg pole position.

It was easily the most impressive display of pace in his F3 debut season, underlining his conviction to become a serious challenger next year when he will be aiming to catch the attention of the watching F1 teams.

Ultimately, Shaaban's weekend ended in disappointment as first a 14th lap spin off in pouring rain and then a huge pile-up caused when Italian Edoardo Piscopo stalled on the starting grid put him out of the two races.

However, the Lebanese driver, who was raised in Abu Dhabi, remains upbeat as looks forward to this weekend's double race agenda at Nogaro and has even found himself welcoming weather forecasts predicting more rain.

"I have very little experience of racing in the wet and this cost me in the first race last weekend," said Shaaban. "Now I want to get as much experience of wet weather driving as I can. It's such an important part of your make-up as a driver.

"I'm managing to get on the pace in the wet, but the speed by which you get to the pace depends on the amount of confidence you have based on how much driving you've done in wet weather conditions. The forecast says there's a good chance of rain this weekend, and it could be a good opportunity for me to get some valuable wet weather training."

Shaaban had a day of testing at Nogaro earlier in the season and was hoping to get the most out of a three-hour Thursday test session at one of the two new venues on this year's F3 Euro Series before Friday's free practice and qualifying session.

Ahead of the two races on Friday and Saturday, Grosjean leads Buemi by five points in the race for the world's most important F3 title which will be decided by a final 2007 race weekend at Hockenheim on 14-15 October.

2007 F3 Euro Series, leading positions:

1. Romain Grosjean (FRA) 79pts
2. Sebastien Buemi (SUI) 74pts;
3. Nico Hülkenberg (GER) 52pts
4. James Jakes (GBR) 42pts
4. Kamui Kobayashi (JAP) 41pts
6. Franck Mailleux (FRA) 35pts
7. Yelmer Buurman (HOLL) 27pts
- 8 Edoardo Mortara (ITA) 26pts

Ends