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Premier Middle East Pay-TV network SHOWTIME to air Arab Driver's pioneering exploits in the pinnacle 2007 F3 Euro Series

Dubai, UAE, 27th February, 2008: The Middle East's understanding of the world's most-watched annual sport, Formula One, is about to receive a major boost. The region is in the midst of a meteoric motorsport development, where the Bahrain F1 GP, taking place since 2004, and the highly anticipated 2009 Abu Dhabi F1 GP have taken giant strides in kick starting the Middle East motorsport industry. Starting today, Showtime subscribers can peek into a key stepping-stone on the way to the pinnacle of motorsport that is F1. This will mark the first time in history that an Arabic-language series centering on an Arab driver's development across a complete season on the "F1 Ladder" becomes available to an Arab audience.

Showtime has entered into this partnership with the Arab world's first and only driver to compete in the F3 Euro Series, Lebanese-born and UAE-raised Basil Shaaban, to expose the challenges faced by the world's F1-hopefuls as they try earning a shot at a seat with F1 teams. F3 has been fundamental to many F1 drivers' careers, and the Euro Series is considered the world's most competitive F3 championship. Recent F1-sensation Lewis Hamilton dominated the 2005 F3 Euro Series championship in his second season, taking 15 wins from 20 races with ASM F3, arguably the series' top-team. In total, seven 2008 F1 race-drivers are Euro Series graduates. Four drivers whom Shaaban competed against in 2007 are now official F1 test-drivers, with Nico Hulkenberg dove-tailing his WilliamsF1 testing duties with a second F3 Euro Series season with ASM in 2008.

Basil Shaaban is not simply the first Arab to reach this level of international formula motorsport. He is also a pioneer in his acquisition, and now licensing, of the Middle East Broadcast Rights to the 2007 F3 Euro Series in an attempt to motivate the region's knowledge and interest in the F1 Ladder. "I am delighted that a network of Showtime's stature will be exposing this exciting championship which leads to Formula One. It is a

great honor for me to represent Lebanon and the Arab world in this highly-competitive series, and to be able to share the many challenges that are faced on the way up,” said the 27 year-old F1-hopeful, who will be applying the lessons learned in his tough first season for his second attack on the upcoming 2008 F3 Euro Series championship.

Showtime’s commitment to this special sporting display has seen the network give it several prime-time slots on its Arabic-language SHOWSPORTS 1 channel. Prior to the April start of the 2008 F3 Euro Series, the network will be airing the ten rounds of the 2007 F3 Euro Series over the next five weeks on Tuesdays at 20:00 KSA on SHOWSPORTS 1. The first broadcast takes place this evening, starting with the action from Germany’s Hockenheim F1 circuit.



Caption: Arab F1-hopeful Basil Shaaban, smiling at Showtime’s Dubai headquarters, after signing a historic Broadcast-Licensing agreement with the network for the 2007 F3 Euro Series.

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