

For further press information please contact  
Tony Lewis / Ahmad Huzayen  
Total Communications  
Tel: + 971 4 336 9909 Fax: + 971 4 336 9905  
Email: [tony@totalcompr.ae](mailto:tony@totalcompr.ae) / [ahmad@totalcompr.ae](mailto:ahmad@totalcompr.ae)

## **SHAABAN GEARED UP FOR ITALIAN JOB**

**Arab driver aims to move up F3 Euro ladder  
as Mäki looks to build on flying start**



*Basil Shaaban: chasing a top ten breakthrough in Italy*

Dubai, UAE, 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2008: The F3 Euro Series has returned to disturb the normal tranquility of a corner of Tuscany this weekend, with Arab driver Basil Shaaban aiming for a result to match his early season promise.

Shaaban goes back into action in his Shell Dallara Mercedes over the demanding Mugello circuit chasing a top ten breakthrough to boost his challenge in the world's most competitive F3 championship.

He seemed poised to make his move in the season opener at Hockenheim after being 13<sup>th</sup> fastest in the first test session, just 0.886 seconds away from pace-setter Jean Karl Vernay of France, before falling foul of weather conditions.

“In qualifying, we had a wet circuit that was drying and ran a dry set-up, gambling that we would get to use slicks by the end,” said Shaaban, who was born in Beirut and grew up in Abu Dhabi. “But the circuit didn’t dry fully or come up to temperature,”

“So I qualified way down the order, and when that happens you can’t expect miracles for the races. But my race speed again was good, particularly in race two, with lap-time rankings between P6 and P13 when things were clicking.

“I feel confident for Mugello. If we get the car’s set-up right I’ll be looking towards qualifying at least in the top half of the field, and maybe the top ten. That’s our goal, and from there we would stand a good chance of getting into the points for the first time.”

The HBR Motorsport team feel two top-20 finishes out of 29 starters in Hockenheim were scant reward for Shaaban’s overall performance, and are determined to pull out all the stops for him at Mugello.

Said Shaaban: “Mugello is a flowing and undulating 5.2km circuit with a combination of 15 corners with some significant elevation changes.

“It is an abrasive circuit, so tire-wear is a big factor in strategy. We’re still experimenting with brake pad compounds and with dampers, and are continuing this experimentation at Mugello as we try to find our definitive brakes and damper specification for the rest of the season.”

Finland’s Mika Mäki starts race one Saturday as championship leader, being level on points with Italian Edoardo Mortara but holding an edge by virtue of his opening race victory at Hockenheim.