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MONZA GIVES SHAABAN A TASTE OF THINGS TO COME



Arab driver hopes Italian detour will help him pass tough Norisring street test

Dubai, UAE, 25th June, 2008: The F3 Euro Series is anything but an easy street leading to Formula One, and Basil Shaaban faces another strong examination in Germany at the weekend for the adaptability he will need to achieve his ultimate goal in motor racing.

After tackling one of the world's tightest and most undulating street circuits at Pau in France earlier in the month, Shaaban will encounter another challenging test when he takes his Shell Dallara Mercedes back into action at the Norisring in Germany.

"It's another street circuit, but quite different to Pau and one which poses it's own challenges," said Shaaban. "It must be run with a low-downforce set-up, because it has a

very long main straight and back straight and no medium or high-speed corners, which makes the car more nervous under braking and through the corners.

“It’s also very bumpy, particularly in the braking zones. Negotiating the first corner well demands accuracy as we approach at over 240 km/h and slow down to 55 km/h in a distance of 110 metres.”



Basil Shaaban: doing valuable testing at Monza in Italy ahead of his next examination in the F3 Euro Series at the Norisring in Germany at the weekend.

Born in Beirut and raised in Abu Dhabi, Shaaban believes he will be ready to test for Formula One by the time the UAE enters the World Championship late next year, and this week he is getting a taste, perhaps, of things to come.

To prepare for the special demands of the Norisring, he is spending two days across the border in Italy testing at the Monza Grand Prix circuit, which has contributed much to the annals of Formula One.

“It’s my first time at this historic circuit and I’m very excited to be here, especially as Monza is also usually run with a low-downforce set-up” said Shaaban today (Tuesday).

“I’m driving my car in low-downforce for the first time, and these two days are allowing us to develop the set-up we’ll need for Norisring and try different aerodynamic configurations. This is an invaluable two days of testing after a four-week break.”

Shaaban has had more than his fair share of mechanical and other problems in three outings in the F3 Euro Series so far this season, and wants to produce his best qualifying performance of the season on Friday to set himself up for the two races at the Norisring on Saturday and Sunday.

‘Pau was a hard race weekend for me, with my qualifying mistake putting me on the back foot for the rest of the event,’ he admitted. “I learned a lot from the whole experience and will be building on those lessons at Norisring.

“I’ve been competitive during testing and in the races, but have not had a single fair shot at qualifying so far this season for one reason or another and I want to change that this weekend.

“The goal is to get the best performance out of the car in qualifying and put myself in a good starting position for Saturday. If I can do that I know I can fight my way into the top ten and from there aim to get amongst the points.”

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