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NOTHING CAN HOLD ME BACK ON F3 LADDER TO THE TOP, SAYS SHAABAN



Arab driver vows to learn from lessons at Norisring

Dubai, UAE, 3 July, 2008: Basil Shaaban has vowed to bounce back immediately from a frustrating experience in Germany to prove that nothing can hold him back in the F3 Euro Series on the ladder to Formula One.

Shaaban's hopes of a first top-ten finish in the world's toughest F3 series were ruined by a spate of bad luck which dropped his Shell Dallara Mercedes from contention at the famously difficult Norisring street circuit last weekend.

Brought to a halt by two multi-car pile-ups and later gearbox and electrical problems, Shaaban, the only Arab driver in the F3 Euro Series, has quickly shrugged off the disappointment and looks forward optimistically to his next outing at Zandvoort in Holland from 11-13 July.

“There’s no point in feeling sorry for myself after what happened at the Norisring,” said the Lebanese driver, who grew up in Abu Dhabi. “You have to accept setbacks as a racing driver, and even though I’ve had more than my fair share of bad luck this season I can’t wait to get back behind the wheel.

“I’m making good progress and am very competitive when I have a trouble-free run. You make your own luck in this sport by concentrating on minimising mistakes and making the most of your opportunities. This is what I plan to do, and nothing will hold me back.”

Shaaban says he learnt some valuable lessons at the Norisring, including one that will help prepare him for his first attempt at the Macau Grand Prix in November at another of the world’s most demanding street circuits.



Basil Shaaban: “You make your own luck in this sport.”

“The main things you learn at the Norisring are more psychological than about driving technique,” he said. “With the bumpy surface frequently causing wheels to lock under

braking, or the car to suddenly oversteer, you have to be fearless to go quicker, and forget how close the walls are.”

“I handled this much better at the weekend than I did on my first visit to the circuit last year. I’ve made some big advances on the mental front which will help me a lot in the future, and especially for Macau later in the year.”

Shaaban admits that a mistake in qualifying, when he failed to slipstream other drivers, cost him dearly, and this is something he won’t repeat at Zandvoort next week.

“There was only 1 second between the fastest and slowest times out of the 29 drivers, and I knew I had driven well, so I was bitterly disappointed to qualify in 28th place for the first race,” he said.

“My mistake was to run more in ‘free-air’ to focus on my driving, whereas most other drivers were driving closer together and benefitting from the slipstream of the cars ahead down the straights. It was a good lesson to learn.”

The first of the multi-car pile-ups in the opening race forced Shaaban to brake sharply to avoid a collision, and in doing so he stalled the engine of his Shell Dallara Mercedes. Despite the lost time he recovered well to finish eight places up from his starting position in 20th.

After another major pile-up which saw the second race being re-started, Shaaban immediately encountered serious gearbox trouble and loss of power due to battery problems. With the engine misfiring badly he was called into the pits by his team, later being classified in 21st place after another crash ended the race prematurely.

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