

KIMBALL SHOWS PACE IN EURO SERIES FORMULA 3 DEBUT

American Charlie Kimball debuted in the Euro Series F3 April 7-9, 2006 at Hockenheim in Germany. Unfortunately, his results were not representative of his true pace. A problem with tires in qualifying meant that he started Race 1 from 12th, with qualifying for Race 2 determined by finishing position in Race 1. He didn't finish the first race after contact left him stranded with broken suspension. As a result of the first race, Kimball started the second race from 22nd. The young Californian survived being spun down the order to finish an impressive 12th. Despite the disappointing results, Kimball's fastest lap was as quick as those at the front of the field.

Qualifying left the American very disappointed as his speed in free practice was much faster than his qualifying pace. Kimball spent most of the practice hour in 4th place, and yet went slower in qualifying than he did in practice, placing him 12th. After looking at the data, the team concluded that the tires must have been from an old stock, preventing the young driver from setting a competitive time - Kimball struggled with grip throughout qualifying.

Kimball was crushed by the result, "Qualifying didn't go anything like to plan! I had even less grip on my new tires than I did on the used tires I started the session with. I did the best job I could and am lucky that at Hockenheim there are passing opportunities."

The Signature team driver made a great start in the first race moving up from 12th to 9th on the first lap before the safety car was deployed. When the race restarted, Kimball found himself stuck behind Esteban Guerreri who had broken a front wing by running into his teammate under the safety car. This delay concertinaed a group of cars and subsequently at the hairpin, Kimball was hit on the left front corner as another driver chopped across the American's line. The result was a bent steering arm that Kimball struggled with until it collapsed, forcing his retirement on lap 16.

His result was disappointing and his comments reflected that, "My pace was so much better than the drivers running in the midfield. I could have pushed much further up the order and been on for a top 6 result. Starting 22nd tomorrow means I will have a lot of ground to make up."

Race 2 began with more chaos on the start line, allowing Kimball to move into 16th position by the end of the first lap. After lap 4, he was up to 13th when guest British driver James Walker hit and spun Kimball again at the hairpin. He rejoined in 19th and then pushed hard to finish a disappointing but none the less impressive 12th. His fastest laptime, done even in traffic, was on par with the leading 5 cars, all of whom benefited from clear track.

After the race, Kimball said, "It is really frustrating to have pushed that hard, gone that quick, passed that many cars and still ended up 12th. I know that I can fight in the races, and I have the speed to be up front, I just need to start higher up. In that race I started 22nd, passed 16 cars, and still finished 12th!"

Kimball will be looking forward to improved results this weekend at the Euro Speedway Lausitzring in eastern Germany, April 27-30th.

For more information please email Charlie@charliekimball.com, or visit www.CharlieKimball.com.