

Charlie *Kimball*

Taking the American Dream to Formula One

RAIN WASHES AWAY GOOD RESULT FOR KIMBALL AT PAU

Charlie Kimball's F3 Euro Series campaign suffered a setback last weekend at the street circuit of Pau in France when Prema Powerteam struggled in treacherous wet conditions. After a productive test in dry conditions, Kimball was only able to qualify 23rd for Race 1, the fastest for the Italian F3 team. During the race, the young American driver made a small mistake a touched the wall, bending his right front suspension and ending his race. In Race 2, Kimball was unable to make progress from his starting position of 23rd where he ultimately finished. He is still in the championship hunt as several other championship contenders walked away from Pau scoreless.

Kimball's weekend in France started well with a productive test session conducted in the dry. The team continued development to optimise the new Dallara F308 and ensure a return to form for the three drivers.

"I am very happy with how today went," said Kimball after the testing sessions. "I have made progress in both sessions and have some good information to improve upon for qualifying. With such a challenging street circuit, it is a questions of knowing when to push and how hard."

Saturday morning dawned with cloudy skies and as the cars took to the track for qualifying, heavy rain had begun to fall. Kimball knew immediately that the wet set-up for the car was less than optimum but pushed as hard as possible. Struggling with severe understeer, low tire temperature and minimal grip, Kimball was only able to qualify 23rd out of the 30 car field. He was however the best positioned Prema driver as his team-mates lined up 24th and 26th.

"I could tell straight away that the grip wasn't in the car," remarked a frustrated Kimball after the qualifying session. "I could see the speed difference between others cars and me. It is really frustrating to qualify this poorly after having such a competitive car in the dry."

Race 1 presented the F3 Euro Series grid with yet another set of challenges – a wet to drying circuit. The whole field took to the track on slick tires as a dry line had appeared but deviating from this line by even the smallest margin spelled disaster. Kimball made a good start and was progressing through the field. The high level of attrition meant he was running as high as 18th when he strayed slightly from the line in the high speed left hand turn 5. Kimball lost the back end of the car and brushed the barrier, buckling the front suspension and forcing him to retire.

Kimball commented after the race, "Those were the most challenging conditions possible. With a single dry line and wet spots all over, it was so easy to touch a damp patch and get put into the wall. I wasn't pushing too hard, I just had my right rear tire a couple of inches off line and that's all it took. I did what I could to minimize the impact but the damage was just too severe to continue."

Due to the progressive nature of the F3 Euro Series, Kimball would start Race 2 where he finished Race 1. As only 10 cars finished Race 1, the young American was one of many top challengers relegated to the back of the grid. In torrential rain, Kimball lined up 23rd on the grid and as the race started under the safety car, made a steady start. He continued to proceed with caution as the rain varied from heavy downpours to light sprinkles.



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The Prema Powerteam driver again struggled with understeer and overall pace but maintained his position to finished where he started - 23rd.

“We still haven’t figured out the set up in the wet, at least here on the streets of Pau,” said Kimball after the race. “I was just watching people drive by me like I was standing still. I know there is a lot of information to be sifted through from this weekend and I am confident of a return to form for the remainder of the season. I am lucky to be working with a talented engineer and an experienced team so I know we’ll get there.”

Kimball has now returned California where he is attending the American Diabetic Association National Conference. He has been asked to share his story and insights on the challenges of coping with Type 1 Diabetes as a professional athlete. He will next be on the track at the Norisring, racing through the streets of Nuremberg in Germany, June 27-29th, 2008.

About Charlie Kimball:

Charlie Kimball is a successful young American racing driver forging a career in the highly competitive world of open wheel racing. He has spent the last few years racing in some of the most competitive racing categories in the world including British Formula 3, Formula 3 Euroseries and the World Series by Renault. The 2009 season sees Kimball returning to the United States as he challenges for the title in the Firestone Indy Lights Championship.

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