



Alex Lloyd

Superfund Euro F3000 Championship Spa Francorchamps. July 18th 2004

Who said overtaking isn't possible?

After almost a year of being unable to race due to funding difficulties, Alex finally got back on track with a storming drive to 4th place at the majestic Spa circuit in Belgium.

The Superfund Euro F3000 series uses a 460HP Zytec engine in a Lola chassis, running the Championship very close to F1 rules. The race is run over 150Km, taking almost an hour, a significant step up in all ways from the Formula Renault championship, in which Alex was Vice-Champion last year, and from the Formula 3 class in which he tested and developed cars with 4 teams over the winter months.

Alex did the official test in the F3000 with John Village Automotive at the Jerez circuit in Spain a few weeks ago, and shocked the paddock by quickly coming to terms with the big powerful cars, ending up quickest. Still without a budget, however, he was forced to sit out the race, but has now got sufficient funding from the BRDC to do the next 3 or 4 races in the championship.

A disappointing weekend at Monza on 27th June saw him face mechanical problems which qualified him only 10th, but once the problem was cured, he was straight back onto the pace, setting fastest time in the pre-race warm-up, and optimistic for the race.

Sadly, he was caught up in a first lap incident at the 2nd chicane, which saw him launched into the air and crash heavily out of the race. Not enough time to learn much!

So to Spa, a beautiful long fast circuit, where he was hit by more mechanical problems in the one-hour qualifying session – his gearbox broke after only a couple of laps, which is too big a job to mend before the end of the session – but even so, his first (and only) quick lap was enough to qualify him 6th, only 3/10ths off pole.

"The car was handling really well, particularly in the flowing middle sector, where I am very quick" he commented "and I'm confident that I could easily have secured pole position if the gearbox hadn't jammed in 5th gear. The engine was well down on power too, so if we can cure these for the race, I think we could be in for a good performance".

Overnight, the team repaired the jammed gearbox, and replaced the engine. All seemed well in the warm-up, and in race trim, Alex was quickest.

After a good start, he battled for 5th place with his team mate, Jonny Reid for several laps before forcing him into an error at the newly-reprofiled bus stop chicane, and taking the place cleanly, then set out after the 4th place man, Norbert Siedler. Unable to get close enough on the straights to mount a challenge, Alex lined him up through the middle section of the track, and pulled alongside on the outside of one of the fastest corners – Blanchimont. Bravely holding his line, he made the move stick, to the delight of the live TV commentators.



Alex caught the Championship leader, Del Monte, who was lying 3rd, and for the last couple of laps he harried him aggressively for the last podium position, but was again unable to get close enough on the straights to mount an attack under braking, and Del Monte made no mistakes.

Speaking after the race, Alex proclaimed himself happy to have completed his first race since September last year, and was also very pleased that his fitness regime had paid off, as he was feeling he could have raced on for much longer.

“No problems at all with fitness, strength and stamina” he smiled “and no problems with my neck. I’m spending nearly 3 hours a day working on all these aspects, so I’m pleased it has turned out to be time well spent. I was also pleased that I was able to look after my tyres throughout the race – the only problem was that Del Monte also looked after his, otherwise I might have been able to capitalise on that in the last few laps”.

As to the fantastic overtaking move around the outside of Blanchimont, Alex merely said that he had noticed where Siedler was a little slow on the previous lap, and thus Alex dropped a gear to get a good run on him, got out of his dirty air quickly to make the pass on the outside, where he said there was sufficient concrete run-off if he needed it. “I worked out that it was possible, so I did it” he said.

“The cars are much more susceptible to lack of downforce when you are following another car” he went on to say. “In Formula Renault or Formula 3 you do get this problem, but it is much more pronounced in the F3000, as the cars are so much quicker. Also the F3000 is significantly bigger and wider, and this makes overtaking that much more difficult too. But I’m glad to have got a full race distance under my belt, and to understand exactly how the car’s handling goes off towards the end of the race. The team have a really good base set up, and the handling of the car was great.

“I’m also happy that I made no mistakes over the entire race distance – far longer than I have raced before. I love the speed and grip of these machines, and Eau Rouge is a wonderful corner to take flat out – as is Blanchimont! I’m really looking forward to the next round at Donington.”

SOME FACTS AND FIGURES:

Superfund Euro F3000 series – engine Zytec, 3 litre V8, 460 HP, chassis Lola, tyres Avon
Team: John Village Automotive, Chesterfield, UK

Superfund web site: www.superfund-eurof3000.com

Alex’s web site: www.alex-lloyd.com

TV coverage: live on Motors TV in UK (with highlights throughout the following week) and throughout Europe and South America and the race is also web-broadcast live on Superfund’s web site. See Superfund web site for details.

Next rounds:

Donington	29 th August 2004
Dijon	12 th September 2004
Zolder	19 th September 2004
Cagliari	31 st October 2004
Dubai	28 th November 2004

