

Press release 22/06/09

Round 4 of the Formula Renault NEC Championship was held at Oschersleben in Germany from 26-28 June . 23 of Europe's best Formula Renault drivers turned up for the event forming part of the European GT championship. Arriving at the track on Thursday, Arnold knew he had a lot of work to do in order to retain his 3rd place in the NEC.

Practise.

During practise, Arnold had excellent pace in wet conditions, consistently placing in the top 3. As the track dried up the team found themselves struggling for pace.

Qualifying.

At the end of a disappointing qualifying session, Arnold was classified in 16th place. This suggested a very difficult first race for Arnold on a circuit with only two major overtaking opportunities.

Race 1.

Conditions were good, the track was dry with threatening rain clouds overhead. Arnold got off the line well, moving up the order in the first few laps. He then got stuck behind the 11th place driver who he could simply not overtake. As rain started falling, the race was stopped after only 12 laps.

Race 2.

Morning showers left the track completely wet for race two. Arnold seized the opportunity to gain positions since he knew he was very fast in these conditions.

In the early laps, the young South African moved up the order and was soon fighting for 9th place.

Going into turn 5, he locked a wheel and skidded off the track.

He lost only 1 position, only to make the same mistake a few laps later, this time falling back to 15th position.

Angry with himself, he drove his heart out, threading his way through the field. This determined drive rewarded him with a fastest lap near the end of the race. Despite a broken front wing end plate, he finished a credible 8th.

Points standing.

The Oschersleben event marked the halfway mark in the 2009 championship and remarkably Arnold retained his 3rd place in the driver's standing.

An announcement regarding sponsorship and an investment in his future as a race driver can be expected before the next round at Assen in August.

This reassurance should give Arnold and the team at SL Formula Racing a good opportunity to continue in their quest for a good finish in a highly competitive environment.

Arnold's comments:

"It was a very difficult weekend with a lot of frustration. In the dry we were far off pace, we were just not able to close the gap on the leaders. In our defence, I must add that we were not able to do as much off and in-season testing as we hoped. Hopefully this situation will improve once the sponsorship is secured for the second half of the season.

As far as going off twice in race two, I have only myself to blame. This left me really angry with myself and this fuelled me to push and make the best of what was left of the race. I will tick this experience off as another lesson learned! It's a pity though, as I knew we had the pace to fight to the front in the wet.

I am pleasantly surprised to still be 3rd in the standings after this weekend, it shows I still have the chance to finish well in the championship. Let's hope I can come back for Assen in a few weeks time and find good pace in the dry"

