



The selection event for this year's FIA Institute Young Driver Excellence Academy, currently being held in Austria, consists of a variety of different driving, fitness and aptitude exercises. The FIA Institute interviewed three of the drivers during Day Two. The three drivers are: Andrea Caldarelli (21, Italy), Yazan Hamadeh (18, Syrian Arab Republic) and Brendan Reeves (23, Australia)

### **Q: How are you coping with the Academy selection event?**

Andrea Caldarelli (AC): The first day was really tough in every area and now it's tougher still. But I am really enjoying it and I would love to be part of it for the future. There's a lot to take in – which is really valuable.

Yazan Hamadeh (YH): So far I think I'm doing really well. I'm getting along with my group, I like the professionals who are coaching us, and the fitness and the other events we are taking part in. We're enjoying it but at the same time we are learning a lot.

Brendan Reeves (BR): It's been great so far. In the team skills exercise yesterday everyone nominated me to be leader, so that made me happy. My fitness course also went really well as I scored high in the beep test. The driving yesterday was really tricky as I was last out and it was foggy but we were out at lunchtime today so it was a lot easier.

### **Q: What is the most important lesson that you have learned so far?**



AC: The teamwork aspect is really interesting: how to work with people and understand who they are and how they think. Also the driving part: this gives you more understanding and

sensitivity behind the wheel, which is important.

YH: Yesterday we did teamwork skills. That was really valuable for me. In single-seaters in Saudi Arabia and the Middle East we don't have racing teams like those in Europe: you basically have a standard car, an engineer and you get in and drive it so it is a very individual experience. Yesterday I learned how important it is to communicate well with your team and that it can really benefit you.

BR: The safety aspect and the way that everything is aimed at safety, is really fascinating. I had a big crash in 2009 and injured myself, so it's something that I feel very strongly about in rallying and something I definitely want to help with.

### **Q: Why do you think the Academy will be beneficial for your future career?**

AC: The Academy is a good experience and to be part of it is great. The driver has to be a complete person and not just someone who is quick on the track: they have to know how to deal with media and engineers as well. I think it can help me and teach me a lot, particularly in terms of safety. The first thing that we have to teach to everyone as FIA Institute ambassadors is to be safe.

YH: There's no way I wouldn't benefit from being trained by the top professionals. Fitness-wise and mentality-wise, they will teach us the right way to approach racing. It will benefit me in lots of different areas and all the aspects will add up to me being a better racing driver. It would be an honour to be part of the Academy.

BR: There are so many different ways that you benefit because you look at every skill you need to build up from the bottom to the top. It's putting together all the little things that add up to make the complete package. Personally I find it easy to do all the things inside the car but not so easy to do everything needed outside the car. The Academy has already really helped me with that.

[View more photos from the Academy.](#)

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