

# GEORGE RUSSELL CLAIMS POLE FOR MACAU GRAND PRIX QUALIFICATION RACE

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A lap time of 2m10.100s for British driver George Russell (HitechGP) was enough to claim pole position for tomorrow's ten lap qualification race for the FIA Formula 3 World Cup at Macau. In the final stages of second qualifying, in which red flags flew three times, Russell posted two fast lap times to claim pole position. By qualifying second, 0.370s down on Russell's pole-winning time, Van Amersfoort Racing's Callum Iott completed the clean sweep of the front row for British drivers. Behind the two regulars from this year's FIA Formula 3 European Championship, Formula 3 returnee António Félix da Costa (Carlin) claimed third place on the grid, followed by Motopark's Sérgio Sette Câmara. The qualifying race to decide the starting grid positions for Sunday's main race will get underway tomorrow at 13.50 hrs local time (CST).

## FREE PRACTICE 2: ILOTT FASTEST BY A COMFORTABLE MARGIN.

On Friday morning, drivers had another 35 minutes of free practice to prepare for the deciding second qualifying session in the afternoon. British driver Callum Iott proved to be an early pace-setter, posting several lap times in the low 2m11s range early in the session. After 18 minutes, Daniel Ticktum (Double R Racing) hit the barriers at Maternity Bend, but the session continued. Another twelve minutes later, Sérgio Sette Câmara (Motopark) hit the barriers at the Melco hairpin, but managed to continue.

Meanwhile, Iloft had improved his own fastest time to 2m10.703s, followed by a strong Arjun Maini and Japanese F3 champion Kenta Yamashita. There was plenty of action in the final quarter of the session. Firstly, Sho Tsuboi (Team TOM's) hit the barriers at Lisboa and then Hongli Ye (B-Max Racing Team) spun at Police. Following right behind the Chinese, his compatriot Guanyu Zhou (Motopark) wasn't able to avoid the collision and ran into Ye's car that was stuck on the track. Both drivers escaped unscathed, but with 2m49s remaining, race control had no other option than to stop the session, which was not resumed. Thus, Iloft remained fastest from Maini, Yamashita, Felix Rosenqvist (SJM Theodore Racing by Prema), Sérgio Sette Câmara and Jake Hughes (Carlin).

## QUALIFYING 2: GEORGE RUSSELL PUTS HIS CAR ON POLE

Second qualifying went off to a rather calm start, with German Maximilian Günther (SJM Theodore Racing by Prema) the only driver to improve his time from first qualifying during the first ten minutes. Then, however, other drivers succeeded in posting faster lap times as well, with Iloft moving up into first place from Maini and Félix da Costa.

With ten minutes remaining, red flags were out as Daiki Sasaki (B-Max Racing Team) had crashed at Maternity. Some drops of rain were reported on the track as well. Just after the restart, red flags were out again following a crash by Maximilian Günther at Mandarin. Once the action had resumed again, George Russell moved up into first place with the fastest lap time of the weekend to date, 2m10.100s.

The final interruption came with only a few seconds remaining as Arjun Maini (Motopark) had missed his braking point and gone straight into the tyre stacks at Lisboa. The session wasn't restarted, so Russell ended up on pole position from Iloft, Félix da Costa and Sette Câmara.

## QUOTES AFTER QUALIFYING:

### **George Russell:**

"I went into this weekend with the intention to be fully focussing on Q2, which is what I did, but I was well down the order in the earlier sessions, I have to admit that I was slightly worried. After this morning's free practice, we made some changes on the car that worked out very well. I did a really good lap that secured me pole position already, but on the next lap, I managed to pull one of the best laps of my life out of the bag. I couldn't image to be on top after the start of the event we had. Track conditions were okay. After the second red flag, it was slightly slippery in the first corner. Later I saw a few spots of rain, but I realised that with so little rain, the grip still would be there, so I went for it and I was on top. Then I made another attempt, thinking, if I crash, I will still be on pole, but fortunately, I didn't and I improved my time once more."

### **Callum Iloft:**

“When I went out, I did the time on old tyres, so I was pretty happy with that time already. We had new laps and being at the back of the pit lane, it wasn’t easy to find a clean lap. I thought I had two laps to go fast, but ended up having only one as the red flags came out. On top of that, my radio wasn’t working. Last I know was that I was in P1, and with the rain setting in, I thought that nobody was going to beat it, but when I came back in I learned that George was on pole. Then again, from past races here, we know that not being on pole might even be a better position. I am confident, I know I have the speed, and who knows, the weather might even change.”

**António Félix da Costa:**

“Like Callum, my lap time was only set with two fresh tyres, so I was looking forward to doing a good lap with fresh tyres, but I never got that chance. Also, one has to consider that I haven’t driven the car for the last three years and I haven’t been to Macau since. I just wanted to put a fast lap in to see where we would end up. The last few minutes I couldn’t complete the lap. Having been on provisional pole position yesterday, it is a bit disappointing to be only third now, but I am sure it is going to be a fun race. If it rains, it is new for everyone, but at least four or five guys out there can win, even some that are not sitting here. It is about being smart and then bring it home on Sunday. If I can go home with a top five position, I can be happy.”

**Sérgio Sette Câmara:**

“It is a good feeling to be on the second row. This year’s field is very strong. You can see a lot of very good drivers who aren’t even in the top ten. I feel a bit bad for not being able to do a lap time on a full new set. George’s lap was amazing; he has a massive gap to second place. I am very happy with our performance; we were just penalised by our position at the back of the pit lane.”