

# CALLUM ILOTT COMES OUT ON TOP IN MACAU QUALIFICATION RACE

Posted on 18. November 2017 (<http://www.fiaf3europe.com/2017/11/18/callum-ilott-comes-top-macau-qualification-race/>)



British driver Callum Iloft (SJM Theodore Racing by Prema) has got himself in the best possible position for top honours in tomorrow's 64th Suncity Group Macau Grand Prix - FIA Formula 3 World Cup by winning today's ten laps' qualification race. Iloft took the chequered flag with a margin of 7.957 seconds from pole-sitter Joel Eriksson (Motopark with VEB) and the Swede's team-mate Sérgio Sette Câmara (Motopark with VEB).

Saturday's qualification race was a race of two halves. With a good getaway from pole position, Joel Eriksson slightly pulled clear from the rest of the field. The two SJM Theodore Racing by Prema drivers Iloft and Maximilian Günther quickly moved up into second and third place respectively as reigning FIA Formula 3 European Champion Lando Norris (Carlin) had a difficult start from second on the grid and only returned from the opening lap in ninth place.

Eriksson remained in front until the halfway point, but was visibly struggling with rapidly degrading tyres. That allowed Iloft to close the gap to the Swede on lap five and to mount his first challenge under braking for Lisboa next time round. That attempt was still in vain, but one lap later, Iloft passed Eriksson going into the ultra-fast Mandarin bend and immediately pulled away. While the Brit motored on to an undisputed win, a nice battle between Motopark team-mates Eriksson and Sette Câmara unfolded itself in the final three laps of the race. Eriksson eventually came home

ahead of his Brazilian team-mate while Maximilian Günther finished fourth from Ferdinand Habsburg, who drove a solid race to fifth place ahead of Pedro Piquet (Van Amersfoort Racing), the Brazilian making the most progress from 13th on the grid to sixth at the finish. Lando Norris, Daniel Ticktum (Motopark with VEB), Yuki Sekiguchi (B-Max Racing Team) and Guanyu Zhou (SJM Theodore Racing by Prema) rounded out the top ten.

German Mick Schumacher (SJM Theodore Racing by Prema) appeared to be on course to become the best Macau rookie, but saw all his hopes of a good result blown as he missed his braking point for Lisboa on lap four, went straight and dropped to the back of the field. Thus, Frenchman Sacha Fenestraz (Carlin), driving a car in the colours of the legendary Michel Vaillant comic hero, finished twelfth as the best-placed Macau novice.

The 15-lap feature race of the FIA Formula 3 World Cup will get underway tomorrow at 15.30 hrs local time.

**Callum Ilott:** “My start was okay, but then I made a mistake in the first corner on the opening lap. Initially, I was quite happy with second, but then I saw how Joel started to struggle a bit, and I decided to go for it. At my first attempt to overtake Joel, I didn’t get the room I wanted and was also on the wrong side. Next time round, I decided I would surprise him already before Mandarin. I was quite surprised with the advantage I had in the end. I didn’t expect to pull away so quickly once in the lead. It will be interesting for tomorrow, but I am really happy to be starting from the front row. “

**Joel Eriksson:** “The balance of the car was too much to the front, which was the main reason that my tyres degraded so much. I had a great start, so initially, it was quite relaxed going into Lisboa, but on the first laps, I could already feel that the rear tyres were degrading too fast and I really had to work hard to keep my pace. In the final stages, I was under pressure from Sérgio. It was good fun, we are team-mates and good friends and I knew he wouldn’t be making any stupid mistakes or take too many risks. We must take the positive from this race.”

**Sérgio Sette Câmara:** “I was very upset after my two crashes on Thursday and Friday, because the guys had to work all night long each time to repair the car. In qualifying, I thought we had the pace to go for pole position if I kept it on track. That didn’t quite work out, but at least I was pleased to see Joel do so well. I am also happy about today’s race, we had a good pace and are in a good position for tomorrow, so that is a good thing for everyone. I started well, but I was not so happy with fifth, so my goal was to move up to third at least. Then I saw how Joel was really struggling and

I just had to make a move on him, but Joel did a good job on overtaking to get the position back and I didn't want to take any further risks, so I kept the tow for the last two laps and brought the car home in third place.”