

# JOEL ERIKSSON SECURES POLE POSITION IN MACAU

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With a strong qualifying performance, Joel Eriksson (Motopark with VEB, 2m10.720s) secured pole position for tomorrow's 10 laps' qualification race for the 64th running of the Suncity Group Macau Grand Prix – FIA Formula 3 World Cup. In an action-packed second qualifying, in which nearly all drivers managed to improve their lap times from the previous day, the Swede pipped pre-race favourite and reigning FIA Formula 3 European Champion Lando Norris (Carlin, 2m10.744s) by 0.024 seconds. Callum Ilott (SJM Theodore Racing by Prema, 2m10.810s) ended up third from his team-mate Maximilian Günther (SJM Theodore Racing by Prema, 2m11.156s). German Mick Schumacher (SJM Theodore Racing by Prema, 2m11.483s) was the best-placed Macau rookie in qualifying, in which he was classified seventh.

With a similar programme like on the day before, Friday's Formula 3 schedule included another 40 minutes' free practice session and 40 minutes of qualifying. The fastest time for each driver from any of the two qualifying sessions is used to determine the starting grid positions for tomorrow's qualification race. Free practice in the morning already saw Joel Eriksson (Motopark with VEB, 2m12.032s) come out on top from his team-mate Daniel Ticktum (Motopark with VEB, 2m12.142s) and Austrian Ferdinand Habsburg (Carlin, 2m12.284s). After 14 minutes, red flags flew for the first time after Pedro Piquet (Van Amersfoort Racing, 2m13.218s) hit the tyre stacks at Paiol. The second

interruption came after a crash by Mick Schumacher (SJM Theodore Racing by Prema, 2m13.476s) at Moorish Hill and the session was red-flagged for the third time and not restarted following an off by Ralf Aron (Van Amersfoort Racing, 2m13.621s) at Police.

In second qualifying, nearly all drivers managed to improve their times from the previous day. In best Macau tradition, this session couldn't be completed without interruptions either. After ten minutes, Jehan Daruvala (Carlin, 2m13.710s) crashed and brought out the red flags. The next to cause an interruption was F3 returnee Sérgio Sette Câmara (Motopark with VEB, 2m11.569s) who crashed out at Fisherman's Bend. Once action resumed, Lando Norris was the first to post a sub 2m11s lap time, only to be outpaced by Joel Eriksson by 0.024 seconds. There were two more red flags after crashes by Guanyu Zhou (SJM Theodore Racing by Prema, 2m11.781s) and Yuki Sekiguchi (B-Max Racing Team, 2m11.559s), making it very difficult for drivers to find a rhythm. After the final red flag, the session wasn't restarted, so Joel Eriksson secured pole position from Lando Norris and Callum Ilott, whose final lap saw him move up into third place. Maximilian Günther, Ferdinand Habsburg (Carlin, 2m11.245s), Daniel Ticktum (Motopark with VEB, 2m11.437s), Mick Schumacher, Yuki Sekiguchi, Sérgio Sette Câmara and Guanyu Zhou rounded out the top ten.

Joel Eriksson: "My pole lap was really on the limit. Halfway through the session, I had a lot of traffic, so it took a while before I was able to find a clear lap. After the red flag, I went out once more with four new tyres and that lap was really spot-on. I made the most of it. The tyres we are using here are quite different from the ones we have in the FIA Formula 3 European Championship, they require a little bit more work before they build up grip, but I managed it well."

Lando Norris: "There is no doubt, I am disappointed, P1 was definitely on the cards. I made quite a big mistake on my push lap and then the tyres were no longer in a condition for me to mount a challenge. Still, second place on the grid is not too bad. I really don't have a clue what to expect tomorrow. There is a chance that it rains and if that is the case, I am looking forward to it. If its dry, we don't know what will happen. There are two races, we have to take it race by race, but we have two new tyres left, which may be a slight advantage."

Callum Ilott: "I was quite relieved to get that push lap in before the red flags came out. Yesterday, I was really unlucky with the red flags. I did my time with fresh tyres, on my final attempt, I got caught out in traffic. That was a bit frustrating, but it is nice to finish the session close to the front."