Vesti surges to first F3 pole in Spielberg, ahead of Beckmann and Sargeant

Frederik Vesti turned on the style to take pole position for Race 1 on Saturday, as PREMA once again dominated around the Red Bull Ring, taking three of the top four spots in a stop-start Qualifying session. Only the Trident of David Beckmann could split the PREMAs, as the German took P2, ahead of Logan Sargeant and Oscar Piastri.

Fresh from taking P1 in the opening session of the day, Lirim Zendeli was chomping at the bit to get back out on track and was the first to set a flying lap. For all of his eagerness, he couldn't quite find the same pace as in Free Practice, with Alex Peroni setting the initial benchmark.

With track temperatures hitting 55 degrees, it didn't take the grid long to warm up their tyres, or for Sebastián Fernández to go fastest, with the Spaniard eyeing up his second pole position in a row. That was as good as it got for the ART Grand Prix driver though, who then lost control and ended up in the barriers. The crash ended his afternoon and brought out a red flag midway through the session.

Fernández was swiftly knocked off top spot by the PREMA trio when running resumed, but the fastest of the three drivers, Vesti, saw his time deleted for exceeding track limits. This placed Sargeant in first ahead of Piastri.

The session was briefly brought to a stop for a second time with less than five minutes to go, as Igor Fraga pulled over onto the side of the road with mechanical issues, bringing out another red flag.

Fears that the session would be ended early were quickly culled as race control confirmed that the teams would be allowed to finish Qualifying. This would have pleased all bar Sargeant, who suffered mechanical issues of his own during the pause and was forced to watch the rest of the session from his engineer's phone in the pitlane.

With such little time remaining, there were no guarantees that anyone would be able to topple the American, and this initially proved true on the first of two final push laps for the field. Vesti came the closest, improving thanks to a fastest final sector, but his tour was still only good enough for third.

The majority of the grid made it across the line in time for one more lap and Vesti was able to improve again, going 0.192s faster than his teammate for pole. Beckmann was also able to improve and stole second from Sargeant by less than seven hundredths.

The American did manage to hold on to P3 ahead of Piastri, with Theo Pourchaire claiming fifth. Zendeli, Peroni and Olli Caldwell followed in the order, while Fernández will at least be pleased to have remained in the top nine, ahead of Liam Lawson in 10th.

The first race of the weekend will take place at 10.25am (local time) tomorrow morning, with Vesti in prime position to seal his first F3 win.

ENDS

SCHUMACHER'S BEST LAPTIME REINSTATED

10 July 2020

2020   SPIELBERG   DAVID SCHUMACHER   CHAROUZ RACING SYSTEM

David Schumacher will start from 17th on the
grid for Race 1 on Saturday at the Red Bull Ring.

The Charouz Racing
System driver had his best lap time deleted during qualifying earlier today when
the Stewards determined that he had exceeded track limits. They have since
reviewed the footage and determined that this was incorrect, reinstating his
time of 1:21.141. He had originally classified P22 and has thus gained 5 places
on tomorrow's starting grid.

Schumacher will be pushing for his first
points of the season when Race 1 gets underway at 10.25am (local time).