

Saturday 19 June 2021

Leclerc dominates from lights-to-flag in Le Castellet for maiden F3 win

An overtake-laden Race 1 for Arthur Leclerc was followed up by a controlled run from lights-to-flag in Race 2, with the PREMA Racing driver taking his first victory in Formula 3 from reverse grid pole at Paul Ricard.

PREMA enjoyed a one-two finish with Dennis Hauger in second, although Olli Caldwell was unable to hold onto third as MP Motorsport's Victor Martins nabbed the final podium spot on the penultimate lap, after starting from 11th.

A Qualifying retirement on Friday looked to have dashed Leclerc's hopes of a win in Round 2, but he put on a sensational performance in Race 1 to leap from 30th to 12th, earning himself reverse grid pole. The Monegasque will have been thankful for a much calmer second race, looking untroubled throughout the 20 laps to win by more than 4s over Hauger.

AS IT HAPPENED

Lining up under dark clouds in France, there was despair for Jak Crawford when the lights went out, the Hitech Grand Prix driver stalling and getting stuck on the starting grid. The American had a front row seat for reverse polesitter Leclerc's getaway, as the Ferrari junior pulled off without a hitch and held the lead.

Leclerc's PREMA teammates were battling for second behind him, but Hauger wasn't able to make a move on Caldwell stick between Turns 1 and 2.

Promoted to fourth off the line, Ayumu Iwasa wasn't able to retain the position for long, dropping down to sixth behind Jack Doohan and Martins, the latter up an incredible six places from P11. Clément Novalak clambered ahead of the Hitech shortly after for sixth, while Race 1 winner Alex Smolyar was up to eighth from P12.

Caio Collet wasn't enjoying the same success as his MP Motorsport teammate. Finishing outside of the points in Race 1, the Brazilian was forced to retire from the pits in Race 2, after stalling at the start of the race.

CONTINUES

But Martins was far from finished, the Frenchman edging ahead of Doohan for fourth, as Hauger began to reel in Caldwell in the fight for second. Lucky for PREMA, Hauger's eventual overtake was a clean one, with the Italian team retaining hopes of a 1-2-3 finish.

There were a couple of scuffles further back, as Kaylen Frederick and Jonny Edgar came together, before Rafael Villagomez and Ido Cohen clashed as well. The latter was handed a 10s-time penalty for causing the collision, before later retiring.

Smolyar and Calan Williams both made it past Iwasa for seventh and eighth in the closing laps, dropping the Hitech racer down to P9 at the flag. In 10th, Vesti was able to hold off David Schumacher and Logan Sargeant for the final points' position.

Out in front, Leclerc was enjoying a controlled run to the chequered flag, finishing the race with a 4.2s advantage over Hauger, the Norwegian seemingly happy to settle for second behind his teammate.

Caldwell's podium, and PREMA's 1-2-3, was very much under threat, though. The Briton had been drawn into a battle with the continually brilliant Martins, who was more than happy to break up the PREMA train. Diving down the inside of Caldwell and into third, the Frenchman made it two podiums in as many races, gaining his 18th position of the weekend so far.

THE KEY QUOTE – ARTHUR LECLERC (PREMA RACING)

"I am really happy, it was a great race and really special to win in front of both F1 and my family and friends as well. It was a really special win, especially because this is so close to my home.

"I didn't expect this at all this morning when I was starting from P30, but we did it and I am really happy about today."

THE CHAMPIONSHIP VIEW

Hauger and Martins are now tied on 48 points at the top of the Drivers' Championship, although the PREMA driver is ahead on countback. Caldwell has fallen to third with 41 points, with Novalak fourth on 39 and Smolyar fifth on 36.

CONTINUES

In the Teams' title battle, PREMA remain first with 104 points, ahead of Trident on 72. MP are third with 68 and ART fourth with 67. Charouz Racing System are fifth with 18.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Vesti will be looking to translate his brilliant pole lap from Friday's Qualifying to a first win of the season, when he lines up from P1 in Race 3 on Sunday at 11.40am local time. Rivalling the ART driver will be the PREMA of Hauger, who will be hoping to follow up his Race 2 podium with a win in Race 3.

CONTINUES

2021 FIA FORMULA 3 CHAMPIONSHIP – ROUND 2 RACE 2 PROVISIONAL CLASSIFICATION

	DRIVER	TEAM
1	Arthur Leclerc	PREMA Racing
2	Dennis Hauger	PREMA Racing
3	Victor Martins	MP Motorsport
4	Olli Caldwell	PREMA Racing
5	Jack Doohan	Trident
6	Clément Novalak	Trident
7	Alexander Smolyar	ART Grand Prix
8	Calan Williams	Jenzer Motorsport
9	Ayumu Iwasa	Hitech Grand Prix
10	Frederik Vesti	ART Grand Prix
11	David Schumacher	Trident
12	Logan Sargeant	Charouz Racing System
13	Matteo Nannini	HWA RACELAB
14	Jak Crawford	Hitech Grand Prix
15	Lorenzo Colombo	Campos Racing
16	Pierre Louis Chovet	Campos Racing
17	Juan Manuel Correa	ART Grand Prix
18	Enzo Fittipaldi	Charouz Racing System
19	Tjmen Van der Helm	MP Motorsport
20	Roman Stanek	Hitech Grand Prix
21	Oliver Rasmussen	HWA RACELAB
22	Kaylen Frederick	Carlin Buzz Racing
23	Jonny Edgar	Carlin Buzz Racing
24	Amaury Cordeel	Campos Racing
25	Reshad de Gerus	Charouz Racing System
26	Jonathan Hoggard	Jenzer Motorsport
27	Rafael Villagómez	HWA RACELAB
28	Filip Ugran	Jenzer Motorsport
DNF	Ido Cohen	Carlin Buzz Racing
DNF	Caio Collet	MP Motorsport
Fastest lap	Victor Martins	MP Motorsport 1:52.419 (Lap 19)

ENDS

Colombo handed post-Race 2 time penalty

19 June 2021



Lorenzo Colombo has received a time penalty following today's Race 2 at Le Castellet, after he was found to have left the track and gained an advantage.

The stewards have determined that Colombo left the track at Turn 9 and cut the apex, which gained the Campos Racing driver a lasting advantage.

As a result, 5s have been added to the Italian driver's race time, dropping him from 15th to 20th in the final classification.