

Friday 18 June 2021

Vesti beats Hauger to pole in electrifying battle at Le Castellet

Frederik Vesti was frustrated to have only Qualified fifth on his ART Grand Prix debut in Round 1 but delivered a stunning lap in Round 2 at Le Castellet, usurping the previously dominant Dennis Hauger late on with a time of 1:50.882 in a thrilling battle for pole.

The PREMA Racing driver had controlled the majority of the session, but had no answer to Vesti's late effort and was forced to settle for second, ahead of MP Motorsport rookie Victor Martins.

Setting off in 27-degree heat, Alex Smolyar was the first driver to put a time on the board, the Russian getting in a 1:52.393 just ahead of an early red flag, caused by Arthur Leclerc, who pulled to a stop on the side of the track. Smolyar's teammate Vesti was the only other driver to set a time before the stoppage, the ART Grand Prix man 0.002s off.

The pause in action could have benefitted the leading duo, with the rest of the grid forced into a second install lap on the same tyres, but their initial times weren't quick enough and Hauger was able to jump to first. The Championship leader had topped Free Practice and returned to P1 with a time of 1:51.688, ahead of MP Motorsport duo Caio Collet and Martins.

Smolyar and Vesti had fallen to seventh and eighth by the end of the first runs, with Jack Doohan, Matteo Nannini and Jak Crawford all also able to better them.

Returning with fresh tyres for the second set of runs, Hauger looked certain to retain his control of Qualifying when he posted a purple first sector and followed it up with a personal best second, improving on his time and retaining first in the process.

Running outside of the top 10 at the time, Vesti had gone almost unnoticed on his fast lap, with the majority of eyes fastened on the battle between Hauger and Collet. But the ART Grand Prix man had set three strong green sectors and broke the 1m 51s barrier for the first time to steal first.

Collet, meanwhile, had not been able to keep up with Hauger and dropped down to fifth, with his MP teammate Martins improving to third and Doohan nipping to fourth. The Australian's teammate Clément Novalak managed sixth on home soil, with the second ART of Smolyar settling for seventh.

Hauger set off on one final attempt, but his tyres were worse for wear and a poor first sector was followed up by a wobble in the second, as he went deep into Turn 7.

There were only two changes to the top 10 in the final minute, with Ayumu Iwasa sneaking into eighth, ahead of Juan Manuel Correa, while Logan Sargeant moved up 10th.

Finishing 12th overall, Jenzer Motorsport's Calan Williams will start ahead of Trident's David Schumacher in Saturday's reverse grid Race 1, which takes place at 10.10am local time.

CONTINUES

2021 FIA FORMULA 3 CHAMPIONSHIP – ROUND 2 QUALIFYING PROVISIONAL CLASSIFICATION

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

NOT CLASSIFIED

	Arthur Leclerc	PREMA Racing
--	----------------	--------------

ENDS