

Sunday 29 August 2021

Doohan closes in on Championship lead with defensive Race 3 win at Spa

Jack Doohan put on a defiant defensive display in a rain hampered Race 3 at Spa, holding off Victor Martins and Alex Smolyar to become the first Formula 3 driver to win twice in a single round with his third victory of the season.

The battle between Doohan and Martins will continue to bubble away even after the chequered flag, with the Frenchman at one point passing the Trident driver off the track. Martins argued that he'd been forced wide but was ordered to hand back the position.

Retaking the lead, Doohan didn't make the same mistake twice, holding off Martins for the remainder of the race and clinching a vital victory for his title bid. The Australian is now just 25 points off Dennis Hauger, who had entered the weekend with a 63-point advantage.

After Qualifying back in 14th, Hauger's goal was damage limitation, and the PREMA made up six places to eighth, only slowed down by some dogged defending from Doohan's Trident teammate, David Schumacher, who ended up in ninth ahead of Arthur Leclerc.

Alex Smolyar was out of the battle for first but coolly clinched his third podium of the season, and first since Le Castellet. Caio Collet was unable to challenge him in fourth, finishing in front of Clement Novalak, Frederik Vesti and Logan Sargeant.

AS IT HAPPENED

Further downpour meant that the field started behind the Safety Car for the second time this weekend, with Bert Mylander eventually peeling the Mercedes SC into the pitlane for a rolling start with 14 laps to go.

Starting from pole for the second time in as many races, Doohan slowed the field right down on the main straight before launching into Turn 1, with Martins in tow. The MP driver was locked into Doohan's slipstream but hampered by the spray from the back of his Trident.

With his main title rival at the front, Championship leader Hauger was attempting to minimise the damage to his advantage after a difficult Qualifying session. The PREMA Racing driver was starting down in 14th but managed to jump two spots inside of the opening lap.

CONTINUES

Jak Crawford and Roman Stanek followed next for Hauger as the PREMA locked in a points' place. Schumacher and Johnathan Hoggard were busy battling for ninth ahead of him, but Hauger put a stop to that, picking off Hoggard and putting himself between the pair.

With 10 laps to go, Martins hadn't relented in his chase of the race lead, continuing to keep Doohan within DRS range. The MP made a bold move at Turn 9, running wide and scampering past the Trident, but with all four wheels off the tarmac, the Frenchman was told to hand the place back.

Meanwhile, Doohan's teammate, Schumacher, had been doing a sterling job of keeping his title rival at bay in eighth, but a wobble opened the door for Hauger and the PREMA leapt ahead.

Leclerc had recovered from a difficult start to the race to pass Crawford and Stanek for 11th. The Monegasque was then gifted the chance to join the back of the top 10 after a wide moment for Hoggard, who had gone skidding through the gravel and dropped to 16th.

Eventually, Martins was forced to relent in his battle with Doohan and save his tyres, the Trident weathering the storm to take a second win in as many races. Crossing the line with a 1.6s gap, Martins settled for second but did score the fastest lap.

Alex Smolyar collected a podium ahead of Caio Collet and Clément Novalak. Frederik Vesti had dashed past Logan Sargeant for sixth with two laps to go. Hauger had risen six places to get up to eighth, minimising the points loss to Doohan. Schumacher and Leclerc completed the top 10.

KEY QUOTE – JACK DOOHAN (TRIDENT)

"I am very happy, although I didn't have the pace that I would like to have had. We didn't have the same pace as yesterday, but in the end, we got the job done and I adapted as well as I could have.

"Victor had an awesome race and had very strong pace. He was definitely quicker than I was, but luckily, I was able to pull away in the few areas that I was quicker and did enough to keep the gap. I am very happy and off to Zandvoort now.

"The gap to Dennis (Hauger) is definitely a lot better than 63, but there are two rounds to go, and my aim is to be in front of him. We are going to keep pushing as hard as we can."

CONTINUES

THE CHAMPIONSHIP VIEW

Hauger retains his Championship lead but is now just 25 points ahead of Doohan, with Vesti in third on 101 points. Martins is fourth with 96 and Smolyar fifth with 92.

PREMA Racing are first in the Teams' Championship with 290 points, ahead of Trident on 274. ART Grand Prix are third with 202, in front of MP Motorsport with 159.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Hauger and Doohan will pick up the title fight in less than one week as the field heads to Zandvoort next weekend for the penultimate round of the season.

CONTINUES

2021 FIA FORMULA 3 CHAMPIONSHIP – ROUND 5 RACE 3 PROVISIONAL CLASSIFICATION

	DRIVER	TEAM
1	Jack Doohan	Trident
2	Victor Martins	MP Motorsport
3	Alexander Smolyar	ART Grand Prix
4	Caio Collet	MP Motorsport
5	Clément Novalak	Trident
6	Frederik Vesti	ART Grand Prix
7	Logan Sargeant	Charouz Racing System
8	Dennis Hauger	PREMA Racing
9	David Schumacher	Trident
10	Arthur Leclerc	PREMA Racing
11	Olli Caldwell	PREMA Racing
12	Jak Crawford	Hitech Grand Prix
13	Ayumu Iwasa	Hitech Grand Prix
14	Lorenzo Colombo	Campos Racing
15	Roman Stanek	Hitech Grand Prix
16	Jonathan Hoggard	Jenzer Motorsport
17	Oliver Rasmussen	HWA RACELAB
18	Calan Williams	Jenzer Motorsport
19	Tijmen Van der Helm	MP Motorsport
20	Jonny Edgar	Carlin Buzz Racing
21	Ido Cohen	Carlin Buzz Racing
22	Juan Manuel Correa	ART Grand Prix
23	László Tóth	Campos Racing
24	Zdenek Chovanec	Charouz Racing System
25	Filip Ugran	Jenzer Motorsport
26	Matteo Nannini	HWA RACELAB
DNF	Amaury Cordeel	Campos Racing
DNF	Hunter Yeany	Charouz Racing System
DNF	Rafael Villagomez	HWA RACELAB
Fastest lap	Victor Martins	MP Motorsport 2:23.928 (Lap 12)

ENDS

Van der Helm receives five-second time penalty after Race 3

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Tijmen Van der Helm has been handed a five-second time penalty from today's Race 3 at Spa.

The MP Motorsport driver attempted a move on Calan Williams at Turn 18 on the final lap of the race that resulted in the duo touching shortly after the apex, forcing the Jenzer Motorsport driver off track.

The Stewards determined that Van der Helm was wholly at fault for the incident as he came from a long way back with considerable speed.

The Dutchman originally classified 19th and with the penalty applied, falls to 22nd.