

Saturday 10 September 2022

Colapinto holds off Bearman as title fight takes yet another twist

Franco Colapinto won the Monza Sprint Race from pole position, winning ahead of Oliver Bearman after the PREMA Racing man put in a great drive to secure P2. Caio Collet ended up P3 after holding off a number of threats behind for a podium result, but there was a plethora of drama along the way.

Victor Martins, Isack Hadjar and Arthur Leclerc all had contact at some point during the Sprint Race and fell down the order. It was Bearman though who secured the best result to give himself a real chance of the Drivers' Championship in the last race of the season, while six of the original seven contenders remain in the hunt.

AS IT HAPPENED

Colapinto covered off Collet from the launch to take the inside line into Turn 1. Through the Curve Grande, Martins made contact with Arthur Leclerc and the Frenchman was sent off into the gravel, dropping down the order to 27th. He recovered up to 23rd by the end of the second lap. Leclerc fell to 13th as a result, swamped by those around him into the second chicane after losing momentum due to the contact.

The Safety Car was deployed on Lap 4 after Zak O'Sullivan came unstuck into Turn 1. Missing his braking point, he had to take avoiding action to steer clear of teammate Brad Benavides and tagged the barriers as a result.

Racing resumed entering Lap 9 with Colapinto going as late as possible in his attempts to retain the lead. Into Turn 1 Josep Maria Marti locked up, running deep from third in the order and lost position to Jonny Edgar as he rejoined beyond Turn 2.

Hadjar's title hopes suffered another blow on the restart after he damaged his front wing in contact with Kush Maini at Ascari. He was forced to pit for a new one on Lap 10. Bearman was also in the wars but escaped damage following a tag from Frederick behind, as the Championship contenders weighed up risk versus reward going wheel-to-wheel.

Bearman had overtaken Marti twice into Turn 1 across Laps 10 and 11 but on both occasions, the Campos man fought back through into Turn 4 with the slipstream. A mistake at the second Lesmo for the Spaniard undid his great defensive work, and dropped him to 7th, promoting Bearman, Crawford and Maloney into fourth, fifth and sixth respectively.

Bearman slowly recaptured the fight for the podium places and was dragging the DRS train behind him along the way. Colapinto was keeping Collet at arm's length but backing up the MP Motorsport man and Edgar towards the pursuing pack in the process.

Entering Lap 15, Bearman was well within DRS range of the Trident driver in third and as Edgar attacked Collet into Turn 1, the PREMA man dived down the outside and took two places in one corner with a brilliant overtake.

As Collet defended from Edgar to stay on the podium, Bearman edged ever closer to leader Colapinto. Into the final lap, the gap for the race win was down to 0.6s.

Maloney was the next title contender to shape a move for the podium. The pack from fourth down to 14th were nose-to-tail. Stanek had dropped down the order and out of the second Lesmo, Martins' comeback drive relegated the Trident driver to P12 in a straightforward pass.

On the final lap, Bearman got the gap down to 0.1s to Colapinto out of Ascari and dived to the outside of Parabolica for a move. The Argentine defended just enough to dissuade Bearman from attempting the move and held on for the victory.

Collet had broken away from the battle behind to retain third while Maloney managed to make his move on Edgar stick to take fourth ahead of the Briton.

Saucy ended up as the lead ART driver in sixth ahead of Crawford in P7 who fell out of title contention following the Sprint Race result. Leclerc recovered to eighth with Marti dropping to ninth after catching the gravel out of the second chicane. Martins' recovery drive was rewarded with a point after reaching 10th on the last lap.

KEY QUOTE – Franco Colapinto, Van Amersfoort Racing

“Second win of the year, really happy and really proud of all of the team after all the hard work they’ve been doing all year as a new team. I’m really impressed with the pace we had all race, leading the whole race at Monza was something I didn’t think we’d be able to do but we managed to do it and keep the tyres in the window.

“I’m really proud, the car was really nice to drive and tomorrow I think we have another chance to score some really good points.”

THE CHAMPIONSHIP VIEW

With P2, Bearman closes the gap to the leading duo of Martins and Hadjar. The Frenchman now sits on 127 points while Hadjar's DNF leaves him on 121 in second. Bearman narrows the gap, now third on 114 points ahead of Maloney and Stanek, both on 109 points. Leclerc is now the one with it all to do, sixth but still in contention albeit on 104.

The Teams' title fight goes on to the final race of the season too, with PREMA Racing leading Trident by 49 points heading into Sunday's Feature Race. ART Grand Prix remains third in the standings, now on 196.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The 2022 Formula 3 Championship finale. The Drivers' Championship will be decided on Sunday at Monza, with lights out scheduled for 08:35 local time.

CONTINUES

2022 FIA FORMULA 3 CHAMPIONSHIP – ROUND 9 SPRINT RACE PROVISIONAL CLASSIFICATION

	DRIVER	TEAM
1	Franco Colapinto	Van Amersfoort Racing
2	Oliver Bearman	PREMA Racing
3	Caio Collet	MP Motorsport
4	Zane Maloney	Trident
5	Jonny Edgar	Trident
6	Grégoire Saucy	ART Grand Prix
7	Jak Crawford	PREMA Racing
8	Arthur Leclerc	PREMA Racing
9	Josep María Martí	Campos Racing
10	Victor Martins	ART Grand Prix
11	Kush Maini	MP Motorsport
12	Roman Stanek	Trident
13	Juan Manuel Correa	ART Grand Prix
14	William Alatalo	Jenzer Motorsport
15	Ido Cohen	Jenzer Motorsport
16	Federico Malvestiti	Jenzer Motorsport
17	Francesco Pizzi	Charouz Racing System
18	Brad Benavides	Carlin
19	Reece Ushijima	Van Amersfoort Racing
20	Enzo Trulli	Carlin
21	Nazim Azman	Hitech Grand Prix
22	László Tóth	Charouz Racing System
23	Alessandro Famularo	Charouz Racing System
24	Hunter Yeany	Campos Racing
25	Alexander Smolyar	MP Motorsport
26	Rafael Villagómez	Van Amersfoort Racing
27	Isack Hadjar	Hitech Grand Prix

NOT CLASSIFIED

DNF	Kaylen Frederick	Hitech Grand Prix
DNF	Zak O'Sullivan	Carlin
DNS	David Vidales	Campos Racing

Fastest lap Alexander Smolyar | MP Motorsport | 1:39.160 (Lap 14)