

Friday 8 July 2022

Leclerc holds off Smolyar in slippery Spielberg Free Practice session

Showers overnight saw Practice commence around a slippery Red Bull Ring. Fortunately for the 30 drivers the rain held at bay for the whole session, as they took the time to make some exploratory laps on the blue-walled wet tyres.

Immediately getting to grips with the challenging conditions, Trident's Roman Stanek laid down a cautious but representative 1:30.622, before he and MP Motorsport's Alexander Smolyar began to trade fastest times. Meanwhile, track limits caught several of the field out, including Championship leader Victor Martins who went wide and put four wheels off the track at Turn 2.

At the halfway point, it was clear the wet tyres had served their purpose as a dry line had started to form around the Red Bull Ring. Taking the gamble, Arthur Leclerc became the first driver to switch over to slicks, putting on a set of soft compounds whilst his teammate Oliver Bearman hopped up into the top spot with a 1:29.524.

Turning the timing screens purple, times tumbled as drivers began clocking in their best laps of the session. The change in conditions saw lap times over 10 seconds quicker than those at the start, as the field dashed out to take advantage.

Finding the limit in the sole Free Practice of the weekend was not an easy task. Off the back of taking his maiden Formula 3 podium in Silverstone, Reece Ushijima lost his rear end into Turn 2 and had to take a trip through the gravel before re-joining. At the same time, Zak O'Sullivan went over half a second clear of his nearest rival. But the Carlin driver's time at the top wouldn't last forever, as soon after Leclerc set a 1:20.171 to go quickest.

A flurry of action in the final minutes saw the top 10 chop and change, while traffic proved to be a problem for many. However, nobody could unseat the PREMA Racing driver from the P1 spot. Smolyar closed the session a tenth down on Leclerc's leading time, as Jonny Edgar put in a promising performance for third, ahead of fellow Red Bull junior Isack Hadjar.

ART Grand Prix's Grégoire Saucy finished fifth, ahead of early pacesetter Stanek. Bearman made sure there were two PREMAs in the top seven, beating out Martins. Franco Colapinto secured ninth for Van Amersfoort Racing, as Kaylen Frederick rounded out the top 10 runners.

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2022 FIA FORMULA 3 CHAMPIONSHIP – ROUND 5 FREE PRACTICE PROVISIONAL CLASSIFICATION

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

CONTINUES



MEDIA RELEASE

Notes to editors

A selection of high-resolution images from this session is now available via our [media platform](#), along with a variety of driver interviews, press conference transcripts and the FIA Formula 3 media kit.

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