

Sunday 20 March 2022

Martins prevails in Sakhir to win over Leclerc

ART Grand Prix driver Victor Martins took the glory in the opening Feature Race of the 2022 FIA Formula 3 season in Sakhir, beating PREMA Racing's Arthur Leclerc to victory.

Martins stayed patient throughout the opening stages of the race after starting from third on the grid, keeping close to the rear of rookie pole-sitter Franco Colapinto, who led a majority of the race. However, on lap 15, the more experienced Martins made his move for the lead.

Leclerc produced another strong recovery drive from 13th on the grid, advancing all the way up to second place by the chequered flag.

Van Amersfoort Racing's Colapinto crossed the line in third place but was issued a five-second time penalty for violating track limits, which caused him to drop back to fifth while Gregoire Saucy inherited the final spot on the podium.

AS IT HAPPENED

Although he produced a surprise result in Qualifying with pole position, it was arguably going to be a taller task for Colapinto to hold onto the victory as he continues to acclimatise himself to his new F3 surroundings.

However, in the opening stages of the race, the Argentine looked comfortable out in front. He was forced to deal with a Safety Car restart, which was required after Francesco Pizzi and Zane Maloney came to a stop on the circuit on the opening lap. Pizzi was nudged by Maloney, who was dropping through the field due to a mechanical issue following the opening corners.

Caio Collet was also a victim of the first lap, as he broke his front suspension while driving over a kerb at Turn 7, having taken his car off the circuit to avoid potential contact between his rivals.

At the Safety Car restart, Martins overtook Roman Stanek for P2, but the Trident driver would soon be eliminated from contention after coming together with Alex Smolyar. Stanek suffered a puncture and was forced back to the pit lane for a new set of tyres.

A brief Virtual Safety Car was called on Lap 6 after Hitech Grand Prix's Nazim Azman was spun around following contact. At the restart, Leclerc made swift work of Saturday race winner Isack Hadjar and Campos Racing's David Vidales to place himself in the top five.

Further ahead, Juan Manuel Correa appeared to have rapid pace and he moved into the top three after overtaking Smolyar, with the latter also soon finding himself behind the charging Leclerc. There was then heartbreak for Hadjar, who suffered a puncture while battling Smolyar for fifth place.

Leclerc progressed into the top three after moving past Correa, while behind and outside the points, his two PREMA teammates Jak Crawford and Oliver Bearman began to make headways into the top 10, progressing through a stream of 15 or so cars that were separated by just a handful of seconds.

Having hounded Colapinto for several laps, Martins made the crucial overtake on Lap 15, and three laps later, the pole-sitter found himself in third as Leclerc moved ahead. Although Leclerc was able to slightly narrow the gap to Martins, he couldn't cut it enough to challenge for victory in the final laps.

Bearman and Crawford continued to progress further into the top 10 and at the chequered flag, they found themselves sixth and seventh, respectively. Colapinto was demoted back to fifth due to his time penalty, with Saucy and Correa gaining a spot each to classify third and fourth.

Vidales was eighth, while Williams Alatalo scored his first points of the season in ninth. American Kaylen Frederick rounded out the top 10 to take the final point on offer.

KEY QUOTE – Victor Martins (ART Grand Prix)

"What a race, P1 today. It's a great comeback after yesterday's race and zero points scored.

"The race was just mega, the overtakes, I went for it. I waited a bit of time behind Colapinto but in the end, I managed to take the win. I think it's a good start to the season."

THE CHAMPIONSHIP VIEW

In the Drivers' Championship, Martins is the leader of the standings after round one, sitting atop with 25 points. He's one point ahead of Leclerc in second with 24, while Bearman is third on 17 points.

In the Teams' Championship, ART Grand Prix come away from the opening round with the lead, sitting on 54 points. PREMA Racing is close behind on 47, while Hitech Grand Prix sits further back in third on 14 points.

WHAT'S NEXT?

F3 will return next month for the second round of the season in Imola from April 22 – 24. Like Bahrain, it will mark the first time the category has visited the circuit.

CONTINUES

2022 FIA FORMULA 3 CHAMPIONSHIP – ROUND 1 FEATURE RACE PROVISIONAL CLASSIFICATION

	DRIVER	TEAM
1	Victor Martins	ART Grand Prix
2	Arthur Leclerc	PREMA Racing
3	Grégoire Saucy	ART Grand Prix
4	Juan Manuel Correa	ART Grand Prix
5	Franco Colapinto	Van Amersfoort Racing
6	Oliver Bearman	PREMA Racing
7	Jak Crawford	PREMA Racing
8	David Vidales	Campos Racing
9	William Alatalo	Jenzer Motorsport
10	Kaylen Frederick	Hitech Grand Prix
11	Jonny Edgar	Trident
12	Rafael Villagómez	Van Amersfoort Racing
13	Josep María Martí	Campos Racing
14	Hunter Yeany	Campos Racing
15	Niko Kari	Jenzer Motorsport
16	Ido Cohen	Jenzer Motorsport
17	Kush Maini	MP Motorsport
18	Reece Ushijima	Van Amersfoort Racing
19	Zak O'Sullivan	Carlin
20	Ayrton Simmons	Charouz Racing System
21	Brad Benavides	Carlin
22	Roman Stanek	Trident
23	Alexander Smolyar	MP Motorsport
24	László Tóth	Charouz Racing System
25	Isack Hadjar	Hitech Grand Prix
26	Enzo Trulli	Carlin
DNF	Nazim Azman	PREMA Racing
DNF	Caio Collet	MP Motorsport
DNF	Zane Maloney	Trident
DNF	Francesco Pizzi	Charouz Racing System
Fastest lap	Roman Stanek	Trident
		1:51.634 (Lap 7)

CONTINUES



MEDIA RELEASE

ENDS

Notes to editors

A selection of high-resolution images and printouts from this session are 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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