

Saturday 22 July 2023

Mini steers clear of trouble to clinch victory in Budapest

Gabriele Mini brought home a second victory of his rookie Formula 3 campaign, keeping his nose clean and his tyres in check despite late drama around the Hungaroring. Starting on reverse grid pole, the Hitech Pulse-Eight driver initially lost out off the line to Nikita Bedrin but remained within touching distance to regain the lead and hold on to it despite a late Safety Car appearance.

Championship leader Gabriel Bortoleto's consistency remained firmly intact as he carved through from fourth to second, snatching P2 away from Bedrin out of the penultimate corner. Bedrin's valiant defence on well-worn tyres was rewarded with his and Jenzer Motorsport's first podium of the season.

AS IT HAPPENED

In his first front row start of Formula 3, Bedrin didn't let inexperience phase him. Nailing his getaway gave him the run he needed to swoop around the outside of Mini and snatch the lead out of Turn 1.

Bortoleto tried to execute the same move on Mansell for third, but the Trident driver couldn't keep it within the white lines, going wide across the run-off. Meanwhile, Feature Race polesitter O'Sullivan also capitalised as the lights went out, making up three places to P9.

Further back, Tommy Smith and Sebastián Montoya made contact on the opening lap, with the Van Amersfoort Racing driver pitched into the air and across the gravel. They both pitted for repairs, joined by Hugh Barter and Ido Cohen, the latter retiring at the end of Lap 1.

On Lap 3, Colapinto put the pressure on Tsolov for seventh, forcing the ART Grand Prix driver into a mistake to get the switchback done through Turn 2.

Having been waiting patiently behind Mansell, Bortoleto pounced for third on Lap 7. Utilising DRS, the Trident driver sailed from a long way back down the inside of the Campos Racing driver into Turn 1. Aron tried to do the same two laps later with a great run out of the final corner but couldn't make the late move stick and ran wide.

Out front, Bedrin couldn't quite shake off the #15 Hitech Pulse-Eight car and left the door open on Lap 8 for Mini to breeze past back up into the lead on the approach to Turn 1.

Attempting to find his way through on Tsolov, O'Sullivan tried moves left, right and centre as the Bulgarian driver got his elbows out to defend eighth. Locking up at the apex, the #3 PREMA Racing car tagged the rear of the ART, forcing O'Sullivan to box with front wing damage.

CONTINUES

Minì's efforts to build an advantage over Bedrin and seven second gap to Bortoleto was swiftly wiped away on Lap 13. Montoya came to a halt between Turns 12 and 13 to trigger a Virtual Safety Car, which was quickly converted into a full Safety Car.

Once racing resumed on Lap 17 the field faced a three-lap sprint to the line. Aron instantly forced Mansell onto the defensive for fourth. Having been unable to get past at Turn 1, the Estonian got the job done around the outside of Turn 3, enabling Oliver Goethe to also find his way through on the #24 Campos car.

Josep María Martí's efforts to climb back into the points from P13 unravelled on the restart, as the Spaniard was tagged from behind by Tsolov, sending the pair spinning out of the top 10 and triggering a brief Virtual Safety Car appearance.

With one lap of racing left, Bortoleto fought Bedrin hard for second as the Jenzer driver struggled with his rear medium tyres. Bedrin made his #26 car as wide as possible but a bad run out of the penultimate corner handed the Trident driver the opportunity he needed to snatch second place.

Minì reached the chequered flag 4.2 seconds clear of the duelling pair. Aron added more points to his rookie tally in fourth ahead of Goethe. Mansell ultimately had to settle for sixth ahead of Colapinto. Jonny Edgar, Grégoire Saucy and Dino Beganovic were all beneficiaries of the late restart to round out the final points scorers in eighth, ninth and 10th respectively.

KEY QUOTE – Gabriele Minì, Hitech Pulse Eight

"Just finished the Sprint Race in P1. It was a really good race, just tried to save the tyres from the beginning and then once I overtook Nikita (Bedrin), I started managing the tyres and happy to have kept my position to the end."

THE CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS

Gabriel Bortoleto's continues to strengthen his hold on the lead of the Drivers' Championship with 138 points. The Brazilian now has a 46-point advantage over second-place Josep María Martí. Victory has allowed Gabriele Minì to close up to within five points of P2, on 87 points to the Campos Racing driver's 92. Paul Aron sits in fourth on 84, as Franco Colapinto moves up one place to round out the top five on 78 points.

Increasing their tally to 254 points, Trident are 19 points clear of PREMA Racing in the Teams' Standings, with their compatriots comfortably second on 235. Hitech Pulse-Eight remain third on 154 points.

UP NEXT

Zak O'Sullivan will be looking to secure his first Feature Race victory of the season when he lines up on pole. Sunday's 24 laps of action commence at 08:25 local time.

2023 FIA FORMULA 3 CHAMPIONSHIP – ROUND 8 SPRINT RACE PROVISIONAL CLASSIFICATION

	DRIVER	LICENCE	TEAM
1	Gabriele Mini	ITA	Hitech Pulse-Eight
2	Gabriel Bortoleto	BRA	Trident
3	Nikita Bedrin	ITA	Jenzer Motorsport
4	Paul Aron	EST	PREMA Racing
5	Oliver Goethe	DEU	Trident
6	Christian Mansell	GBR	Campos Racing
7	Franco Colapinto	ARG	MP Motorsport
8	Jonny Edgar	GBR	MP Motorsport
9	Grégoire Saucy	CHE	ART Grand Prix
10	Dino Beganovic	SWE	PREMA Racing
11	Luke Browning	GBR	Hitech Pulse-Eight
12	Taylor Barnard	GBR	Jenzer Motorsport
13	Kaylen Frederick	USA	ART Grand Prix
14	Caio Collet	BRA	Van Amersfoort Racing
15	Leonardo Fornaroli	ITA	Trident
16	Oliver Gray	GBR	Rodin Carlin
17	Sophia Floersch	DEU	PHM Racing by Charouz
18	Rafael Villagómez	MEX	Van Amersfoort Racing
19	Maxwell Esterson	USA	Rodin Carlin
20	Roberto Faria	BRA	PHM Racing by Charouz
21	Josep María Martí	ESP	Campos Racing
22	Mari Boya	ESP	MP Motorsport
23	Zak O'Sullivan	GBR	PREMA Racing
24	Tommy Smith	AUS	Van Amersfoort Racing
25	Hugh Barter	AUS	Campos Racing
26	Woohyun Shin	KOR	PHM Racing by Charouz
27	Alejandro García	MEX	Jenzer Motorsport

NOT CLASSIFIED

DNF	Nikola Tsolov	BGR	ART Grand Prix
DNF	Sebastian Montoya	COL	Hitech Pulse-Eight
DNF	Ido Cohen	ISR	Rodin Carlin

OVERALL FASTEST LAP

Gabriel Bortoleto	BRA	Trident
1:36.474 (Lap 3)		

FASTEST LAP ELIGIBLE FOR POINTS

Gabriel Bortoleto	BRA	Trident
1:36.474 (Lap 3)		