

Browning grabs pole position for F3 Macau Grand Prix qualifying race



Hitech Pulse-Eight's Luke Browning took pole position for the qualifying race for the Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix - FIA F3 World Cup on Friday, as he edged out his closest rival Gabriele Minì by just 0.006 seconds.

The Briton had moved to the top of the timesheets with less than 10 minutes remaining as drivers began to unleash their best efforts on new tyres they had saved for the second qualifying session.

Browning's time of 2m05.435s was a clear target for his rivals, especially provisional pole position holder Minì, whose initial effort in his SJM Theodore PREMA Racing car put him six thousandths of a second adrift.

But Minì clearly felt he had more to come, and he looked on course to better things – and therefore take pole – on the following lap as he put in purple sector times. However, before he could finish that lap, the red flags were brought out after Marcus Armstrong (MP Motorsport) crashed at Dona Maria Bend and Ugo Ugochukwu (TRIDENT MOTORSPORT) ended up blocking the track at Moorish Hill.

A restart with five minutes to go meant Browning's rivals had another opportunity to knock him off the top spot, and early sector times again suggested that Minì had the pace needed to go better and take pole.

But once more, despite his obvious pace, Minì had to abort the lap after a late red flag was caused by Hitech Pulse-Eight's Isack Hadjar crashing at Moorish Hill. With not enough time left to restart the session, Browning's pole position was confirmed.

Having been second in every session this weekend, Browning said he always believed he had the potential to come out on top - especially after a lack of DRS in first qualifying had explained the deficit to Minì.

"In Q1, we didn't have DRS working, so this was more or less the deficit to P1," he said. "I thought it was going to be close when we get to Q2 and, having saved a set of tyres, I knew we were going to be in a good place if I really put it together. The lap was special, it really was, and I'm glad to be on pole."

Behind Browning and Minì, SJM Theodore PREMA Racing's Dino Beganovic ended up third fastest in the end with a late effort, while Hadjar's earlier fastest lap was good enough to secure him fourth. The late red flag that prevented drivers improving also guaranteed that Armstrong was able to hold on to fifth despite his early end to running.

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