

Thursday 25 May 2023

Minì scores top spot late on in wet-to-dry Monte Carlo running

Gabriele Minì made the most of a drying Monte Carlo circuit to head the field in Formula 3's first session around the Principality. The Hitech Pulse-Eight driver put his previous experience to good use, clocking in a 1:26.686 in the final jam-packed seconds of Free Practice.

Fellow returnees Franco Colapinto and Grégoire Saucy benefited from a late switch to slicks to finish second and third, over two-tenths down on the Italian's best effort.

A heavy downpour ahead of the session threw a curveball the drivers' way, making the challenge of learning the new track even more difficult. Campos Racing's Christian Mansell was the first to get a representative time on the board with a 1:45.249, but times continued to tumble with every lap of the 3.337km circuit.

The Hitech Pulse-Eight duo of Sebastián Montoya and Luke Browning and MP Motorsport's Colapinto traded the top times inside the opening 15 minutes, before Josep María Martí broke into the 1:40s for the first time.

Although a dry line had begun to form, there were still plenty of areas to catch the field out. Championship leader Gabriel Bortoleto reacted sharply to keep his #5 Trident out of the barriers, while Hugh Barter touched the wall after going in too deep at Turn 5.

Browning brought the time to beat down to a 1:39.879 before the Red Flag appeared. A spin for Jonny Edgar left the British racer facing the wrong way and his car in need of recovery.

When the action resumed, Caio Collet wasted no time posting a 1:38.5s to assume the top spot before Leonardo Fornaroli set the benchmark at 1:37.334.

PREMA Racing's Paul Aron went too deep into the Turn 6 hairpin, followed by Browning a few laps later, leaving the British racer with a damaged front wing and a momentary Virtual Safety Car.

With the track at its driest in the closing stages, Colapinto stormed five seconds clear in P1, despite a snap of oversteer out of the final corner. The late frenzy of activity left several drivers facing traffic ahead, but Minì managed to squeeze his way through to snatch P1 at the chequered flag.

Split-group Qualifying is set to get underway on Friday. Group A will get the session underway at 11:10 local time, followed by Group B at 11:34

2023 FIA FORMULA 3 CHAMPIONSHIP – ROUND 4 FREE PRACTICE PROVISIONAL CLASSIFICATION

	DRIVER	LICENCE	TEAM	LAPTIME
1	Gabriele Minì	ITA	Hitech Pulse-Eight	1:26.686
2	Franco Colapinto	ARG	MP Motorsport	1:26.919
3	Grégoire Saucy	CHE	ART Grand Prix	1:27.321
4	Josep María Martí	ESP	Campos Racing	1:27.324
5	Gabriel Bortoleto	BRA	Trident	1:27.501
6	Dino Beganovic	SWE	PREMA Racing	1:27.508
7	Sebastian Montoya	COL	Hitech Pulse-Eight	1:27.544
8	Caio Collet	BRA	Van Amersfoort Racing	1:27.693
9	Mari Boya	ESP	MP Motorsport	1:28.190
10	Tommy Smith	AUS	Van Amersfoort Racing	1:28.271
11	Paul Aron	EST	PREMA Racing	1:28.646
12	Christian Mansell	GBR	Campos Racing	1:28.793
13	Nikita Bedrin	ITA	Jenzer Motorsport	1:29.015
14	Luke Browning	GBR	Hitech Pulse-Eight	1:29.119
15	Kaylen Frederick	USA	ART Grand Prix	1:29.145
16	Hugh Barter	AUS	Campos Racing	1:29.233
17	Oliver Gray	GBR	Rodin Carlin	1:29.383
18	Rafael Villagómez	MEX	Van Amersfoort Racing	1:29.651
19	Sophia Floersch	DEU	PHM Racing by Charouz	1:29.766
20	Nikola Tsolov	BGR	ART Grand Prix	1:29.894
21	Hunter Yeany	USA	Rodin Carlin	1:29.894
22	Zak O'Sullivan	GBR	PREMA Racing	1:30.084
23	Ido Cohen	ISR	Rodin Carlin	1:31.027
24	Leonardo Fornaroli	ITA	Trident	1:31.566
25	Piotr Wisnicki	POL	PHM Racing by Charouz	1:31.702
26	Taylor Barnard	GBR	Jenzer Motorsport	1:35.268
27	Alejandro García	MEX	Jenzer Motorsport	1:37.592
28	Oliver Goethe	DEU	Trident	1:40.239
29	Jonny Edgar	GBR	MP Motorsport	1:41.073
30	Roberto Faria	BRA	PHM Racing by Charouz	1:47.729

ENDS

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