

Saturday 27 May 2023

Martí drives off into the distance for Monte Carlo victory

Josep Maria Martí was in a class of his own to bring home his second victory of the 2023 season in the Monte Carlo Sprint Race. Starting from reverse grid pole, the Campos Racing driver put together a spotless performance from start to finish to win by over eight seconds.

Trident's Leonardo Fornaroli held his nerve to keep Grégoire Saucy at bay for second, whilst the ART Grand Prix driver secured the final podium position from fourth on the grid.

AS IT HAPPENED

Martí maintained the lead off the line to break away from Fornaroli, who found himself forced to go on the defensive from Taylor Barnard. However, the Jenzer Motorsport driver lost out himself, after a daring move by Saucy around the outside of Turn 1 allowed him to jump up to third.

The Safety Car was deployed on the first lap following contact into the opening corner at Sainte Devote sent Jonny Edgar into the barriers. His MP Motorsport teammate Mari Boya also suffered Turn 1 contact, resulting in retirement also.

As the Safety Car peeled into the pits at the end of Lap 5, Martí held the lead on the restart. Colapinto was brave on the brakes with a late dive squeezing him past fourth-placed Barnard at the Turn 6 hairpin.

In the battle for the final point, Gabriele Miní closed on Paul Aron's tail. The PREMA Racing driver continued to keep him at bay, despite not having DRS to Caio Collet ahead, leaving the Italian stuck in a PREMA sandwich with Dino Beganovic never far behind.

Out front, Martí looked untroubled, steadily building his advantage lap-by-lap. The Spaniard pulled over five seconds clear in six laps through the middle phase of the race. This left Fornaroli driving on his mirrors as Saucy closed up to the back of him, with Colapinto staying close to the Swiss driver also.

He wasn't the only Trident under attack as Hitech Pulse-Eight's Sebastián Montoya was primed and ready to pounce the moment Championship leader Gabriel Bortoleto made an error. There wasn't one forthcoming as the Brazilian continued to keep him at bay for sixth.

As the chequered flag flew, Martí secured victory by an 8.1s margin to Fornaroli with Saucy third. Colapinto made up one place to take fourth, as Barnard added more points to his rookie tally with his best-ever F3 finish in fifth.

Bortoleto held on to sixth ahead of the Hitech Pulse-Eight duo of Montoya and Browning. Collet earned two points for Van Amersfoort Racing in ninth, as Aron clung on to round out the top 10.

KEY QUOTE – Josep María Martí, Campos Racing

" It was a great race. Obviously, I had Leonardo pushing behind me right at the beginning so I was just trying to manage the gap, see where he was faster, where he was slower, trying to see what I could do to be quicker. When he started dropping off, I had my tyres a little bit better, so I just kept that pace and slowly built a gap. Extremely happy to win in Monaco, my first-ever race here and it was a great experience driving around here, so really special"

THE CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS

Gabriel Bortoleto continues to stand tall at the top of the Drivers' Championship on 63 points, 17 points clear of Grégoire Saucy. Victory moves Josep María Martí up to third on 35, with Gabriele Miní sitting in fourth, five points further back. Leonardo Fornaroli rounds out the top five on 28 points.

Two top six finishes mean Trident strengthen their hold on the lead of the Teams' Standings, now on 114 points to PREMA Racing's 71. Hitech Pulse-Eight remain third on 64, ahead of ART Grand Prix and Campos Racing, on 53 and 39 respectively.

UP NEXT

Miní will be looking to cover himself in glory when he lines up on pole for Sunday's Feature Race. Lights go out at 08:00 local time.

CONTINUES

PHM RACING BY CHAROUZ TRIO PENALISED FOR FEATURE RACE

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PHM Racing by Charouz's **Piotr Wisnicki**, **Sophia Floersch** and **Roberto Faria** will all start Sunday's Feature Race from the pit lane.

The team were found to have exceeded the total of 11 personnel working on their cars by allowing a representative to scan their tyres after Parc Ferme.

The Stewards determined that the actions were a serious breach of Article 21.5 of the Operational Staff Regulations, which are designed to be a key cost limiting component for the Championship. These additional personnel released existing team members to perform other functions, with a severe penalty issued due to its seriousness.

As a result, the trio will all have to start the Feature Race from the pit lane in their Qualifying order, with Wisnicki lining up ahead of Floersch and Faria.