

Saturday 29 July 2023

Collet wins as Championship contenders hit trouble

Caio Collet surged through from fourth on the grid to win at Spa-Francorchamps, but it was a dramatic Sprint Race behind him. Championship leader Gabriel Bortoleto and challenger Josep María Martí both failed to finish after separate incidents, while Zak O'Sullivan finished fourth on the road.

Collet made his moves on the opening lap, pulling off a brave pass to take the lead on Taylor Barnard at the end of Lap 1. The Jenzer Motorsport driver held onto the rear wing of the Brazilian to secure his maiden Formula 3 podium, while PREMA Racing's Paul Aron completed the rostrum in third.

AS IT HAPPENED

Hugh Barter nailed his start to retain the lead into La Source ahead of Aron and Barnard, but wheelspin under traction for the PREMA Racing man allowed the #27 Jenzer Motorsport car to sneak through for P2 on the approach to Eau Rouge.

Collet followed the Briton in passing Aron, and on the run to Les Combes, the pair overtook Barter along the Kemmel Straight to head the field in P1 and P2 respectively. Aron and Jonny Edgar were also able to pass the Campos Racing driver before the end of the first lap.

Through Blanchimont, Collet swept around the outside of Barnard to take the lead of the race before the Safety Car was deployed to recover a stranded Sebastián Montoya, who had spun out before Turn 9 after contact with Rafael Villagómez.

Back to racing conditions entering Lap 4, and the two PREMA teammates of Dino Beganovic and O'Sullivan battled into La Source. The Briton was able to make the pass around the outside to take sixth, before moving by Barter into Les Combes for fifth.

Heading into Pouhon, Martí and Gabriele Minì fought over 10th but mid-corner contact left the pair spinning off. In his efforts to rejoin, the Spaniard collected the Rodin Carlin of Ido Cohen, putting both out of the race along with Minì, who'd ended up in the gravel after the initial contact. The incident brought out the Safety Car once again.

With the Safety Car withdrawn going onto Lap 8, O'Sullivan pressured Edgar into a lock-up at Turn 1, moving himself up to fourth.

Bortoleto was up to ninth position having started 15th on the grid, passing Beganovic heading into Lap 9 but his joy was short lived. Slight contact after a lock-up for the Swede tagged the Trident driver's rear left tyre, leaving him stranded on track and out of the running.

With the recovery of Bortoleto's car taking until the end of the penultimate lap, there was no more time to go racing and the field finished in formation behind race winner Collet under Safety Car conditions.

Barnard had to settle for second with Aron third ahead of teammate O'Sullivan in. Edgar held off MP Motorsport teammate Franco Colapinto, in fifth and sixth respectively. Barter fell to seventh in the end with Nikola Tsolov eighth, Beganovic ninth and Hitech Pulse-Eight's Luke Browning in P10.

As the minimum of two racing laps were not completed without the intervention of the Safety Car, no points are awarded for the race as per the Sporting Regulations.

KEY QUOTE – Caio Collet, Van Amersfoort Racing

"Really happy with the win. I think the conditions were quite tricky, we did a good first lap and unfortunately there were a lot of Safety Cars, but we managed both restarts well. Really happy for the team and myself and we'll keep pushing for tomorrow."

THE CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS

With no points awarded in the Sprint Race, it's as you were in the Championship. It means Gabriel Bortoleto retains his lead on 144 points ahead of Zak O'Sullivan on 101 and Josep María Martí on 100. Paul Aron stays fourth with 94 ahead of Beganovic, also on 94.

PREMA Racing head up Trident in the Teams' Standings, 289 points to 274 respectively. Hitech Pulse-Eight remains third on 154 points.

UP NEXT

The FIA Formula 3 Feature Race kicks off at 08:30 local time on Sunday, with Gabriel Bortoleto getting his first chance to seal the 2023 Drivers' Championship.

CONTINUES

2023 FIA FORMULA 3 CHAMPIONSHIP – ROUND 9 SPRINT RACE PROVISIONAL CLASSIFICATION

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

NOT CLASSIFIED

DNF	Gabriel Bortoleto	BRA	Trident
DNF	Gabriele Mini	ITA	Hitech Pulse-Eight
DNF	Josep María Martí	ESP	Campos Racing
DNF	Oliver Goethe	DEU	Trident
DNF	Ido Cohen	ISR	Rodin Carlin
DNF	Sebastian Montoya	COL	Hitech Pulse-Eight

OVERALL FASTEST LAP

Caio Collet	BRA	Van Amersfoort Racing	2:14.585 (Lap 8)
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