

Sunday 30 July 2023

Barnard takes maiden F3 win with Bortoleto two points short of title

Taylor Barnard won a thrilling Feature Race at Spa-Francorchamps, taking his maiden F3 win and Jenzer Motorsport's first since 2019. The Briton called the strategy right, opting to start on wets, handled a Safety Car restart and held off Christian Mansell in tough conditions. The Campos Racing driver secured his second podium of the 2023 season, while Nikita Bedrin capped off a great day for Jenzer in third.

Gabriel Bortoleto will have to wait until Monza if he hopes to wrap up the 2023 Drivers' title, finishing 11th and falling just short of the points gap he needed to be crowned Champion.

AS IT HAPPENED

After a formation lap behind the Safety Car, racing got underway with a rolling start and Josep María Martí headed the field on slicks. Paul Aron was one of the only drivers to opt for wet tyres and he went from P11 up to fourth in the first corners as those ahead on the mediums struggled for grip.

Along the Kemmel Straight he moved up to P2, passing Leonardo Fornaroli into Les Combes, then quickly taking the lead as Martí slithered around on the mediums. Barnard was up to second after opting for wets also, joined by MP Motorsport's Mari Boya who likewise went the right way on tyres. Mansell was the biggest gainer, going from 23rd to fourth in the opening stages.

The Safety Car was deployed on Lap 4 after a crash for Oliver Goethe at Eau Rouge. He was out of the car and ok, but Aron's sacrificed his nine second lead as the PREMA Racing driver pitted for slick tyres. Barnard, Mansell, Bedrin, Alejandro García, Sebastián Montoya and Sophia Floersch all remained on track to make up the top six while Aron filtered out on his mediums in P7.

Roberto Faria was also on the mediums but spun off the road and into the gravel at Les Combes and out of the race, prolonging the Safety Car. Luke Browning was another to suffer a spin under the Safety Car, but he was able to rejoin, albeit down to 17th.

Racing got back underway heading onto Lap 8 and those on the wets opened up a gap to Aron who was the lead car on the slicks in seventh. Caio Collet made a fast restart, passing Boya for P8 into Les Combes, and the Sprint Race winner passed Aron after the Estonian ran wide and off the road at Turn 8.

Championship leader Bortoleto had been as low as 20th in the first laps but was back up to 16th on Lap 9 as he chased down his title rivals ahead. The Trident driver claimed two more places into Les Combes to move up to 14th on the same lap.

With five laps to go, Mansell was just 0.3s back from leader Barnard in the fight for first and looking to find a route through. The pair almost made contact into Les Combes and the Campos Racing driver ran across the escape road before handing the place back to Barnard.

Bortoleto continued his fightback, taking 12th from Boya on Lap 12 down the Kemmel Straight. That became 11th on the penultimate lap with a pass on title rival Zak O'Sullivan and with Aron in eighth, he needed two more places to clinch the title.

Up in front, Barnard made it back-to-back podiums at Spa-Francorchamps to seal his maiden F3 victory ahead of Mansell. Teammate Bedrin was P3 in the end ahead of the third and final Jenzer García, who capped off a great day for the team in fourth.

Collet swept to fifth on the final lap after he found grip to pass Montoya and Floersch for a top five result. Aron ended up eighth with Martí ninth and Colapinto taking a pivotal 10th place, keeping Bortoleto behind and short of the title by just two points.

KEY QUOTE – Taylor Barnard, Jenzer Motorsport

“A Feature Race win here at Spa, I can't quite believe it! My weekend has gone upside-down to how I expected it to be to be honest, I finished on the podium in both races. Quite a crazy race, started on the wets and I think it was the best tyre. I managed to hold off Christian and take the win.”

THE CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS

Gabriel Bortoleto remains top on 144 points on the cusp of the 2023 title with a 38-point advantage, and only 39 points to play for in Monza. Paul Aron is P2 on 106 points ahead of Josep María Martí on 105. Zak O'Sullivan is fourth on 101 points and Franco Colapinto moves into triple digits and back inside the top five with 100 points to his name now.

PREMA Racing stay top of the Teams' Standings on 301 points ahead of Trident in second on 276 while Campos Racing leapfrogged Hitech Pulse-Eight to third on 171 points.

UP NEXT

The 2023 Formula 3 season resumes after the summer break on 1-3 September for the season finale at Monza.

CONTINUES

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

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

NOT CLASSIFIED

DNF	Oliver Gray	GBR	Rodin Carlin
DNF	ido cohen	ISR	Rodin Carlin
DNF	Roberto Faria	BRA	PHM Racing by Charouz
DNF	Oliver Goethe	DEU	Trident
DNF	Gabriele Mini	ITA	Hitech Pulse-Eight

OVERALL FASTEST LAP

Gregoire Saucy	CHE	ART Grand Prix
2:18.289 (Lap 15)		

FASTEST LAP ELIGIBLE FOR POINTS

Josep Maria Marti	ESP	Campo Racing
2:19.784 (Lap 15)		