

Friday 28 July 2023

Martí steals pole late on to keep title hopes intact

Josep María Martí pulled off one of his best Qualifying performances of the season, taking his second pole position of 2023 at a crucial moment in the Championship fight. Leaving his best to last, the Campos Racing driver took the top spot by just 0.016s ahead of Trident's Leonardo Fornaroli. Hitech Pulse-Eight's Gabriele Minì completed the top three, just under a tenth down on the pole time.

Grégoire Saucy picked up from where he left off in Practice, going fastest early on with a 2:26.165 to set the time for everyone to beat. Zak O'Sullivan went close, just 0.085s down to go second fastest in the opening exchanges.

After sliding off into the gravel on his first flying lap, Kaylen Frederick was next to go to the top, setting a 2:26.077 with just under 10 minutes gone. Saucy retook the top spot very briefly until Nikola Tsolov bested his time with a 2:25.814 to make it an early 1-2-3 for ART Grand Prix.

That was broken quickly though with Paul Aron able to take P1 for PREMA Racing as track conditions improved lap after lap. Caio Collet was next to go fastest by just 0.002s from Aron with a 2:25.697 in his Van Amersfoort Racing car.

Trident's Gabriel Bortoleto lowered the time to beat to a 2:25.180 just before everyone returned to the pits to reset ahead of the final flying laps.

Into the final six minutes of Qualifying and Saucy went back to the top as the track dried rapidly. Further improvements moved Hitech Pulse-Eight's Luke Browning into the top five before Bortoleto lifted himself up to fourth heading into the last minutes.

The PREMA teammates denied one another the top spot in succession but it was O'Sullivan that was the quickest of the trio. The Briton had been 20th after a laptime deletion but rebounded to usurp his teammates with a 2:22.551 to go onto provisional pole.

That didn't last long though as Gabriele Minì pulled out a 2:22.254 at the chequered flag to take P1 until Martí went 0.094 better, on a 2:22.160 for pole. Leonardo Fornaroli was the last across the line but couldn't beat the Campos driver, finishing just 0.016s down on the pole man.

Minì completed the top three ahead of Franco Colapinto, who made a late improvement to fourth. Tsolov was the lead ART driver in the end with P5 ahead of O'Sullivan, Beganovic, Jonny Edgar, Collet and Taylor Barnard in the top 10.

Championship leader Bortoleto will start from 15th in both races, pushed down from reverse grid pole in the final seconds. Instead, Hugh Barter will start from reverse pole after ending Qualifying 12th, and he'll have Aron alongside him on the Sprint Race front row after the PREMA driver finished up 11th.

The FIA Formula 3 Sprint Race is set to begin at 10:00 local time on Saturday.

2023 FIA FORMULA 3 CHAMPIONSHIP – ROUND 9 QUALIFYING PROVISIONAL CLASSIFICATION

	DRIVER	LICENCE	TEAM	LAPTIME
1	Josep María Martí	ESP	Campos Racing	2:22.160
2	Leonardo Fornaroli	ITA	Trident	2:22.176
3	Gabriele Minì	ITA	Hitech Pulse-Eight	2:22.254
4	Franco Colapinto	ARG	MP Motorsport	2:22.402
5	Nikola Tsolov	BGR	ART Grand Prix	2:22.517
6	Zak O'Sullivan	GBR	PREMA Racing	2:22.551
7	Dino Beganovic	SWE	PREMA Racing	2:22.722
8	Jonny Edgar	GBR	MP Motorsport	2:22.739
9	Caio Collet	BRA	Van Amersfoort Racing	2:22.792
10	Taylor Barnard	GBR	Jenzer Motorsport	2:22.816
11	Paul Aron	EST	PREMA Racing	2:22.942
12	Hugh Barter	AUS	Campos Racing	2:23.104
13	Luke Browning	GBR	Hitech Pulse-Eight	2:23.143
14	Mari Boya	ESP	MP Motorsport	2:23.175
15	Gabriel Bortoletto	BRA	Trident	2:23.251
16	Grégoire Saucy	CHE	ART Grand Prix	2:23.345
17	Kaylen Frederick	USA	ART Grand Prix	2:23.435
18	Nikita Bedrin	ITA	Jenzer Motorsport	2:23.914
19	Rafael Villagómez	MEX	Van Amersfoort Racing	2:23.945
20	Tommy Smith	AUS	Van Amersfoort Racing	2:23.975
21	Sebastian Montoya	COL	Hitech Pulse-Eight	2:24.006
22	Alejandro García	MEX	Jenzer Motorsport	2:24.276
23	Christian Mansell	GBR	Campos Racing	2:24.334
24	Sophia Floersch	DEU	PHM Racing by Charouz	2:24.952
25	Oliver Gray	GBR	Rodin Carlin	2:25.019
26	Ido Cohen	ISR	Rodin Carlin	2:25.732
27	Oliver Goethe	DEU	Trident	2:26.138
28	Woohyun Shin	KOR	PHM Racing by Charouz	2:26.320
29	Francesco Simonazzi	ITA	Rodin Carlin	2:26.367
30	Roberto Faria	BRA	PHM Racing by Charouz	2:26.810

ENDS

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