

Goethe tops incident-filled wet first free practice for Macau Grand Prix – FIA FR World Cup

German Oliver Goethe led the way in wet opening free practice for the Macau Grand Prix – FIA FR World Cup on Thursday morning, in a session that was shortened because of a late red flag.

Goethe had been the first driver out of the pits on to the soaking Guia Circuit and, with the benefit of a clear track ahead of him, the MP Motorsport driver quickly established himself as one of the main contenders for this weekend's event.

Initially though it was SJM Theodore Prema Racing's Freddie Slater who was fastest after the first laps were completed, with the Briton and his team-mate Alexander Dunne then trading the fastest times as drivers built up their confidence. But the session was red flagged after a little over 16 minutes when TOM'S Formula driver Rikuto Kobayashi hit the barriers head first at Lisboa Bend, with his car needing retrieving before action could be resumed.

Following a 10-minute delay, and with the rain abating a little, practice resumed and drivers quickly got back up to speed to get themselves as well prepared as possible for Thursday afternoon's first qualifying session.

A few pushed a bit too hard, with Saintéloc Racing's Alexander Abkhazava and KCMG IXO by Pinnacle Motorsport's Mari Boya ending up down the escape road at Lisboa Bend – but both were able to recover from their incidents and get going again. ART Grand Prix's Kanato Le also had a spin.

Then just as Goethe pulled off a brilliant lap in the tricky conditions to set a benchmark of 2m41.270 seconds – which was two seconds faster than Slater had managed at that point – the red flag was brought out following a series of incidents.

ART Grand Prix's James Wharton had swiped the barriers at Matsuya and, with damage to his suspension and front wing, toured slowly around the track before finding himself unable to get around the Melco Hairpin. Soon after, TGM Grand Prix's Sota Ogawa also crashed at Matsuya and stopped, with practice not being resumed.

Behind Goethe and Slater on the timesheets, Dunne ended up third quickest, ahead of Noel Leon and Tuukka Taponen.

Macau Grand Prix Organising Committee
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