

Ugochukwu wins Macau Grand Prix – FIA FR World Cup Qualifying Race

McLaren development driver Ugo Ugochukwu triumphed in the rain-hit Macau Grand Prix – FIA FR World Cup Qualification Race on Saturday as proceedings finished behind a Safety Car following a downpour that had triggered a red flag.

The American, who drives for the R-ace GP team, got away cleanly from pole position at the start but found himself under pressure from front row starter Oliver Goethe on the run down to Mandarin Bend, as his MP Motorsport rival managed to drag himself alongside. But, by the time the cars arrived at Lisboa Bend, Ugochukwu was ahead again and able to lead the pack as they swooped through Lisboa Bend – followed by Goethe and KCMG IXO by Pinnacle Motorsport driver Noel León.

Behind them though there had been an incident at Mandarin Bend on the opening lap as Sota Ogawa and Tuukka Taponen hit the wall on the outside – with both cars coming to a rest in the middle of the track and bringing out the first Safety Car.

At the restart for the beginning of lap four, Ugochukwu brilliantly timed his restart and, by the time they crossed the start/finish line, he was 1.3 seconds clear of Goethe, which meant he had escaped the threat of being slipstreamed down the long run to Lisboa Bend. But Goethe had not given up on taking the lead and set about closing in on the leader, chipping away at his advantage to even have a brief look down the inside at Lisboa Bend on lap six as rain began to fall.

The wet track prompted first the Safety Car and then a red flag later that lap as the downpour soaked half the track – making conditions unsafe to continue. Following a short stoppage to allow the cars to fit wet tyres, the race restarted behind the Safety Car but the track was too soaked in the section around Lisboa Bend to allow action to properly get back underway – meaning the race finished under caution.

Speaking about his win, Ugochukwu said: “I am really happy with today's win. It puts us in a really good position for tomorrow again and, with how the pace was today, I'm really confident we will be able to get another good result.”

Behind the podium trio of Ugochukwu, Goethe and León, SJM Theodore Prema Racing driver Freddie Slater had made great progress from seventh on the grid to finish fourth.

Macau Grand Prix Organising Committee
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