

Ugochukwu dominates Macau Grand Prix – FIA FR World Cup

McLaren junior Ugo Ugochukwu dominated the Macau Grand Prix – FIA FR World Cup race on Sunday as he pulled off four perfectly judged Safety Car restarts to beat Oliver Goethe and Noel León across the finish line. The American's triumph was the first for his nation since Bob Earl had won the event back in 1981.

Speaking about the achievement, Ugochukwu said: "I can't describe the feeling, but of course I am super happy. It was quite a tricky race – and I was pushing the whole way. But I was confident with the pace and we've had a great weekend."

With the race starting under the Safety Car because of damp conditions, Ugochukwu knew that getting away cleanly at the restart would be key to success, as that would prevent his pursuers from getting his slipstream. That is exactly what he did, as he held a 0.8-seconds advantage over Goethe when the race got going at the start of lap two. But his efforts were for nought when the red flag was brought out after James Wharton had crashed into the barriers at Lisboa Bend and was collected by a number of other drivers – including Jett Bowling and Kai Daryanani.

After a short delay to clear the track, Ugochukwu again got away with a decisive advantage for the restart on lap four, before the Safety Car was called out yet again just one lap later after Liu Ruiqi crashed at Post 15 Bend. For the third time at the start of lap eight, Ugochukwu again pulled off the perfect restart but, as the race developed, the pursuing Goethe appeared to start closing the gap before yet another Safety Car was called on lap 11 after Sota Ogawa's car stopped on track just after Turn 1.

The race restarted for lap 14, with Goethe this time getting closer to Ugochukwu to get a much better slipstream – but it was still not enough to find a way through. The battle for the win was effectively decided on the final lap after the Safety Car was called out once more for Mattia Colnaghi hitting the wall at Fishermen's Bend, meaning the race finished under caution.

Behind the leading duo, León finished third following a race-long battle with Freddie Slater, who had attempted to dive down the inside of Lisboa Bend on the final lap but locked up and ran straight on into the barriers. That meant Enzo Deligny came home fourth, ahead of Matteo de Palo and Rashid al Dhaheri.

Macau Grand Prix Organising Committee
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