

Goethe takes provisional pole position for Macau Grand Prix – FIA FR World Cup

Oliver Goethe secured provisional pole position for the Macau Grand Prix – FIA FR World Cup Qualification Race with a perfectly-timed lap during an incident-packed first qualifying session on Thursday which featured five red flags.

With the Guia Circuit damp as the 40-minute session got underway, the arrival of rain meant it essential that drivers got an early clean lap in while conditions were at their best. Goethe's mission to do this was helped by his MP Motorsport team having the prime garage spot closest to the pit exit – which gives him track position each time at the front of the pack.

Being head of the queue proved to be a huge advantage when, following a first red flag that was called after five minutes when Liu Ruiqi hit the wall at Lisboa Bend, Jett Bowling triggered the second stoppage soon after the restart when he crashed his Kiwi Motorsport car at Post 15 Bend.

That second red flag appeared moments after Goethe had completed his first flying lap of 2m32.482 seconds, and just two other drivers also made it across the timing beam – second fastest Tuukka Taponen and third quickest Valerio Rinicella. By the time the session restarted, the rain had got much heavier, and it proved impossible for anyone to get close to the leading trio – with lap times roughly five seconds off.

Speaking after the session, Goethe said that he and his team had been well aware of the need to set a lap time as early as possible. "I was speaking with my engineers beforehand, and we were looking at the weather radar on our phones, so knew we had to get it done at the start," he said. "That lap was crucial and could be really important if it is wet again tomorrow."

The chances of anyone else improving were also not helped by the stop-start nature of the remaining time, as a trio of further red flags were brought out. All were caused by cars being left stranded in hazardous positions down the escape road of Lisboa Ben – with Kai Daryanani, Tiago Rodrigues and Rikuto Kobayashi all having separate moments.

In the end, Rashid Al Dhaheri was fastest of those who completed laps when the track was totally wet as he secured fourth place, ahead of Freddie Slater and Matteo De Palo.

Macau Grand Prix Organising Committee

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