

Saturday, 25 May 2024

Tsolov earns maiden F3 victory after Red Flag stoppage

ART Grand Prix's Nikola Tsolov took his maiden victory in Formula 3, winning the Monte Carlo Sprint Race from reverse grid Pole.

MP Motorsport's Tim Tramnitz finished in second after jumping ahead of Tsolov's ART teammate Laurens van Hoepen on the opening lap into Sainte Devote, and resisted pressure for the remaining laps to hold the position, leaving the Dutchman to round out the podium in P3.

AS IT HAPPENED

Tsolov got the launch he needed to retain first, but Tramnitz was able to leapfrog the ART of van Hoepen to take second into Turn 1.

Further back and coming through Casino Square, contact between the third ART of Christian Mansell and PREMA Racing's Arvid Lindblad put both into the wall. Their clash left the AIX Racing car of Joshua Dufek, MP Motorsport driver Alex Dunne and Hitech Pulse-Eight's Cian Shields unable to avoid a collision behind.

It brought out the Safety Car before the first lap was completed, but with five cars needing to be cleared, a Red Flag followed.

One big winner on the opening lap was Luke Browning, as the Hitech driver was able to move up from 10th to eighth, passing early season title rival Leonardo Fornaroli in the Trident.

Racing got back underway entering Lap 4 with a rolling start and Tsolov retained his lead comfortably over Tramnitz. Van Hoepen followed in third with Noel León in fourth for Van Amersfoort Racing ahead of Rodin Motorsport's Joseph Loake in P5.

The gaps fluctuated between those in the top 10 in the early phases of green flag racing, as Tsolov was able to repel Tramnitz thereby preventing the MP driver from gaining the DRS advantage.

By half distance, the gap was up to 2.5s in the Bulgarian driver's favour, while Tramnitz had van Hoepen glued to his rear wing just 0.3s back, while León lurked a further half second behind. Lap 13 and the race was run for Kacper Sztuka, who stopped on the inside of Turn 1 with a puncture after contact with VAR's Sophia Floersch, bringing out a Safety Car once again. It was a short interruption and racing action resumed going onto Lap 16 and Tsolov re-launched into a sizeable lead.

Over the line to start Lap 20, the gap was up to 3.5s over Tramnitz, who had van Hoepen and León charging and within a second in the fight for the podium positions.

Tsolov was well clear by the chequered flag, winning by over four seconds as Tramnitz resisted the pressure from behind to earn second for MP and a third rostrum visit of the year. Van Hoepen had León close behind but held onto P3 for his third podium of the year also.

Loake added a best finish in F3 to his finest Qualifying result of the season with P5 for Rodin, as Mari Boya followed in sixth for Campos Racing.

Dino Beganovic was the highest-placed PREMA in P7, it was eighth for Browning, Fornaroli was ninth and Goethe rounded out the points in 10th.

KEY QUOTE – Nikola Tsolov, ART Grand Prix

“I was shaking to be honest. It was a feeling I can’t explain. It’s like getting your first win in racing all over again. It’s been a while since I’ve had a win and it’s like breaking that loop, I was stuck in for a year and a half. It wasn’t an easy part of my career but now I’m happy and just need to keep working to continue from here.”

THE CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS

With a P9 finish in the Sprint, Leonardo Fornaroli retains the lead in the Drivers’ Championship on 54 points, though Luke Browning closes to within two points of the Italian, going onto 52 after finishing eighth. Dino Beganovic moves up to third on 50 points ahead of PREMA teammate Gabriele Minì, who remains on 45 points in fourth. Oliver Goethe moves onto 42 points to stay fifth in the Standings.

Over in the Teams’ Standings, PREMA remain on top with 127 points, Trident are second still going onto 109 with Campos Racing remaining third on 78. ART Grand Prix lift themselves up to fourth with 67 points ahead of Hitech Pulse-Eight in fifth, now on 62.

UP NEXT

The Monte Carlo Feature Race is one every driver wants to win. PREMA’s Gabriele Minì starts from Pole with lights out scheduled for 08:00 local time on Sunday morning.

CONTINUES

2024 FIA FORMULA 2 CHAMPIONSHIP – ROUND 4 SPRINT RACE PROVISIONAL CLASSIFICATION

	DRIVER	LICENCE	TEAM
1	Nikola Tsolov	BGR	ART Grand Prix
2	Tim Tramnitz	DEU	MP Motorsport
3	Laurens van Hoepen	NLD	ART Grand Prix
4	Noel Leon	MEX	Van Amersfoort Racing
5	Joseph Loake	GBR	Rodin Motorsport
6	Mari Boya	ESP	Campos Racing
7	Dino Beganovic	SWE	PREMA Racing
8	Luke Browning	GBR	Hitech Pulse-Eight
9	Leonardo Fornaroli	ITA	Trident
10	Oliver Goethe	DEU	Campos Racing
11	Gabriele Mini	ITA	PREMA Racing
12	Callum Voisin	GBR	Rodin Motorsport
13	Tommy Smith	AUS	Van Amersfoort Racing
14	Max Esterson	USA	Jenzer Motorsport
15	Santiago Ramos	MEX	Trident
16	Martinius Stenshorne	NOR	Hitech Pulse-Eight
17	Tasanapol Inthraphuvasak	THA	AIX Racing
18	Sebastian Montoya	COL	Campos Racing
19	Charlie Wurz	AUT	Jenzer Motorsport
20	James Hedley	GBR	Jenzer Motorsport
21	Piotr Wisnicki	POL	Rodin Motorsport
22	Sami Meguetounif	FRA	Trident

NOT CLASSIFIED - 107%

DNF	Nikita Bedrin	ITA	AIX Racing
DNF	Sophia Floersch	DEU	Van Amersfoort Racing
DNF	Kacper Sztuka	POL	MP Motorsport
DNF	Arvid Lindblad	GBR	PREMA Racing
DNF	Christian Mansell	AUS	ART Grand Prix
DNF	Joshua Dufek	AUT	AIX Racing
DNF	Alexander Dunne	IRL	MP Motorsport
DNF	Cian Shields	GBR	Hitech Pulse-Eight

OVERALL FASTEST LAP

	Dino Beganovic	SWE	PREMA Racing
			1:24.919 (Lap 7)

ENDS