

Naël takes Pole position for Macau Grand Prix – FIA FR World Cup

Théophile Naël has secured pole position for the Macau Grand Prix – FIA FR World Cup Qualifying Race after a close-fought battle with Freddie Slater in a thrilling qualifying session on Friday.

Warmer temperatures than Thursday's first qualifying meant it took a while for times to get within range of those set from the first day of running. However, by the middle of the session drivers started unlocking what was needed as they closed in on the first session benchmarks.

The defining segment came with little more than 10 minutes remaining on the clock following a third red flag period caused after Charlie Wurz had crashed his Evans GP at Maternity Bend and stopped against the barriers. This followed earlier stoppages for Jose Garfias, who hit the barriers at the Solitude Esses, and Tymek Kucharczyk who crashed in the same spot.

With some clear running and six minutes left, KCMG Enya Pinnacle Motorsport driver Naël managed to deliver a time of 2m15.977s which put him second overall, before he went even better the following lap to deliver a lap of 2m15.609s which beat Slater's first qualifying effort.

Speaking after securing pole, Naël said: "The first part of qualifying was not ideal with the track [conditions], but in the end there was a big improvement."

Slater had looked quick throughout qualifying, setting regular purple sectors in the city section, but he kept hitting traffic at the Melco Hairpin section that meant he could not better his best lap of 2m15.708s from Friday. That earlier time was still good enough for second on the grid.

ART Grand Prix's Evan Giltaire made the most of the late running to deliver the third best time of 2m15.876s to secure a place on the second row of the grid ahead of his team-mate Taito Kato.

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Macau Grand Prix Organizing Committee