

Saturday 27 August 2022

Bearman takes maiden F3 win after red flag stoppage

Oliver Bearman capitalised perfectly on his closest rivals' misfortune, winning the Spa Sprint Race to close the gap in the Drivers' Championship. The PREMA Racing driver kept his nose clean during a chaotic race to claim his first FIA Formula 3 victory, winning from fifth on the grid.

Roman Stanek delivered on Trident's strong Qualifying pace and ended up second while Alexander Smolyar made it back-to-back podiums, rounding out the top three for MP Motorsport.

AS IT HAPPENED

Zak O'Sullivan retained the lead from pole into La Source with teammate Benavides attempting to wrestle second from Juan Manuel Correa. With the tow on the Kemmel Straight, the ART Grand Prix driver turned defence into attack, taking the lead but only momentarily. Slight contact with O'Sullivan led to a puncture at the exit of Les Combes and Correa tumbled down the order. At the same time, Franco Colapinto was pitched into a spin by Jonny Edgar and the Trident driver picked up a five-second time penalty for the incident.

Through Pouhon, Benavides was able to sweep by his British teammate for first as front wing damage dropped O'Sullivan down the order. Bearman had a great start and was up to second entering Lap 2 with Edgar hot on his heels in third.

The PREMA Racing man turned second into first with a tow down the Kemmel Straight. A Safety Car was deployed later that lap after Charouz Racing System's Christian Mansell ended up in the barriers at Les Combes. Just before, Isack Hadjar had pulled a brave move on the Briton, going side-by-side with the Charouz through Eau Rouge to take 18th.

Title rival Victor Martins meanwhile had made his way up to 16th by the time the Safety Car was deployed but had jumped the start. He was handed a drive-through penalty as a result. Arthur Leclerc meanwhile kept out of trouble to reach 13th.

Racing resumed entering Lap 5 and Edgar was the man on the move, taking second from Benavides into Les Combes as leader Bearman was able to generate enough of a gap to defend his lead. A wide moment from Oliver Goethe heading into Stavelot left the Campos Racing driver under pressure from the Trident duo of Roman Stanek and Zane Maloney.

Stanek was able to clear the Monégasque driver for fifth but contact on the exit of Blanchimont between Goethe and Maloney resulted in a big crash for the pair. Both drivers were thankfully able to walk away from their cars. As barrier repairs were required, a Red Flag was thrown on Lap 8.

CONTINUES

Bearman led from Edgar at the restart with Benavides, Smolyar, Stanek, William Alatalo, Reece Ushijima, David Vidales, Caio Collet and Leclerc the top 10. Racing resumed with a rolling start entering Lap 10 and the leader aced his launch while Alatalo ran wide out of La Source, dropping him down to 10th. The Monégasque in the PREMA wasn't done, and he seized eighth from Collet into the final corner.

Smolyar moved up to third on the road with a tow on Benavides into Les Combes and he set about chasing down Edgar for second. Stanek made a bold move on the American, running over the wet patches of track into Pouhon to relegate the Carlin back another spot.

Ushijima had looked set to take another spot from Benavides, but it was Vidales that capitalised best, forcing the Van Amersfoort Racing driver to cede sixth place into La Source, and the loss of momentum dropped Ushijima down the order to 15th.

Leclerc was able to force Vidales to go defensive entering Lap 13 and tucked into the slipstream of the Campos driver ahead through Eau Rouge. With DRS, the PREMA man breezed by to take sixth position from the Spaniard. Hadjar was another beneficiary of the drama ahead of him and was 10th with three laps to go.

Leclerc's charge continued at the expense of Benavides. Another DRS pass down the Kemmel Straight moved him up to fifth position and within range of Edgar as a result of the latter's pending time penalty.

Entering the final lap Alatalo made a great late move on Vidales to surprise the Campos man and seize seventh. That soon became sixth with DRS assistance and Hadjar pulled another move into Les Combes, this time at the expense of Collet.

Bearman was untroubled for most of the race and ended up 1.3s clear at the chequered flag to take a crucial victory in the 2022 title race. Stanek kept Trident on the podium with a P2 finish while Smolyar secured third for MP Motorsport.

Edgar's time penalty dropped him down to fourth position. Leclerc's charge ended up with P5 while Alatalo put in a great drive to take sixth. Vidales, Benavides, Hadjar and Collet rounded out the points-paying positions.

KEY QUOTE – Oliver Bearman, PREMA Racing

"First win of the season, nice that it finally arrived. It was a really tough race, really had to push again on the last stint to create the gap and I managed to stay out of DRS and win the race. Mega result, I'm really happy for the team and myself."

CONTINUES



MEDIA RELEASE



THE CHAMPIONSHIP VIEW

Hadjar's drive to eighth means the Hitech Grand Prix man now leads the way on 106 points. Leclerc's charge through from 20th to 5th brought him some well-earned points to lift him onto 101 points, third in the standings. Meanwhile, Bearman's victory thrusts him into the title fight, now up to 90 points and fourth in the Drivers' Championship.

PREMA Racing extends its advantage in the Teams' Standings, now on 271 points. ART Grand Prix drops to third in the Championship with Smolyar's podium lifting MP Motorsport up to second on 156 points to ART's 153.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The Formula 3 Feature Race could turn the title picture further on its head. Lights out is scheduled for 08.50 local time.

CONTINUES

2022 FIA FORMULA 3 CHAMPIONSHIP – ROUND 7 SPRINT RACE PROVISIONAL CLASSIFICATION

	DRIVER	TEAM
1	Oliver Bearman	PREMA Racing
2	Roman Stanek	Trident
3	Alexander Smolyar	MP Motorsport
4	Jonny Edgar	Trident
5	Arthur Leclerc	PREMA Racing
6	William Alatalo	Jenzer Motorsport
7	David Vidales	Campos Racing
8	Brad Benavides	Carlin
9	Isack Hadjar	Hitech Grand Prix
10	Caio Collet	MP Motorsport
11	Jak Crawford	PREMA Racing
12	Grégoire Saucy	ART Grand Prix
13	Kush Maini	MP Motorsport
14	Reece Ushijima	Van Amersfoort Racing
15	Franco Colapinto	Van Amersfoort Racing
16	Enzo Trulli	Carlin
17	Nazim Azman	Hitech Grand Prix
18	Juan Manuel Correa	ART Grand Prix
19	Federico Malvestiti	Jenzer Motorsport
20	Francesco Pizzi	Charouz Racing System
21	Zak O’Sullivan	Carlin
22	Victor Martins	ART Grand Prix
23	László Tóth	Charouz Racing System
24	Rafael Villagómez	Van Amersfoort Racing
25	Ido Cohen	Jenzer Motorsport

NOT CLASSIFIED

DNF	Josep María Martí	Campos Racing
DNF	Oliver Goethe	Campos Racing
DNF	Zane Maloney	Trident
DNF	Christian Mansell	Charouz Racing System
DNF	Kaylen Frederick	Hitech Grand Prix

Fastest lap Jonny Edgar | **Trident**
2:07.266 (Lap 11)