

Friday 26 August 2022

**Collet charges to maiden pole in last-second wet-to-dry thriller**

Caio Collet put his foot to the floor to storm his way to his first Formula 3 pole position, mastering the wet to drying conditions in Spa-Francorchamps to become the seventh different driver to take pole in as many rounds. There was no shortage of contenders in the fight for P1 as last-minute improvements mixed up the order, but it was the MP Motorsport driver who reigned supreme, over two tenths clear of Zane Maloney.

Francesco Pizzi secured his best Qualifying performance of the season by a stretch in third, whilst Oliver Goethe put Campos Racing right in the hunt for points in fourth ahead of Roman Stanek. Meanwhile, it was a difficult session for the top three Championship contenders, with third-placed Arthur Leclerc leading the way in P20, while Isack Hadjar and Victor Martins will have each other for company on the 12<sup>th</sup> row of the grid.

Downpours during the break between Practice and Qualifying forced the whole field to bolt on the wet weather Pirelli tyres and given the conditions, it was no surprise that the track was immediately full of action.

Despite his lack of previous experience around the Belgian circuit, Oliver Bearman immediately got up to speed to set the early benchmark with a 2:22.931, 0.159s ahead of his teammate Leclerc. However, the conditions saw several drivers dance on the limit with Maloney going deep into the final chicane.

The session soon ground to a halt with 19 minutes on the clock, as Jak Crawford found himself facing the wrong way. In his attempt to spin his PREMA car around, the American driver got caught out by the gravel trap and was forced into a frustratingly early end to his running.

Sitting tight in the pit lane, the big question on everyone's minds was – is now the time for slicks? A drying line had begun to form along the 7.004km track and nine drivers, including Championship leader Isack Hadjar, bolted on the medium compound when the lights went green once more.

Tip-toeing their way around, the conditions were less than ideal, as William Alatalo sent up a flurry of spray out of the Jenzer's rear wheels. Nevertheless, the times swiftly began to tumble and despite his fears that Hitech Grand Prix made the jump to the dry tyres too early Hadjar stormed to the top of the timing sheets, a whopping 4.2 seconds faster than Bearman's early effort.

There was no time for the field to rest with less than 10 minutes remaining and the battle for pole was anyone's game – Martins, Collet, Alatalo and Bearman traded turns in the P1 spot, before Alexander Smolyar snatched provisional pole with a 2:15.121, over three tenths clear of Stanek. Not content with P2, the Trident driver sent it to leapfrog Smolyar by over a second.

**CONTINUES**

Improvements were never far away, and the order continued to chop and change as the session approached the final five minutes. Out front, Stanek became the first driver to break into the 2:12 barrier and showed no signs of slowing down, but with an ever-drying track, it would be a fight to be the last driver to cross the line that would decide who would start on the front row.

Even the appearance of the chequered flag didn't mean that the order was final. Maloney leaped half a second clear of his teammate but there was nothing he could do to stop Collet's final effort of 2:11.289, which sent the Brazilian straight into P1 to seal back-to-back poles for his MP team, and forced the Bajan driver to settle for second.

Pizzi capitalised on the best conditions of the session to catapult himself into P3 at the very end of the session, as Goethe moved up to fourth ahead of Stanek. All three Tridents secured their spots in the top six, as Jonny Edgar outqualified Budapest pole man Smolyar.

Having led the session early on, Bearman could only manage eighth in the drying conditions, ahead of Franco Colapinto and Brad Benavides, who secured his best Qualifying result of his 2022 campaign in 10th for Carlin.

After their charge back up the order last time out in Budapest, Zak O'Sullivan will line up on reverse grid pole alongside Juan Manuel Correa when the seventh Sprint Race of the Formula 3 season begins at 10:35 local time tomorrow.

**CONTINUES**

## 2022 FIA FORMULA 3 CHAMPIONSHIP – ROUND 7 QUALIFYING PROVISIONAL CLASSIFICATION

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

### NOT CLASSIFIED

	Jak Crawford	PREMA Racing
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