



FIA F3 WORLD CUP

Félix da Costa takes provisional pole position



MOTORCYCLE GRAND PRIX

Rutter rules first qualifying



Michael Rutter

IN perfect conditions Macau maestro Michael Rutter (Bathams/SMT Racing BMW) seized control of the first qualifying session and grabbed provisional pole by 0.99 seconds from the persistent and consistently fast Martin Jessopp (Riders Motorcycles BMW).

The two had battled for supremacy in morning practice with successively faster times and this afternoon picked up exactly where they left off, and then took it in turns to up the ante for lap after enthralling lap.

As he has done before, Rutter picked his moment in the closing minutes of the session and with the chequered flag already waving and his rivals

in the pits, he was the first and so far only rider to dip into the 2.24 bracket, tantalizingly close to Stuart Easton's 2010 lap record, stopping the clock at 2.24.793.

But with one more session to go tomorrow morning, this is only provisional pole and Jessopp, at 2.25.783, has another chance as does the clutch of riders a second or so behind – including 2013 winner Ian Hutchinson (Tyco BMW), previous winner and road racing legend John McGuinness (Honda Racing), a strongly-performing Gary Johnson (Penz13.com BMW by MGM & Special Olympics Macau), the impressively swift Horst Saiger (Saiger Racing Kawasaki) plus – maybe unsurprisingly – the sensational Glenn Irwin (Be Wiser Ducati). A newcomer to Macau but no stranger to rewriting the history books, Irwin is now in seventh place with a 2.27.787 and literally surrounded by previous winners and podium finishers.

The scene is set for a superlative clash of road racing greats in today morning's second qualifying session, while tomorrow's 15-lap Grand Prix is looking to be one to remember, even against the backdrop of the past 50 years.

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Félix da Costa takes provis



Félix da Costa

ANTÓNIO Félix da Costa came through an incident-packed first qualifying session – which featured four red flags – to secure provisional pole position for the Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix yesterday.

Da Costa, returning to the scene of his 2012 triumph in the end-of-season blue riband F3 race, was consistently among the fastest cars throughout the shortened session that witnessed a series of incidents.

But it was the Carlin driver's best effort with 12 minutes remaining that secured him the top spot befo-

re a final red flag – caused by Daniel Juncadella crashing at Fishermen's Bend – brought qualifying to

■ **If it rains today, as predicted, the times of the first qualifying session will define the starting grid**

an early end.

"It's still very early days because so much can happen on a Macau GP weekend, but it's always better to end up first than last," said da Costa. "I quickly could get up to speed with the track, but wasn't so happy with the car after first practice this morning. But the team did a great job to make some changes and everything clicked, so I'm pretty happy."

Van Amersfoort Racing's Callum Hogg ended up second fastest after briefly topping the timesheets prior to da Costa bettering him – ending

Q&A ALLANN-JON VENTER
CF RACING TEAM 32 RIDER

'This year, the competition is tough!'

Renato Marques

HEAD of the 50th edition of the Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix, the Times spoke to South African motorcycle rider Allann-Jon Venter, who is set to race under the colors of local team "CF Racing Team 32". The Times wanted to learn more about the races, the prospective winner and hear about the racer's thoughts on this year's edition. Allann-Jon Venter made the 20th best time during yesterday's first qualifying session.

Macau Daily Times (MDT) – This will be the fourth time you will be racing in Macau. What has changed so far?

Allann-Jon Venter (AJ) – For me, it has changed a lot, I am learning more. This is my third time racing with João [Fernandes, team owner] and having him help me means a lot. They [the team] do a lot of organization and have put a big effort into all this, which makes it a lot easier for me. Coming into Macau and having someone local [who has already prepared all the thin-



gs] makes it a lot easier. This time, I will be racing my own bike from South Africa so I think it will be also easier for me to adjust. Of course the bike would not be as quick because it is only a standard bike but being able to bring a bike, I know it is much better. You can "push more" because you know the limits of the bike.

MDT – How do you see the competition this year?

AJ – This year the competition is tough! If I can come in top 10 it will be something really special. I am riding a Superstock bike, but in that sense I want to reward João and the team with something good because of all the effort they put in. At the same time, Macau is Macau, the festival, the people, it is massive. The racing is big, the city, the clubs, the party, everything... It is a special event that you look forward to.

MDT – This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the Motorcycle Grand Prix. How do you feel about being part of such a milestone?

AJ – It is a privilege, it has to be a privilege because there are 28 people from around the world that are allowed in [this race] and I am very fortunate to be one of them.

To celebrate the 50th is special and you know that on this side of the world when they celebrate things they go over the top.

MDT – You mentioned earlier that to be in the top 10 would be really

special. Is that what you are aiming for as a result?

AJ – Last year I finished 14th and the year before I finished 15th, so I want to improve. But on the other end you have to look at the conditions, the bike and the track, and have to take it easy. This year, there are a lot of really good riders out of the UK and of the British Superbike Championship that are really quick so I have to be realistic. To be racing here is already something special, to be running for top 10 is a dream. Unfortunately, it will be harder this year, but I have to move forward and make it better than last year. If one does not set goals, they will never get there! So if I can run around Top 10, maybe 11th or 12th, I would be very happy.

MDT – On whom do you put your "bet" to win this year?

AJ – Oh, that is really tough. SMT boys have three really good riders with Hickman, Rutter and Easton. Besides those, you have Jessopp, who is phenomenal, and McGuinness, a living legend in everything he does – he is a role model for me. So, I really do not know, you have "Hutchy" [Ian Hutchinson] on a Tyco BMW and he is very quick here as well. I think it is a gamble! Maybe I am guessing "Hutchy."

Macau Daily Times is CF Racing Team 32's media partner

ional pole position



Callum Iloft ended up second fastest

the day 0.226 seconds down. Felix Rosenqvist, who had been quickest in morning practice, was the third fastest driver as he said he still needed to better understand the new Pirelli tyres that are being used in Macau for the first time. Japanese F3 champion Kenta Yamashita ended up fourth quickest, after recovering from losing a wheel in the early stages of the session – and causing the first red flag to come out after 15 minutes. The second red flag came out eight minutes later when a car was stran-

ded in the middle of the track before Lisboa. The third stoppage was caused with 12 minutes remaining after Lando Norris – an impressive seventh quickest – crashed at San Francisco at the same time as Joel Eriksson crashed at the Solitude Esses. The session was stopped for good after Juncadella, who ended up fifth, hit the barriers at Fishermen's with two minutes remaining. If it rains today, as predicted, the times of the first qualifying session will define tomorrow's starting grid.



The troubled session featured four red flags

FIA GT WORLD CUP

Bamber leads opening practice for Porsche

EARL Bamber got his SJM Macau GT Cup – FIA GT World Cup campaign off to a strong start today after clocking the fastest lap in the opening practice session on Macao's 6.2km Guia street circuit. Bamber set a lap of 2:19.362 in his Manthey Racing Porsche 911 GT3R (991) as the chequered flag fell on the 30-minute session, knocking triple race winner Edoardo Mortara off the top of the time sheets.

As the session got underway, it was two-time race winner Maro Engel who was quickest in the new Mercedes-AMG GT3, but first Bamber and then Mortara, in the Audi Sport Team WRT R8 LMS, went quicker. Behind



Earl Bamber surprisingly made the best lap

the trio, Mortara's team mate Laurens Vanthoor, Frenchman Kevin Estre in the second Manthey Racing Porsche, and Engel's teammate Renger Van Der Zande battled it out.

Mortara was the first to lap under 2 minutes 20 seconds,

but this was to be bettered by Bamber who put together the perfect lap just minutes before the flag. The pair of FFF Racing Lamborghini Huracán GT3s of Mirko Bortolotti, making his debut in Macau this week, and local hero André Couto ended the session further down the order.

Of the non-manufacturer entries, Craft Bamboo Racing's Richard Lyons was quickest in a Porsche, fifth fastest overall, with teammate Darryl O'Young seventh, ahead of Nico Müller in a Phoenix Racing Audi.

Hong Kong's Adderly Fong had been running well, moving up to fifth just before a mistake at Police saw him clip the barriers and come to a halt. His car was craned off the circuit and Fong eventually finished the session tenth.



The mighty Mercedes disappointed

Q&A TIAGO MONTEIRO

'It's always great to be back in Macau'

GUIA Circuit veteran Tiago Monteiro is back to Macau in a different category. Monteiro left his World Touring Car Championship (WTCC) duties on hold to compete in the Guia Race, and is driving a third WestCoast Racing Honda to compete in the TCR International Series. During the first practice session yesterday, Monteiro showed that he is one of the favorites, topping the classification with a lap that averaged 142.48 km/h. Before the race, he spoke with journalists about his expectations.

– What are your expectations for your racing weekend?

Tiago Monteiro (TM) – It's always great



to be back in Macau. Unfortunately I could not be here last year, because WTCC did not race here. This time I had an invitation from Honda. They asked me if I was

interested in coming to Macau and I did not hesitate for one second. It is always a challenge, because this [TCR] is not my championship. The cars are slower and

very different from ours [WTCC], demanding a different driving technique. I analyzed this race's competitive level and I think there are 10 or 12 very strong drivers. It is

not going to be an easy task. Nevertheless, I'm here to have fun, since I'm not fighting in this championship. I will try my best but I don't know where I'm going to end up in terms of classification. Basically, I want to drive in Macau. The return of WTCC to Macau [not confirmed] is great news for me as I also can train [for next year].

– Why is Macau special for you?

TM – It is a major challenge if you look just at the circuit. Then you have the race's ambience. The event as a whole is fantastic and different from the rest. The circuit is very fast and dangerous. You pass fast, very close to the wall and the

tarmac is bad. All these elements create a certain stress. Adrenaline works a bit like the drivers' gasoline. That is what we like. So I feel good here in Macau, where everything can happen.

– Last time you were here, you almost won the WTCC race...

TM – Yes, I have to make up for that, to get my revenge. Last time I was here, the steering broke with three corners to go. I was leading and had to quit. That was hard to swallow.

– Did you test the car?

TM – Yes, I helped with the car's development three years ago. Two weeks before coming to Macau I spent an afternoon in Estoril [former F1 racing circuit] to help a friend who races TCR in Portugal and to get a grip on the car. But of course, Estoril and Macau are quite different.

Q&A PUN WENG KUN
 PRESIDENT OF THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Grand Prix preparations went 'smoothly'

THE organizing committee of the 63rd Macau Grand Prix is confident that the event will be a success, citing the team's immense preparations.

President of the Macau Sports Development Board and organization head Pun Weng Kun told reporters that this year's edition of the annual racing event would feature several new highlights.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of Wednesday's welcome dinner for the Grand Prix racers at Fisherman's Wharf Convention Center, Pun said that preparations to the race weekend had gone 'smoothly.'

- How are the preparations for the upcoming Grand Prix? Is the organizing committee ready?

Pun Weng Kun (PWK) - There will be a series of exciting races to be presented to the race fans, and to the riders who do all kinds of races from all over the world. The race is prepared, well prepared. Everything is going smoothly.



Until now, all work regarding the race, whether it is software or hardware [material and human resources] was well done and we are looking forward to the race.

- What are the highlights of this year's edition?

PWK - There are several highlights [...] this time, the Formula 3 race is going to be a World Cup. So there will be two world-class races being organized in Macau. These competitions have not been organized

in other places around the world.

It is also the 50th anniversary of the Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix so we have already prepared several commemorative events.

Last week, a selection of classic motorcycles was featured in the vehicle show [in Tap Seac Square]. Local cultural and creative artists have created souvenirs that are in line with the Grand Prix. The post office has launched stamps that are also Grand Prix-themed. The

Macau Pass has also launched a smartcard design to commemorate the event. On November 19, there will be another classic motorcycle parade at the Grand Prix circuit.

- Are you worried about the weather [rain is predicted for the weekend]?

PWK - Like I said, we have prepared very well from all perspectives for this event; be it accidents or bad weather. We have arranged many different measures to handle situations that could occur [so] we are not worried about the weather.

ONE SHOT NEWS



The Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Alexis Tam, and other officials inspect the Guia Circuit prior to the beginning of the 63rd Macau Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 17 - 20



18th of November (Friday)

- 06:00 Circuit Closed
- 06:30 - 07:00 Circuit Inspection
- 07:30 - 08:15 Suncity Group Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 50th Edition - Qualifying
- 08:40 - 09:10 Suncity Group Chinese Racing Cup - Qualifying
- 09:35 - 10:15 Suncity Group Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix - FIA F3 World Cup - Practice
- 10:40 - 11:10 SJM Macau GT Cup - FIA GT World Cup - Practice
- 11:35 - 12:05 Suncity Group Macau Road Sport Challenge - Qualifying
- 12:30 - 13:00 Suncity Group Macau Guia Race 2.0T - Practice
- 13:55 - 14:25 CTM Macau Touring Car Cup - Qualifying
- 14:55 - 15:25 SJM Macau GT Cup - FIA GT World Cup - Qualifying
- 15:55 - 16:35 Suncity Group Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix - FIA F3 World Cup - Qualifying
- 18:00 Circuit Opened

19th of November (Saturday)

- 06:00 Circuit Closed
- 06:30 - 07:00 Circuit Inspection
- 07:30 - 08:30 Suncity Group Macau Guia Race 2.0T - Qualifying
- 09:00 - 09:50 Suncity Group Macau Road Sport Challenge - 10 laps
- 10:20 - 11:10 Suncity Group Chinese Racing Cup - 10 laps
- 11:20 - 11:40 Suncity Group Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 50th Edition - Warm Up
- 12:10 - 13:10 SJM Macau GT Cup - FIA GT World Cup - Qualification Race 12 laps
- 13:50 - 14:40 Suncity Group Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix - FIA F3 World Cup - Qualification Race - 10 laps
- 14:40 - 15:05 Parade
- 15:30 - 16:30 Suncity Group Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 50th Edition - 12 laps
- 18:00 Circuit Opened

20nd of November (Sunday)

- 06:00 Circuit Closed
- 06:30 - 07:00 Circuit Inspection
- 07:00 - 07:30 Safety and Rescue Cars - Testing laps
- 08:30 - 09:30 CTM Macau Touring Car Cup - 12 laps
- 10:00 - 12:00 Suncity Group Macau Guia Race 2.0T - 2 Races of 10 laps each with 15 minutes break between Races
- 12:55 - 14:15 SJM Macau GT Cup - FIA GT World Cup - 18 laps
- 14:15 - 14:40 Parade
- 15:10 - 15:25 Lion Dance
- 15:30 - 16:30 Suncity Group Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix - FIA F3 World Cup - 15 laps
- 18:00 Circuit Opened