



Irwin tops challengers *Gets provisional pole*



Renato Marques

F3

Norris gets provisional pole in session marred by red flags

LANDO Norris will be seated in the best position of the grid for today's second qualifying session for the F3 World Cup race after obtaining the best time in yesterday's first qualifying session.

The session was marred by several accidents on track leading to multiple interruptions. The last incident caused a delay of over 45 minutes after which barely 11 minutes of the session remained.

The delay was caused by an accident at the Fishermen's Bend that caused severe damage to the security barriers. On-track staff first attempted to fix the barriers, but after inspection, it was deemed necessary to proceed with a full replacement of the affected materials. Lengthy repair operations ultimately delayed the program for the day.

In the part of the session that counted towards the qualifying results, the F3 European Champion, Lando Norris, justified his merits as a favorite by bringing his Dallara-Volkswagen to the top with a best lap of 2:11.570 precisely on the last of its 11 laps to the circuit.

Behind Norris sits Brazilian Pedro Piquet, one of the surprises of the session, clocking 0.912 of a second more than Norris.

The third best place was held by another of the favorites, German racer Maximilian Gunther from Theodore, who placed the second Dallara-Mercedes in the third highest ranking.

The second surprise of the session was Daniel Ticktum, the man from Motopark with VEB, who managed to put his Dallara-Volkswagen in fourth and right in front of his teammate and another favorite, Joel Eriksson who made his best lap only in 2:13.637, that is, over two seconds slower than Norris.

RENATO MARQUES



Pedro Piquet



Maximilian Gunther

In sixth place is the first Japanese participant, Yuhi Sekiguchi, driving the first B-Max Racing for Team Dallara-Volkswagen. Sekiguchi's performance was an expected one, although it was predicted that his teammate

Kenta Yamashita would be the first car from the team. In fact, that was very far from happening as Yamashita only managed to place 11th in the session, clocking his best lap with a time of 2:14.281, almost three se-

conds behind Norris.

With this result, Norris seems to have an open path to an easier race than initially expected, however, the many interruptions of yesterday's session might also have given the

wrong impression.

A second qualifying race will be held today at 3:25 p.m. (provisional time), when all these drivers will have a second chance on track, hopefully with fewer interruptions.

RENATO MARQUES



GT WORLD CUP | INTERVIEW

Scuderia Corsa to fight for podium in Macau

THE US-based team "Scuderia Corsa" was founded in 2013 by Giacomo Mattioli and Art Zafiropoulo. The aim of the team is to strengthen the tradition of long term brand partnership with Ferrari dealerships. These dealerships are in the US, namely in Beverly Hills, Los Angeles and South Bay. Making its first appearance in the Macau FIA GT World Cup this year, the team presented as their driver

for their one and only Ferrari 488 GT3 no one less than two-time F3 winner Felix Rosenqvist.

To learn more about the expectations of both the team owner and the driver for this year's racing weekend, the Times interviewed Paddock Giacomo Mattioli and Felix Rosenqvist at the Macau Grand Prix.

Macau Daily Times (MDT) – What are the chances of "Scu-

deria Corsa" over this weekend?

Giacomo Mattioli (GM) – The chances are very good. I think Felix is the best driver out there; he has a lot of success on this track. For us it's the first year so I'm sure there are some learning curves that we need to climb, but hopefully we will be ready for Sunday.

MDT – What would be a considered a good result?

GM – For sure we always want to aim for the win but a podium finish would be a great result for the first year.

MDT - What do you think about the new rules from FIA World GT Cup that restricts the competition to drivers with top licenses?

GM – I think that right now the grid that we have is one of the best possible grids in GT that

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Gleen Irwing



Peter Hickman

MOTORCYCLE GRAND PRIX

Irwin tops challengers and gets provisional pole

Renato Marques

GLENN Irwin showed potential at last year's debut in Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix and when interviewed by the Times, he said he felt that he could win the race this year. Irwin is well-placed to fulfill his wish as he topped the fierce competition to take the provisional pole position for the 51st edition of the Macau Motorcycle GP.

Irwin, the man from Carrickfergus in Northern Ireland, clocked a time of 2:24.310, ri-

ding a well-functioning Ducati in the first qualifying session, held yesterday afternoon.

Although there is still one qualifying session of 45 minutes remaining in the early morning today, Irwin's latest time certainly puts him in a comfortable position to start the race on Saturday.

But, that advantage did not come easily. In the process, Irwin fought a shoulder-to-shoulder battle with eight-time winner Michael Rutter, who forced Irwin to reduce his times as much as possible.

Rutter ended the session in

second place with a time of 2:25.777 – that is, roughly 1.5 seconds slower than Irwin.

Following Rutter was his teammate, Peter Hickman, who was also the winner of the last two editions. Hickman has also been a close contender in the competition between Rutter and Irwin.

Hickman begins today just half a second behind Rutter. He will surely try to reduce or overlap that difference in the second qualifying session. Nevertheless, the trio are expected to be in fierce competition.

Clocking in at fourth place was Connor Cummins, who managed to squeeze himself ahead of Jessop, pushing him into fifth place.

Cummins finished last year's race in fourth place overall, from a starting position of ninth place, putting him in a much more comfortable position that would allow him to take advantage of any mistakes by the trio in front.

Martin Jessop, in fifth place, clocked 2:27.631, almost two seconds slower than his performance last year.

Mention should also be made of Derek Sheils's performance, which has been increasingly improving around the Guia circuit. Last year, Sheils started from the 13th position of the grid, but improved his time from the first qualifying session to the second by more than one second. Finishing with a best lap time of 2:28.070, time bettered this year clocking entering on the 27th second (2:27.957). If he manages to improve this time or maintain his current performance on it, we could see him finishing with no surprise on the top five this year, after having finished ninth in 2016.

All things are possible, and with all these uncertainties and close rivalries, this year's competition promises to be an adrenaline-fueled race from start to finish.

The grand finale is scheduled for this Saturday at 3:40 p.m.

Macau debut

you can have. I think the idea of Gold and Platinum drivers is fantastic and I think it was a good decision [from FIA].

MDT - Will this partnership with Ferrari continue? Can we expect to see more cars next year?

GM – Yes, for sure, we have had a close relationship with Ferrari through the dealerships for many years and hopefully we will bring

more racing here to Macau. I don't know yet [if we can bring more than one car next time] but we are working on it.

MDT - How does it feel to be back in Macau?

Felix Rosenqvist (FR) – Good! It's a tradition for me to be here. It's my seventh or eighth time already and it would be strange not to be here again. It's almost like celebrating Christmas.

MDT - This time you will be driving a very different car and in a very different category. What are your

expectations?

FR – That's the big thing. It's quite hard to know what to expect at this point because we haven't done much testing (which happened in fact in another car, not exactly this one) and roughly that testing was about half an hour to forty minutes so today will be in fact the first time that I'll drive this car but if the feeling is good we should be up there [in the classification table] but if you start struggling, obviously it is going to take some time to get into it.

MDT - What is your

main goal for this racing weekend?

FR – Here in Macau you want to be able to maximize the car [capabilities], which is difficult since the track is very challenging. Obviously, I think in the first session I'll have some learning to do, but my target is to come to the point that I can squeeze everything out of the car and hopefully at that time we will be good enough to fight for the podium. It's also important not to have the [Practice] session stopped and to have some laps in to get some mileage. But it's good that we aren't one

of the first sessions because when I drove F3 we usually are one of the first sessions and you are pulling up all the dust and the track is very slippery. It feels much better to start after a couple of sessions and after the track already has some rubber in.

MDT - In 2017 you have been focused on Formula E as well as Super Formula in Japan, how about 2018? Will you be aiming to continue this experience with GT cars?

FR – For the next year I'm sure to continue on

Formula E. That part is already settled. We are going to start the season in two weeks in Hong Kong, then what I will do apart from that is not clear [yet] but obviously I would like to stay in Japan.

GT might be an option but to continue on Super Formula would also be a good program. Also WEC (FIA World Endurance Championship) could be a possibility but I think I would like to stay in Japan as now that I've come into that world and established some networks there and I had success so it makes sense to stay there. **RM**



Maro Engel



Norbert Michelisz

First run of GT and WTCC with Mercedes and Honda on top

AFTER the first practice sessions of both the FIA GT World Cup and the WTCC Guia race, Mercedes and Honda, respectively, came out on top.

Driving the GT cars was Maro Engel, the first winner of FIA GT World Cup and quickest on track during the first Free Practice session, setting the pace at the very end of the 30-minute session.

Engel, driving a Mercedes-AMG GT3 from Team GruppeM Racing, clocked the best lap of the category in 2:18.948. Engel's teammate Raf-

faele Marciello was close behind, at a difference of only 0.021 seconds. The AMG Mercedes was clearly dominant in this first session, with three of these cars placing in the first three positions. The last of them was occupied by another of the favorites in the final win, Italian Edoardo Mortara, who clocked his best lap in 2:19.105 – essentially meaning a mere one and a half tenths of a second separated the first and third place winners.

Apparently adjusting quickly to his new car was two-time F3 win-

ner Felix Rosenqvist. On his first time out on track with the Ferrari, Rosenqvist achieved a time of 2:19.249, making it to fourth place overall. His performance left a great impression as to what he can do over the weekend behind the wheel of the 488 GT3 from Scuderia Corsa.

First Audi R8 LMS finished the session in fifth place at the hands of Robin Frijns, just 0.005 of a second behind Rosenqvist.

Between the first and seventh place (Markus Pommer) there was

less than one second of difference, showing how close and competitive this series was and that anything can happen.

As for the touring cars, the first session brought Norbert Michelisz in a Honda Civic to top the timetable with a lap completed in 2:27.802, but the Macau expert Robert Huff, as expected, took advantage of his experience and the favorable Balance of Performance (BOP) of the Citroens to score second place, just 0.352 of a second behind the Honda driver.

Third best was another Citroen, driven by Tom Chilton. In fact, we need to scroll down the timesheet to the sixth position to find the first of the non-Citroens (besides first-place), and that is where we find the Volvo of Nestor Girolami, the best of the S60 WTCC, already over two seconds behind Michelisz.

The second 45-minute practice session for WTCC cars will start today at 9:15 a.m., followed by a qualifying session at 1:25 p.m., and lastly the MAC 3 (Team Trial Session) for extra team points at 2:50 p.m.

As for the GT cars, the second Free Practice is scheduled for 11 a.m. today while the qualifying session will close the second day of racing events on the Guia Circuit, from 4:25 p.m.

AD

NOVEMBER 17 - 19

18th of November (Saturday)

06:00 Circuit Closed
06:30 - 07:00 Circuit Inspection
07:30 - 08:30 Safety, Rescue and Extrication Cars - Testing laps
09:00 - 10:00 Suncity Group Chinese Racing Cup - 10 laps
10:20 - 11:10 Suncity Group Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix - FIA F3 World Cup - Qualification Race - 10 laps
11:30 - 11:50 Suncity Group Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 51 st Edition - Warm Up
12:25 - 13:30 SJM Macau GT Cup - FIA GT World Cup - Qualification Race - 12 laps
14:10 - 15:10 Suncity Group Macau Guia Race - FIA WTCC - Opening Race - 8 laps
15:40 - 16:40 Suncity Group Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 51 st Edition - 12 laps
18:00 - 18:00 Circuit Opened

17th of November (Friday)

06:00 Circuit Closed
06:30 - 07:00 Circuit Inspection
07:30 - 08:15 Suncity Group Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 51 st Edition - Qualifying
08:25 - 08:55 Suncity Group Chinese Racing Cup - Qualifying
09:15 - 10:00 Suncity Group Macau Guia Race - FIA WTCC - Free Practice 2
10:15 - 10:40 CTM Macau Touring Car Cup 1600cc Turbo - Qualifying
11:00 - 11:30 SJM Macau GT Cup - FIA GT World Cup - Free Practice 2
11:45 - 12:25 Suncity Group Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix - FIA F3 World Cup - Free Practice 2
12:40 - 13:05 CTM Macau Touring Car Cup over 1950cc - Qualifying
13:25 - 14:40 Suncity Group Macau Guia Race - FIA WTCC - Qualifying
14:50 - 15:10 Suncity Group Macau Guia Race - FIA WTCC - MAC 3
15:25 - 16:05 Suncity Group Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix - FIA F3 World Cup - Qualifying 2
16:25 - 16:55 SJM Macau GT Cup - FIA GT World Cup - Qualifying
18:30 - 18:30 Circuit Opened

19th of November (Sunday)

06:00 Circuit Closed
06:30 - 07:00 Circuit Inspection
07:00 - 07:50 Safety, Rescue and Extrication Cars - Testing laps
08:00 - 08:30 Special Event
09:00 - 10:00 CTM Macau Touring Car Cup 1600cc Turbo and over 1950cc - 12 laps
10:40 - 11:40 Suncity Group Macau Guia Race - FIA WTCC - Main Race - 11 laps
12:10 - 13:40 SJM Macau GT Cup - FIA GT World Cup - 18 laps
15:10 - 15:20 Lion Dance
15:30 - 16:30 Suncity Group Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix - FIA F3 World Cup - 15 laps
18:00 - 18:00 Circuit Opened