

Friday 4 June 2021

Lawson tops Hitech one-two in Baku with first F2 pole

Hitech Grand Prix cemented their place as the team to beat in Baku with a one-two in Qualifying, as Liam Lawson stormed to a first pole position in Formula 2, ahead of teammate Jüri Vips. Lapping at 1:54.217, Lawson finished just over a tenth faster than his fellow Red Bull junior, with Oscar Piastri a further 0.153s back.

Roy Nissany was forced to watch Qualifying from the side-lines after the DAMS driver crashed out of Free Practice. The short turnaround before the start of the session meaning that the team were unable to mend his DAMS in time.

Marcus Armstrong set the early pace before being usurped by Dan Ticktum and then Théo Pourchaire inside of the opening 10 minutes, with the latter slicing the quickest lap down to 1:55.455.

The trio traded first between them as they headed towards the midway point and it was Armstrong who was top of the class as the cars headed back to the pits for fresh supersofts, the DAMS driver setting the fastest time in Baku so far, with 1:55.057.

Ticktum – who had dropped down to P6 – questioned whether it would be smart to get back out onto the track early, wary of red flags, and his team obliged, sending him out at the front of the queue with 13 minutes on the clock.

Hitech Grand Prix looked like the ones to beat as Lawson leapt to first, punching in two purple sectors to lap at 1:54.332. Lawson's teammate Vips – who had topped Free Practice – improved as well, jumping from fifth to second, 0.023s off the leading pace.

Hailing his earlier return to the track as "spot on," Ticktum improved, but not as much as he would have liked, with the carlin driver settling for P5, ahead of Armstrong. Despite holding provisional pole after the first runs, the DAMS driver wasn't able to keep up with the pace in the second half of the session.

CONTINUES

Rookie duo Piastri and Théo Pourchaire had snuck into third and fourth during the second runs but it was an all-Hitech shoot-out for pole, as Lawson and Vips set off on one final set of push laps in a league of their own.

Vips had to watch on as his teammate took pole, with Lawson shaving his time down to 1:54.217, while the Estonian racer failed to improve, losing four-tenths in the middle sector.

Second fastest in Free Practice, Ralph Boschung finished Qualifying in seventh, ahead of Guanyu Zhou, who was one of the final drivers to return from the pits in the second half of the session.

Finishing 10th overall, Robert Shwartzman will start ahead of Jehan Daruvala in Saturday's reverse grid Sprint Race 1, which takes place at 11.25am local time.

CONTINUES

2021 FIA FORMULA 2 CHAMPIONSHIP – ROUND 3 QUALIFYING PROVISIONAL CLASSIFICATION

	DRIVER	TEAM
1	Liam Lawson	Hitech Grand Prix
2	Jüri Vips	Hitech Grand Prix
3	Oscar Piastri	PREMA Racing
4	Théo Pourchaire	ART Grand Prix
5	Dan Ticktum	Carlin
6	Marcus Armstrong	DAMS
7	Ralph Boschung	Campos Racing
8	Guanyu Zhou	UNI-Virtuosi
9	Jehan Daruvala	Carlin
10	Robert Shwartzman	PREMA Racing
11	Felipe Drugovich	UNI-Virtuosi
12	Christian Lundgaard	ART Grand Prix
13	David Beckmann	Charouz Racing System
14	Jack Aitken	HWA RACELAB
15	Bent Viscaal	Trident
16	Richard Verschoor	MP Motorsport
17	Matteo Nannini	Campos Racing
18	Lirim Zendeli	MP Motorsport
19	Marino Sato	Trident
20	Guilherme Samaia	Charouz Racing System
21	Alessio Deledda	HWA RACELAB

NOT CLASSIFIED

	Roy Nissany	DAMS
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