

Saturday 1 June 2023

Crawford claims maiden victory in Spielberg

Jak Crawford claimed his first FIA Formula 2 victory in the Spielberg Sprint Race. Starting on the slick tyres in changeable conditions, the Hitech Pulse-Eight driver lost out at the start but looked untroubled once he returned to the front of the field on Lap 6.

Victor Martins made his way through the pack from 10th on the grid to take second, as Clément Novalak turned a P20 start into his first podium of the 2023 season.

AS IT HAPPENED

Light rain ahead of the race meant half the field opted to start on the wet tyres. Utilising the dry soft tyres, reverse polesitter Crawford held the lead through the opening corners but it was Arthur Leclerc who made the most of his choice to start on wets. The DAMS driver went from third to the lead of the race by Turn 4 after the Hitech Pulse-Eight ran wide.

Jehan Daruvala spinning off into the gravel at Turn 7 brought out an early Safety Car at the start of Lap 2. This gave the wet tyre runners a chance to switch to slicks, with Théo Pourchaire, Frederik Vesti and Dennis Hauger all stopping, having run inside the top five.

Out front, Leclerc opted to stay out held the lead at the restart on Lap 4. Second-place Richard Verschoor dropped a wheel over the sausage kerb and spun off at the exit of Turn 1, necessitating another Safety Car. Leclerc chose to pit, handing the lead back to Crawford ahead of Juan Manuel Correa.

Back to racing on Lap 8, Kush Maini, Zane Maloney and Enzo Fittipaldi went three-wide up the hill into Turn 3. Diving to the inside, Maloney was through on both, but soon dropped down the order as the track dried and softs became the tyre of choice.

Their battle allowed Martins through into third and he quickly closed on Correa. Late on the brakes, the ART Grand Prix driver went up the inside of Turn 3 to pass the #23 Van Amersfoort Racing car.

Another beneficiary of the soft tyres, Novalak had already made up 16 places after dispatching Isack Hadjar for fourth and soon caught Correa. On Lap 18, the Trident driver was through on the inside to take third, allowing Hadjar the room to follow his compatriot through to take fourth.

A spin for Fittipaldi between Turns 3 and 4 after catching the grass led to the Virtual Safety Car being deployed for two laps.

Having fought his way back up into the points, Oliver Bearman couldn't hold onto a scoring finish. After overtaking Hauger earlier in the race, the MP Motorsport driver repaid the favour to take eighth. With the benefit of the switchback, the Norwegian was then able to get the run on Jack Doohan to take seventh on the final lap.

Nobody could deny Red Bull junior Crawford his maiden victory around the Red Bull Ring. Martins fought through to second, as Novalak returned to the podium for the first time since Zandvoort last year.

Hadjar ensured both Hitech cars finished in the top four, as Correa's valiant defence was rewarded with fifth ahead of Roman Stanek. Hauger ended up seventh with Jack Doohan rounding out the points-scorers in front of PREMA Racing's Bearman and Vesti.

KEY QUOTE – Jak Crawford, Hitech Pulse-Eight

"It was a tough race. We knew it was going to be tricky with the weather and we had to make the right choice. The safest decision for us, which was going on the slicks, and we did that. The first few laps were really tough. Luckily, we had the Safety Car laps to help warm up the tyres and, in the end, I got in the lead and was able to manage the gap quite well.

"My thoughts and prayers go out to Dilano's family and obviously it's a very bitter day today."

THE CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS

With the top four all failing to score points, things remain unchanged at the head of the Drivers' Championship. Frederik Vesti leads on 110 points to Théo Pourchaire's 99, with Ayumu Iwasa a further 17 points behind in third. Oliver Bearman is fourth on 70 points ahead of Dennis Hauger, who narrowly closes the gap to the Briton to 11 points. Victor Martins is the biggest climber, moving up four places to sixth on 56.

In the Teams' Standings, PREMA Racing still leads the way on 180 points, but their advantage over ART Grand Prix has shrunk to 25 points. DAMS remain third on 118, with MP Motorsport edging two points clear of Rodin Carlin on 99 points.

UP NEXT

Martins will be looking for more silverware when he lines up on pole for Sunday's Feature Race, which gets underway at 9:55 local time.

CONTINUES

2023 FIA FORMULA 2 CHAMPIONSHIP – ROUND 8 SPRINT RACE PROVISIONAL CLASSIFICATION

	DRIVER	LICENCE	TEAM
1	Jak Crawford	USA	Hitech Pulse-Eight
2	Victor Martins	FRA	ART Grand Prix
3	Clément Novalak	FRA	Trident
4	Isack Hadjar	FRA	Hitech Pulse-Eight
5	Juan Manuel Correa	USA	Van Amersfoort Racing
6	Roman Staněk	CZE	Trident
7	Dennis Hauger	NOR	MP Motorsport
8	Jack Doohan	AUS	Invicta Virtuosi Racing
9	Oliver Bearman	GBR	PREMA Racing
10	Frederik Vesti	DNK	PREMA Racing
11	Roy Nissany	ISR	PHM Racing by Charouz
12	Kush Maini	IND	Campos Racing
13	Ayumu Iwasa	JPN	DAMS
14	Brad Benavides	USA	PHM Racing by Charouz
15	Arthur Leclerc	MCO	DAMS
16	Théo Pourchaire	FRA	ART Grand Prix
17	Amaury Cordeel	BEL	Invicta Virtuosi Racing
18	Ralph Boschung	CHE	Campos Racing
19	Zane Maloney	BRB	Rodin Carlin

NOT CLASSIFIED

DNF	Enzo Fittipaldi	BRA	Rodin Carlin
DNF	Richard Verschoor	NLD	Van Amersfoort Racing
DNF	Jehan Daruvala	IND	MP Motorsport

OVERALL FASTEST LAP

Zane Maloney	BRB	Rodin Carlin
1:17.294 (Lap 20)		

FASTEST LAP ELIGIBLE FOR POINTS

Victor Martins	FRA	ART Grand Prix
1:17.630 (Lap 14)		



MEDIA RELEASE

ENDS

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