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AUER FASTEST IN FIRST PRACTICE FOR F3 MACAU GRAND PRIX

Lucas Auer led the way during an incident-filled opening free practice session for the Suncity Group Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix on Thursday.

The Mucke Motorsport driver left it until the closing moments of the 45-minute session, which had been red flagged once, to end the session ahead of Carlin duo Antonio Giovinazzi and Tom Blomqvist.

It had been Blomqvist who led the way early on as he exchanged times at the top of the standings with Auer through much of practice.

But it was Auer who saved his best for the final few minutes of the session, which had been restarted with only six minutes remaining following a brief red flag to retrieve the stranded car of Mitsunori Takaboshi, who had crashed into the barriers at Moorish Hill.

Will Buller ended up fourth overall, ahead of Jordan King and Felix Rosenqvist.

Max Verstappen, taking part in his final F3 race before his move to F1, ended up seventh overall in his Van Amersfoort Racing car.

Esteban Ocon had a more disappointing time, after featuring near the top of the time sheets early on. He was one of the first cars on to the scene after Takaboshi crashed and clouted the Japanese driver's car – damaging his front left suspension. His car should be repaired for qualifying through.

There were a number of other incidents during the session, which had been delayed for an hour so track officials could make repairs to barriers at Police that had been damaged in a previous session.

That area of the track proved particularly tricky for the drivers. TOM'S driver Sam Macleod crashed off there after 15 minutes of the session. Following Takaboshi's incident, Richard Goddard also crashed in the same spot with just a few minutes to go.

The biggest accident was suffered by Dan Wells, who spun his Toda Racing car in to the barriers at Fishermen's Bend. His car suffered major damage to the rear, but he was able to climb out of the car unaided.

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Full results and images at: www.macau.grandprix.gov.mo