

Sunday, 12th July 2020

Pourchaire propelled to first F3 win after late collision between Hughes and Lawson

Theo Pourchaire became FIA Formula 3's youngest winner in Race 2 on Sunday, at just 16-years-old, but his run to victory in Spielberg was far from smooth.

The ART Grand Prix racer took the lead at the start, but then spent most of the race watching on as Liam Lawson and Jake Hughes swapped the lead between them. His patience paid off, as the duo came to blows with three laps to go and handed him first, with a safety car escort to the line.

Logan Sargeant drove a measured race for second, and was another beneficiary of the late collision, while David Beckmann was able to take his second podium of the weekend in third, with a drive from eighth.

AS IT HAPPENED

Race 1 on Saturday was ended after just 11 laps due to torrential rain, but there were entirely different conditions on Sunday. Not a drop of rain hit the track, with blue skies and a cool 15-degree temperature handing us optimum conditions for Race 2.

Jake Hughes earned a first half-point of the season with tenth in the first race, after a tough start to the year. This handed the HWA RACELAB driver reverse pole, and the Briton said yesterday that while the aim was to win, his main focus would be on scoring some solid points for the team.

It wasn't the best start for him. Hughes was sluggish off the line, and Pourchaire certainly wasn't as the ART driver launched into first, gliding easily into the lead.

The Frenchman held on in the opening laps, but was unsettled by the introduction of DRS. Hughes opened up and looked to get around the outside, but this provided Liam Lawson with a gap from third and the Kiwi dived between the duo and fired into first.

Hughes did manage to get ahead of Pourchaire, but it was for second and not first as planned. He had the momentum though and used this to claw the lead back from Lawson in the next DRS zone to return to his starting position.

The safety car brought a brief halt to the action, after Alex Smolyar tagged Sophia Floersch and sent her spinning out. It was a tough lap all round for Campos, who saw Alex Peroni go into the gravel trap, and Alessio Deledda damage his front wing.

Amid all the drama, Lawson managed to sneak back into the lead just in time and the Hitech racer was aiming to become the first double winner in F3 this season.

The New Zealander clung on at the restart, but not for long, as he swapped places with Hughes once again. That wouldn't last long either, Hughes locking up on his exit of the corner to allow Lawson to roar back ahead.

The battle between the front two was enthralling, although it would come to an early conclusion with three laps to go. In Spielberg last season, Hughes had been the beneficiary as Marcus Armstrong and Robert Shwartzman came to blows in the closing stages and handed him the race lead.

The Briton was on the opposing end this time around. Lawson suffered from oversteer and clipped the curb, sending him into the path of Hughes. The pair collided and Hughes was sent into the gravel while Lawson pulled up at the following corner with damage.

This handed Pourchaire the race lead, and with the safety car coming out and less than three laps to go, he was able to cross the line unopposed. The collision promoted Sargeant to second and gave Beckmann his second podium of the weekend.

Richard Verschoor finished fourth, ahead of Oscar Piastri, Olli Caldwell, Max Fewtrell, Frederik Vesti, Sebastian Fernandez and Lirim Zendeli.

Piastri holds on to the Championship lead with 44 points, ahead of Vesti on 37.5 and Sargeant on 34. Beckmann is fourth with 31.5 and Verschoor fifth with 27. In the Teams' Championship, PREMA remain first with 111.5, ahead of Trident on 67.5 and Hitech Grand Prix on 30. ART Grand Prix are fourth and MP Motorsport fifth.

KEY QUOTE – THEO POURCHAIRE (ART GRAND PRIX)

"It feels amazing to win Race 2 here in Austria. I made a really good start, but then was third for most of the race with good battles ahead of me. Then Lawson and Hughes crashed, and I was able to win the race.

"To win the race is amazing. It is only my second round in Formula 3, and I would like to thank ART Grand Prix for their amazing work with the car."

CONTINUES



MEDIA RELEASE

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WHAT'S NEXT?

The F3 grid will head to Budapest in Hungary for Round 3 of the Championship next weekend when Piastri will be looking to extend his lead over Vesti at the top of the Championship.

ENDS

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