

Friday 28 August 2020

**Zendeli scores maiden F3 pole, ahead of Pourchaire in rain-hit Spa Qualifying**

Trident's Lirim Zendeli got his fast lap in early to beat off the rain and take his first ever pole position in a wet FIA Formula 3 Qualifying session at Spa-Francorchamps. The German driver's time was set on the first set of fast laps and was two tenths faster than ART Grand Prix's Théo Pourchaire. The Frenchman's teammate Alex Smolyar took third.

Eager to pick up from where he left off in Free Practice, Jack Doohan was the first out onto the track and the first round for a push lap.

The first true laptime was from Zendeli, who set the benchmark at 2:05.598. Only eight more drivers managed to set a fast lap before the session was red flagged after Michael Belov spun off track on his debut and struck the barrier.

Little changed when the cars returned to the circuit. The fast laps poured in, but no one could trouble the top three of Zendeli, Pourchaire and Smolyar, and they headed back into the pits for a freshen up as it started to rain.

The rain changed the entire complexion of the session, making it extremely unlikely that anyone would better Zendeli's early time. Almost everyone headed back out in an attempt to do so, apart from PREMA who chose to remain in the pits.

The teams swiftly realised that it wouldn't be possible and returned with six minutes to go. Bent Viscaal and Calan Williams dipped their toes in the water once more in the final minutes, hoping the track had dried enough, but ultimately another push lap would not be possible.

This allowed Zendeli to claim pole, ahead of Pourchaire and Smolyar. Logan Sargeant took fourth, ahead of David Beckmann, Richard Verschoor and Liam Lawson. Oscar Piastri, Frederik Vesti and Alex Peroni completed the top ten.

Zendeli will have the chance to take his first ever F3 victory from pole in Race 1 tomorrow morning at 10.25 am local time.

**ENDS**