

Saturday 31 July 2021

Nannini beats Fittipaldi to maiden win in Budapest

Matteo Nannini became the ninth different winner from just 11 races in 2021, overcoming Charouz Racing System's Enzo Fittipaldi and Hitech Grand Prix's Roman Stanek for his maiden Formula 3 victory in Race 2 at Budapest.

The HWA RACELAB driver got a strong launch off the line, pulling himself ahead of Stanek from third before overcoming Fittipaldi on Lap 4, who had struggled to warm up his tyres. From there, the Italian's win never looked in doubt.

Alex Smolyar held on to fourth despite pressure from Championship leader Dennis Hauger, who had put on a battling charge through the field, making up three places from eighth.

The PREMA Racing driver gained ground on each of his primary title rivals, with Jack Doohan, Frederik Vesti, Olli Caldwell, and Victor Martins all finishing outside of the points.

AS IT HAPPENED

The sun had returned for the second race of the afternoon, bringing track temperature up to 45 degrees, but that didn't stop the front three from engaging in a heated race start.

Fittipaldi got a strong launch, and he needed it, as Nannini and Stanek both flung off the line and went three-wide into the opening corner. Nannini was late on the brakes and nicked second from Stanek, but Fittipaldi was able to cling on thanks to his quick getaway.

The duo continued to duel in the opening laps and Nannini made a second attempt almost as soon as DRS was switched on. The duo went wheel-to-wheel between Turns 1 and 2 and despite his best efforts, Fittipaldi eventually had to relinquish the position and Nannini hauled his HWA ahead.

It had been a chaotic opening five laps as those outside of the top 10 went all out in their chase of the points' positions, safe in the knowledge the final result wouldn't affect their starting position for Race 3.

Battling for 11th, Oliver Rasmussen and Caldwell came together and were forced into the pitlane for repairs. Both returned, but they were at the back of the grid.

The top 10 had all gotten away unscathed, with Alex Smolyar finding his way to fourth, ahead of Doohan, and up three places from where he started. The only other change came from Hauger, who had jumped Lorenzo Colombo for P7 and was hot on the tail of David Schumacher.

The Norwegian attempted a move going into Turn 1 and the pair went side-by-side, but Schumacher had grown in confidence since his maiden win at Spielberg and was daringly late on the brakes, retaining P6.

The German responded to the attack by stealing fifth from his teammate, Doohan, dragging himself ahead a lap later. But Hauger was unwilling to let their battle go and followed the German through so that the pair could resume their to-and-throw.

Back out in front and Nannini had streaked nearly 4s into the distance, the Italian unwilling to allow Fittipaldi an opportunity to fight back. In third, Stanek was struggling to stay within DRS range of the Charouz and had Smolyar waiting patiently behind.

Doohan's tyres had fallen off a cliff and the Trident fell from seventh to 13th within the course of just one lap. Colombo, Clément Novalak and Logan Sargeant all got ahead within a matter of corners, before Ayumu Iwasa stole the final points' place.

Hauger's cat and mouse chase of Schumacher finally came good on the penultimate lap, as the PREMA moved up to fifth. Despite his best efforts, he ran out of laps and was unable to catch Smolyar in P4.

The Russian's sudden need to defend from the Championship leader allowed the front three to cross the line unopposed, with Nannini clinching his first win at this level ahead of Fittipaldi and Stanek.

KEY QUOTE – MATTEO NANNINI (HWA RACELAB)

"Finally, I got a win. I have been really close twice already this year and it was really frustrating to miss those opportunities, but today we could finally do it.

"Our pace was strong, it's just a pity that we couldn't set a proper lap in Qualifying because that meant that we had to work harder today. But I am really happy with the points that we have scored."

THE CHAMPIONSHIP VIEW

Hauger increased his advantage at the top of the table to 127 points, with Caldwell, Doohan, Vesti and Martins remaining on the same points in second, third, fourth and fifth.

In the Teams' title race, PREMA Racing are first with 235, ahead of Trident on 157 and ART Grand Prix on 148. MP Motorsport are fourth with 107 and Hitech Grand Prix fifth with 64.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Hauger will get the chance to further strengthen his grip on the Championship lead when he starts from second in Race 3 on Sunday at Budapest. The Norwegian's teammate, Arthur Leclerc, will start from pole for the first time when the lights go out at 10.55am local time.

CONTINUES

2021 FIA FORMULA 3 CHAMPIONSHIP – ROUND 4 RACE 2 PROVISIONAL CLASSIFICATION

	DRIVER	TEAM
1	Matteo Nannini	HWA RACELAB
2	Enzo Fittipaldi	Charouz Racing System
3	Roman Stanek	Hitech Grand Prix
4	Alexander Smolyar	ART Grand Prix
5	Dennis Hauger	PREMA Racing
6	David Schumacher	Trident
7	Lorenzo Colombo	Campos Racing
8	Clément Novalak	Trident
9	Logan Sargeant	Charouz Racing System
10	Ayumu Iwasa	Hitech Grand Prix
11	Arthur Leclerc	PREMA Racing
12	Caio Collet	MP Motorsport
13	Jack Doohan	Trident
14	Juan Manuel Correa	ART Grand Prix
15	Tijmen Van der Helm	MP Motorsport
16	Frederik Vesti	ART Grand Prix
17	Jake Hughes	Carlin Buzz Racing
18	Reshad De Gerus	Charouz Racing System
19	Jonathan Hoggard	Jenzer Motorsport
20	Filip Ugran	Jenzer Motorsport
21	Jak Crawford	Hitech Grand Prix
22	Rafael Villagomez	HWA RACELAB
23	László Tóth	Campos Racing
24	Calan Williams	Jenzer Motorsport
25	Victor Martins	MP Motorsport
26	Jonny Edgar	Carlin Buzz Racing
27	Ido Cohen	Carlin Buzz Racing
28	Oliver Rasmussen	HWA RACELAB
29	Olli Caldwell	PREMA Racing
DNF	Amaury Cordeel	Campos Racing
Fastest lap	Olli Caldwell	PREMA Racing
		1:35.316 (Lap 12)

ENDS