

PRESS RELEASE

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Kato takes pole in Q1 with Taponen on top in Q2; Ugochukwu seizes advantage in title fight



ART Grand Prix driver Taito Kato claimed his maiden FIA Formula 3 Aramco Pole Position Award with a stunning performance in Qualifying 1, completing a 1:50.535 to beat Pedro Clerot by 0.012s. In Qualifying 2, MP Motorsport driver Tuukka Taponen impressively beat title hopeful Ugo Ugochukwu to the Aramco Pole Position Award for Feature Race 2. The Campos Racing driver was also fourth in Q1, while his rival Freddie Slater struggled,

finishing 17th in the opening session, and eighth in Q2.

QUALIFYING 1

Kato was the first driver to cross the line and completed a 1:51.127. But no one else could match the ART driver with Alex Powell 0.161s behind in second. It was not good news for TRIDENT, with Noah Stromsted's sidepod coming loose after contact on the warmup lap with Kanato Le, while Slater complained of issues with the car.

On the second set of laps, Kato improved to a 1:50.639, with Jin Nakamura 0.218s behind in P2. The Japanese drivers were demoted a position moments later when Rodin Motorsport's Clerot went quickest on a 1:50.547.

In the battle for the title Slater was down in P11. The Championship leader was still complaining of issues with his car. TRIDENT brought their driver in and fitted him with a new set of Hard tyres, while the rest of the field continued on.

Kato improved to a 1:50.535 to eclipse Clerot by 0.012s as Ugochukwu went to P4. Slater, despite the new rubber, came on the radio to complain of issues on his TRIDENT. Elsewhere, Brando Badoer's session looked to be over after he hit the barrier, with Rodin left in a race against time to fix his left rear suspension ahead of Qualifying 2.

Out on track, Kato could not improve on his final lap of Q1. But neither could his rivals, leaving him on pole for Feature Race 1, with Clerot settling for P2 ahead of Taponen. Ugochukwu was fourth in front of Enzo Deligny, as Jin Nakamura followed in sixth ahead of Ernesto Rivera and Alessandro Giusti. Bruno del Pino ended up in P9, heading Alex Powell and Théophile Nael, while James Wharton rounded out the top 12.

The PREMA Racing driver is set to start Saturday's Sprint Race from reverse grid pole, with Q1 setting the grid for the first race of the weekend. In the title fight, Slater's struggles continued, with a lockup at Turn 1 leaving him down in P17 in the first Qualifying session, much to his frustration.

QUALIFYING 2

After a short break the drivers were back out on track. This included Slater with TRIDENT having worked to fix his car in the break between the sessions. The British driver looked to be back in the groove as he completed a 1:49.972 to go fastest, with Ugochukwu in second, over half a second behind his title rival.

Clerot and Badoer, who was back out on track with his car fixed, went up to second and third, although Nakamura split the Rodin duo moments later. On the second set of laps, Kato jumped up to P1 only for Ugochukwu to demote him to P2 moments later with a 1:49.901.

Clerot continued his strong form to take over at the top with a 1:49.830. Slater, having set the fastest first sector, locked up on the entry to Turn 5, leaving him fifth. Ugochukwu then reclaimed P1 with a 1:49.771 as Slater aborted his lap and returned to the pit lane. Clerot finished his next lap to go to P2, 0.069s off the Campos driver.

On the final lap of the day, Taponen went quickest on a 1:49.750. Ugochukwu came across the line but could not improve and stayed second. Behind them, Clerot had been on for a fast lap, but he pushed too hard at the final corner, winding up in the barriers, bringing the session to an end.

This left Taponen on pole for Feature Race 2 ahead of Ugochukwu and Clerot, with Kato in fourth ahead of Mattia Colnaghi. Deligny was sixth ahead of Giusti and Slater, with Yevan David in P9. Rivera was 10th ahead of Badoer and Powell. The first race of the Madrid weekend is on Saturday morning with lights out for the Sprint set for 11:05 local time.

FIA Formula 3 - Madrid - Provisional Classification - Qualifying Qualifying A

	DRIVER	LICENCE	TEAM	TIME
1	Taito Kato	JPN	ART Grand Prix	1:50.535
2	Pedro Clerot	BRA	Rodin Motorsport	1:50.547
3	Tuukka Taponen	FIN	MP Motorsport	1:50.637
4	Ugo Ugochukwu	USA	Campos Racing	1:50.677

5	Enzo Deligny	FRA	Van Amersfoort Racing	1:50.750
6	Jin Nakamura	JPN	Hitech	1:50.857
7	Ernesto Rivera	MEX	Campos Racing	1:50.877
8	Alessandro Giusti	FRA	MP Motorsport	1:50.930
9	Bruno Del Pino	ESP	Van Amersfoort Racing	1:50.945
10	Alex Powell	USA	PREMA Racing	1:50.983
11	Theophile Nael	FRA	Campos Racing	1:51.108
12	James Wharton	AUS	PREMA Racing	1:51.130
13	Matteo De Palo	ITA	TRIDENT	1:51.142
14	Fionn McLaughlin	IRL	Hitech	1:51.158
15	Yevan David	LKA	AIX Racing	1:51.158
16	Mattia Colnaghi	ITA	MP Motorsport	1:51.196
17	Freddie Slater	GBR	TRIDENT	1:51.215
18	Hiyyu Yamakoshi	JPN	Van Amersfoort Racing	1:51.260
19	Maciej Gladysz	POL	ART Grand Prix	1:51.346
20	Kanato Le	JPN	ART Grand Prix	1:51.417
21	Nicola Lacorte	ITA	DAMS Lucas Oil	1:51.592
22	Brando Badoer	ITA	Rodin Motorsport	1:51.756
23	Jose Garfias	MEX	PREMA Racing	1:51.770
24	Woohyun Shin	KOR	Hitech	1:51.876
25	Fernando Barrichello	BRA	AIX Racing	1:51.935
26	Noah Stromsted	DNK	TRIDENT	1:52.194
27	Niccolò Maccagnani	ITA	Rodin Motorsport	1:52.700
28	N. Bhirombhakdi	THA	DAMS Lucas Oil	1:52.885

Qualifying B

	DRIVER	LICENCE	TEAM	TIME
1	Tuukka Taponen	FIN	MP Motorsport	1:49.750
2	Ugo Ugochukwu	USA	Campos Racing	1:49.771
3	Pedro Clerot	BRA	Rodin Motorsport	1:49.830
4	Taito Kato	JPN	ART Grand Prix	1:49.856
5	Mattia Colnaghi	ITA	MP Motorsport	1:49.900
6	Enzo Deligny	FRA	Van Amersfoort Racing	1:49.908
7	Alessandro Giusti	FRA	MP Motorsport	1:49.953
8	Freddie Slater	GBR	TRIDENT	1:49.972
9	Yevan David	LKA	AIX Racing	1:50.023
10	Ernesto Rivera	MEX	Campos Racing	1:50.032
11	Brando Badoer	ITA	Rodin Motorsport	1:50.114
12	Alex Powell	USA	PREMA Racing	1:50.133
13	Theophile Nael	FRA	Campos Racing	1:50.251
14	Jin Nakamura	JPN	Hitech	1:50.337
15	Hiyyu Yamakoshi	JPN	Van Amersfoort Racing	1:50.347
16	Fionn McLaughlin	IRL	Hitech	1:50.385

17	Bruno Del Pino	ESP	Van Amersfoort Racing	1:50.441
18	James Wharton	AUS	PREMA Racing	1:50.441
19	Noah Stromsted	DNK	TRIDENT	1:50.544
20	Matteo De Palo	ITA	TRIDENT	1:50.602
21	Jose Garfias	MEX	PREMA Racing	1:50.750
22	Kanato Le	JPN	ART Grand Prix	1:50.762
23	Maciej Gladysz	POL	ART Grand Prix	1:51.058
24	Nicola Lacorte	ITA	DAMS Lucas Oil	1:51.128
25	Woohyun Shin	KOR	Hitech	1:51.437
26	Niccolo Maccagnani	ITA	Rodin Motorsport	1:51.496
27	Fernando Barrichello	BRA	AIX Racing	1:51.585

NOT CLASSIFIED - 107% TIME 1:57.432

NC	N. Bhirombhakdi	THA	DAMS Lucas Oil	
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ENDS

About FIA Formula 3:

2019 marked the launch of the FIA Formula 3 Championship. An ambitious new project from the FIA and the former GP3 Series Organisation to form an official third rung of the Road to F1 ladder. Combining GP3 and European F3, the idea was to create a defined entry point for young and ambitious drivers to join the Formula 1 circus, and to give them the chance to take the path to join their heroes in the main paddock. With some of the world's best racing teams on board, and the hottest junior motor racing talent from across the globe filling their race seats, Formula 3 promised to be one of the most exciting championships in motorsport.

Designed as the perfect training ground for both F2, and ultimately, F1, our young drivers must showcase their skills both in speed and in tyre management, just like they will have to do when they move up the motorsport ladder. Notable F3 alumni include 2020 Champion Oscar Piastri, F1 rookie Arvid Lindblad and of course the F1 rookie class of 2024 that included F3 Champion Gabriel Bortoleto, Oliver Bearman, Franco Colapinto and Isack Hadjar. The Championship benefits from the FIA's excellence in the scrutineering of cars and the overseeing and running of events, while FOM's (Formula One Management) unparalleled expertise in broadcasting and marketing ensures that the Championship has a truly global reach and appeal. 2026 promises to be a thrilling spectacle from start to finish.