



PRESS RELEASE

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Nael beats Ugochukwu to pole as Campos seal Melbourne 1-2



Théophile Nael took the first Aramco Pole Position Award of the season, narrowly beating Campos Racing teammate Ugo Ugochukwu to take P1 in a dramatic Melbourne Qualifying.

With his final lap of the day, the French driver completed a 1:34.187 to fight off Ugochukwu

for pole by just 0.021s. This gives the Spanish team a 1-2 start for Sunday's Feature Race, with TRIDENT's Freddie Slater in third.

Ugochukwu had picked up where he left off in Free Practice, going to the top of the leaderboard with a 1:34.208 which put him 0.430s clear of Noah Stromsted in P2 after the first set of laps.

The drivers then pushed on for their second attempts, but before they could set their times the Red Flags were out with Matteo De Palo in the barrier at the exit of Turn 10.

With the TRIDENT car cleared, the teams sent their drivers out on to the track on new sets of tyres. Having set the fastest middle sector, Ugochukwu hit a polystyrene board and sustained front wing damage.

The Campos driver returned to the pitlane and stayed in P1, albeit with James Wharton cutting his lead to 0.413s – the Melbourne-native going up to second for PREMA Racing.

There were nine minutes left when the majority of drivers went out on track for their final push laps, all with a new set of tyres, with Nael waiting back in the pitlane.

Ugochukwu was back out, with his Campos fitted with a new front wing. But he did not improve, with Slater going up to second, 0.061s behind.

Several drivers were looking to push on late on, with Maciej Gladysz going up to third for ART Grand Prix.

He was demoted to P4 moments later as Nael, having come out of the pitlane later than the rest of the field, went to pole, beating his teammate, Ugochukwu by just 0.021s.

Nicola Lacorte then climbed up to fifth for DAMS Lucas Oil, ahead of Mattia Colnaghi, Taito Kato and home favourite Wharton. Brando Badoer was ninth for Rodin Motorsport ahead of Stromsted in P10.

Van Amersfoort Racing pairing Enzo Deligny and Bruno del Pino were in P11 and P12 respectively, giving the Dutch outfit a front row start for Saturday's Sprint Race, which is set to start 11:15 local time tomorrow morning.

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2026 FIA FORMULA 3 CHAMPIONSHIP – Round 1 Qualifying Provisional Classification

	DRIVER	LICENCE	TEAM	LAPTIME
1	Theophile Nael	FRA	Campos Racing	1:34.187
2	Ugo Ugochukwu	USA	Campos Racing	1:34.208
3	Freddie Slater	GBR	TRIDENT	1:34.269
4	Maciej Gladysz	POL	ART Grand Prix	1:34.454
5	Nicola Lacorte	ITA	DAMS Lucas Oil	1:34.533
6	Mattia Colnaghi	ARG	MP Motorsport	1:34.547
7	Taito Kato	JPN	ART Grand Prix	1:34.612
8	James Wharton	AUS	PREMA Racing	1:34.621
9	Brando Badoer	ITA	Rodin Motorsport	1:34.625
10	Noah Stromsted	DEN	TRIDENT	1:34.638
11	Enzo Deligny	FRA	Van Amersfoort Racing	1:34.644
12	Bruno Del Pino	ESP	Van Amersfoort Racing	1:34.648
13	Louis Sharp	NZL	PREMA Racing	1:34.686
14	Tuukka Taponen	FIN	MP Motorsport	1:34.741
15	Jin Nakamura	JPN	Hitech	1:34.759
16	Alessandro Giusti	FRA	MP Motorsport	1:34.817
17	Gerrard Xie	CHN	DAMS Lucas Oil	1:34.860
18	Fionn McLaughlin	IRL	Hitech	1:34.874
19	Pedro Clerot	BRA	Rodin Motorsport	1:34.879
20	Brad Benavides	USA	AIX Racing	1:34.933
21	Christian Ho	SGP	Rodin Motorsport	1:34.947
22	Hiyu Yamakoshi	JPN	Van Amersfoort Racing	1:34.955
23	Matteo De Palo	ITA	TRIDENT	1:35.113
24	Patrick Heuzenroeder	AUS	Campos Racing	1:35.156
25	Jose Garfias	MEX	PREMA Racing	1:35.307
26	Yevan David	SRI	AIX Racing	1:35.731
27	Kanato Le	JPN	ART Grand Prix	1:35.795
28	Woohyun Shin	KOR	Hitech	1:35.820
29	Nandhavud Bhirombhakdi	THA	DAMS Lucas Oil	1:36.161
30	Fernando Barrichello	BRA	AIX Racing	1:36.482

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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.

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