

Friday 30 June 2023

Fittipaldi fastest in Red-Flagged Spielberg opener

Enzo Fittipaldi kickstarted the second half of the season in fine form, as the Rodin Carlin driver topped the opening Practice session in Spielberg. Setting a 1:15.216 before the halfway point, the Red Bull junior remained at the top of the pile throughout. Two Red Flags denied the field a chance to improve late on, as Victor Martins took second, a tenth off the pace, ahead of Championship leader Frederik Vesti in third.

With track temperatures approaching 40°C at the Red Bull Ring, Roy Nissany set the initial pace. The PHM Racing by Charouz driver's 1:16.539 put him just 0.025s ahead of the Rodin Carlin duo of Fittipaldi and Zane Maloney.

Théo Pourchaire went to the top of the times on his second flying lap on the soft rubber, only for his 1:16.124 to be immediately beaten by ART Grand Prix teammate Martins. Breaking into the 1:15s, the Alpine junior and Fittipaldi began to trade fastest laps, before Fittipaldi put himself 0.184s clear at the 26-minute mark with a 1:15.216.

Ahead of the round, Vesti stressed the importance of Free Practice setting the foundation for his weekend and the #7 PREMA Racing driver put that into action, shooting up the order from P18 to P3.

Focus then switched to building up the mileage at the midway point, with lap counts steadily ticking up to the late teens. However, that didn't stop the drivers pushing to the limit and beyond. MP Motorsport's Dennis Hauger had a slide out of the final corner, losing both that attempt and his following one.

The first Red Flag was thrown with 11 minutes left on the clock after Pourchaire spun out at Turn 4. The Frenchman dropped a wheel into the gravel, sending him into a pirouette and he was unable to restart the car.

Green flag conditions resumed with six minutes to go. As the field jostled for track position behind him, Invicta Virtuosi Racing's Amaury Cordeel spun off at Turn 1. With less than four minutes remaining, Practice was red flagged once again and did not resume.

Hitech Pulse-Eight's Isack Hadjar finished the session in fourth ahead of fellow Red Bull junior Ayumu Iwasa. Kush Maini secured the sixth-fastest time ahead of Arthur Leclerc, Hauger, Jack Doohan and Clément Novalak, who rounded out the top 10 for Trident.

Fittipaldi will be looking to repeat his performance this afternoon when Qualifying commences at 15:55 local time.

2023 FIA FORMULA 2 CHAMPIONSHIP – ROUND 8 FREE PRACTICE PROVISIONAL CLASSIFICATION

	DRIVER	LICENCE	TEAM	LAPTIME
1	Enzo Fittipaldi	BRA	Rodin Carlin	1:15.216
2	Victor Martins	FRA	ART Grand Prix	1:15.400
3	Frederik Vesti	DNK	PREMA Racing	1:15.608
4	Isack Hadjar	FRA	Hitech Pulse-Eight	1:15.639
5	Ayumu Iwasa	JPN	DAMS	1:15.718
6	Kush Maini	IND	Campos Racing	1:15.785
7	Arthur Leclerc	MCO	DAMS	1:15.791
8	Dennis Hauger	NOR	MP Motorsport	1:15.802
9	Jack Doohan	AUS	Invicta Virtuosi Racing	1:15.856
10	Clément Novalak	FRA	Trident	1:15.862
11	Oliver Bearman	GBR	PREMA Racing	1:15.865
12	Richard Verschoor	NLD	Van Amersfoort Racing	1:15.878
13	Amaury Cordeel	BEL	Invicta Virtuosi Racing	1:15.882
14	Zane Maloney	BRB	Rodin Carlin	1:15.901
15	Ralph Boschung	CHE	Campos Racing	1:15.906
16	Théo Pourchaire	FRA	ART Grand Prix	1:15.927
17	Jehan Daruvala	IND	MP Motorsport	1:15.928
18	Roman Staněk	CZE	Trident	1:16.024
19	Jak Crawford	USA	Hitech Pulse-Eight	1:16.034
20	Roy Nissany	ISR	PHM Racing by Charouz	1:16.117
21	Juan Manuel Correa	USA	Van Amersfoort Racing	1:16.224
22	Brad Benavides	USA	PHM Racing by Charouz	1:16.491

ENDS

About the FIA Formula 2 Championship™

THE F2 FIA FORMULA 2 CHAMPIONSHIP LOGO, FIA FORMULA 2 CHAMPIONSHIP, FIA FORMULA 2, FORMULA 2, F2 AND RELATED MARKS ARE TRADEMARKS OF THE FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE AND USED EXCLUSIVELY UNDER LICENCE. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.