

RSC Mucke Motorsport dominate free practice

The GP3 Series was officially underway in Barcelona this afternoon with the first 30 minute practice session of the 2010 inaugural season.

Dutch driver Renger van der Zande put his early stamp on the Series by dominating almost from beginning to end in today's opening free practice session at Circuit de Catalunya. The RSC Mucke Motorsport driver posted a time of 1:38.664 and finished just ahead of team mate Nigel Melker, an impressive showing from the Ralf Schumacher led race team.

It certainly wasn't plain sailing for the Dutch driver. With Gutierrez hot on his heels and just six minutes remaining, van der Zande was shown a black and orange flag for a broken mirror he picked up earlier in the session. But, despite a last-gasp effort from Gutierrez, the Mexican was unable to match the flying Dutchman and had to settle for third.

With fresh rubber on his Status GP car Robert Wickens moved towards the top of the time sheets and finished the session in fourth spot posting a time of 1:38.974. Four tenths of a second behind Wickens was Manor Racing driver James Jakes, followed by his teammate and GP3 newcomer Adrian Quaife-Hobbs. Despite ending his session prematurely deep in the gravel after just five laps, Addax Team driver Mirko Bortolotti managed to finish the session in seventh spot. Eighth was the Italian's teammate Pedro Sanchez Lopez. ART's Alexander Rossi had an afternoon to forget, ending his session out on track and ninth in the final timings. Rounding out the top ten was Dean Smith for Carlin.

MW Arden's top driver was Michael Christensen in eleventh just ahead of the newly signed Addax Team driver Felipe Guimaraes. Simon Trummer recovered from an early bump in the pits with his teammate to bring his GP3 car home in thirteenth. Atech CRS GP driver Oakes only took part in session briefly after mechanical issues meant he failed to finish the first lap.

The GP3 action continues bright and early tomorrow morning for Qualifying at 08:45 local time.

Pos	Car #	Name	Team	Best	Laps
1	11	Renger Van der Zande	RSC Mucke Motorsport	1:38.664	14
2	10	Nigel Melker	RSC Mucke Motorsport	1:38.867	15
3	2	Esteban Gutierrez	ART Grand Prix	1:38.918	14
4	4	Robert Wickens	Status Grand Prix	1:38.974	13
5	7	James Jakes	Manor Racing	1:39.044	11
6	9	Adrian Quaife-Hobbs	Manor Racing	1:39.106	15
7	19	Mirko Bortolotti	Addax Team	1:39.181	5
8	18	Pedro Sanchez Lopez	Addax Team	1:39.195	14
9	1	Alexander Rossi	ART Grand Prix	1:39.274	13
10	15	Dean Smith	Carlin	1:39.297	15
11	20	Michael Christensen	MW Arden	1:39.412	12
12	17	Felipe Guimaraes	Addax Team	1:39.431	15

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13	24	Simon Trummer	Jenzer Motorsport	1:39.445	15
14	12	Tobias Hegewald	RSC Mucke Motorsport	1:39.477	16
15	6	Daniel Morad	Status Grand Prix	1:39.483	14
16	28	Jean-Eric Vergne	Tech 1 Racing	1:39.561	13
17	21	Miki Monras	MW Arden	1:39.583	14
18	25	Nigel Muller	Jenzer Motorsport	1:39.601	16
19	8	Rio Haryanto	Manor Racing	1:39.727	13
20	23	Pal Varhaug	Jenzer Motorsport	1:39.788	14
21	14	Joef Newgarden	Carlin	1:40.063	10
22	26	Doru Sechelariu	Tech 1 Racing	1:40.176	13
23	31	Vittorio Ghirelli	Atech CRS GP	1:40.176	16
24	22	Leonardo Cordeiro	MW Arden	1:40.204	15
25	16	Lucas Foresti	Carlin	1:40.440	15
26	3	Pedro Nunes	ART Grand Prix	1:40.550	11
27	5	Ivan Lukashovich	Status Grand Prix	1:40.754	14
28	29	Patrick Reiterer	Atech CRS GP	1:41.351	12
29	27	Daniel Juncadella	Tech 1 Racing	1:41.665	11
30	30	Oliver Oakes	Atech CRS GP	NC	0