



GP79's at Interlagos

By

Gabriel Garivaldis

After the excitement at Mexico, the Interlagos Grand Prix was definitely not one to dismiss as anything less fascinating. The Ligiers were again to be the strongest force with the rest of the pack struggling for grip but definitely still in the mix for good results.

Qualifying just showed the dominance of the Ligiers yet again with Daniel Curby claiming his first pole position less than a tenth ahead of rookie driver Peter Koukouletas. Peter Junek would be 3rd and John Bolton Jr in 4th place. The first of the non-Ligiers was again Jay Boving in the Ferrari T3 with his teammate Steve Lewis right behind him.

Koukouletas was however penalised due to a minor irregularity at the conclusion of qualifying and unfortunately had to start right at the back of the field, just behind Gabriel Garivaldis who missed the session due to hardware problems.

As the lights went out Curby did not get off the line very well at all and was swamped by Junek, Bolton Jr and even Barney Bedelis who started in 5th. Martin Davis retired after not even getting through the first chicane with an engine blow up, causing Ross J MacGregor to run into him and go off track. MacGregor seemed to possibly endure some chassis damage from the incident, as Boving only marginally escaped getting involved too.

Starting from 18th Garivaldis got an absolutely brilliant start and ferociously drove through the pack, gaining 10 places into 8th position after only the Senna S chicane and then later taking 7th from Adrian Calabria with a desperate move into turn 3. They touched in that incident but luckily no damage, however Calabria dropped a place to Boving too. Bedelis would go wide in turn 3 and Curby took 3rd place off him.

As they cross the line Peter Junek leads with John Bolton Jr in 2nd, Daniel Curby in 3rd, followed by Bedelis, Lewis, Paul McFarlane, Garivaldis, Boving, Calabria, Brett Mc Crohan, Koukouletas who passes Ed Cullen for 12th on the straight, Mark Wendt, Greg Longfield, Troy Rosenberg in 15th, Peter Latham, Pat Phillips and in last place Ross MacGregor who seems to be struggling with his FW06 after the incident with Davis. MacGregor pulls into the pits and retires on lap 2.

Mark Wendt makes a good move on Ed Cullen into turn 1, looked like a bit of a wild lunge locking his brakes but he pulled it off nicely.



Meanwhile MacFarlane is attacking Lewis and makes a great pass into

Laranja. The other major battle is between Boving and Garivaldis. Boving would want to get past the Williams driver as soon as possible after what happened at Mexico, but has also Calabria to contend with who is pestering him from behind. Boving attempts a pass into turn 3 however cannot make it stick.

Peter Koukouletas is making ground on this pack and joins the battle for 7th between Garivaldis, Boving and Calabria with Mc Crohan soon after also joining in the fun. Koukouletas makes a good move on Calabria on the final turn and is now right up on Boving, as Mc Crohan is also looking to get past Calabria.

Greg Longfield, in a battle with Peter Latham further back, makes it stick but exiting the turn and entering the straight he loses control and crashes into the barrier! Latham did very well to avoid him. Longfield is the 3rd driver from the race now with only 3 laps completed.

Garivaldis and Boving engage in a wheel to wheel battle in the midfield of the track, right through to the main straight! Garivaldis prevails into turn 1, and then has to opt for the inside line into turn 3 which again

proves a good move keeping Boving behind. Finally on lap 6 Boving is able to pass with a very late braking attempt into turn 3 and makes it stick, a great move, Garivaldis is stunned by it and cannot avoid Peter Koukouletas in also getting through, who also passes Boving a few turns later. What an incredible battle this has been in the midfield, for 7th place!

Lap 7, Junek still leads with a healthy margin over Bolton Jr and Curby. Further back and losing ground to the top 3, Bedelis is in 4th, as MacFarlane who earlier passed Lewis is starting to break clear of him.

As everyone begins to settle into their positions and the incidents and overtakes seem to come to temporary halt, a strange incident occurs between Rosenberg and Phillips. Rosenberg went off the track approaching the final turn, as he got back on the black stuff to take the final turn, Phillips comes in sideways and swipes him! Rosenberg has to pit for repairs, Phillips seems to be OK as he continues on.

On lap 10, Koukouletas has now closed up on Lewis and is trying to get past, he takes the inside into turn 1 but gets it all wrong and spins!

Luckily for him he recovers reasonably well and only loses positions to Boving and Garivaldis, a few turns later he is back ahead of Garivaldis and hounding down on Boving.

Up front there is no change in positions although Curby is slowly closing in on Bolton Jr. Bedelis is still in a lonely 4th place. In the midfield Mc Crohan has now caught up to Garivaldis and applying pressure. However on lap 14 exiting the first chicane he loses the rear end and puts it into the wall! He is unable to get the car going again, and retires on the spot.

Lap 15 and Boving is now up on his teammate, and passes Lewis into turn 3. He then starts closing in on Paul MacFarlane. There is a nice little battle happening for 10th place between Mark Wendt and Adrian Calabria, the FW06 driver is doing a great job to keep the Ferrari T3 behind him at this point. Koukouletas has now passed Garivaldis again for 8th place.

As Boving caught MacFarlane it didn't take long before he pressured him into an error, as MacFarlane goes wide through Laranja, Jay Boving

goes through and Lewis closes in for more pressure on the Ligier driver.

Lap 19 now and finally someone gives Bedelis some company, that being the flying Jay Boving. He seems to be on a mission this race after the error in Mexico which cost him some definite points. At this point the leaders start approaching backmarkers, and it seems the top 3 are going through heavy traffic, will anyone be able to profit from this? Junek seemed to lose out a bit and Bolton Jr closes in, Curby sitting pretty in 3rd.

The battle for 10th wages on as Calabria makes a good move into turn 3 on Wendt, but Wendt refuses to give up and passes him back a few turns later! It's an intense battle, as Ed Cullen also now joins in the game for 10th place. Finally on the following lap Calabria makes a move on Wendt into turn 1 and holds it this time.

The battle between Bedelis and Boving for 4th place intensifies with MacFarlane and Lewis also joining in. This really looks great, 4 drivers all tussling and fighting hard, who will be first to crack under the pressure?



Boving gets by Bedelis into the final turn as Lewis also gets by MacFarlane, but then goes wide and MacFarlane takes the spot back. Bedelis passes Boving back but no! He goes off the track and he brushes the wall, as he rejoins he seems to possibly have incurred some damage. Boving is powering on and just as it appears he will break clear from this group behind him, the unthinkable happens. He spins off the track and parks the car! What happened? It seemed his engine just cut off, or is it an electrical problem? A shame for him as he needs as many points he can get, and after a strong drive he joins the list of retired drivers. Trouble lurks at the front. Peter Junek has spun and drops to 3rd place! Bolton resumes the lead but before too long he also spins! Down to 3rd he goes, Junek now in 2nd and

Curby after not having to fight too hard is in the lead. Lap 23 and Koukouletas overtakes Lewis for what is now 5th place, as Garivaldis is slowly catching Bedelis in 7th. Before you know it though, Garivaldis retires! A minor connection glitch is enough to end his day. Further back Cullen is now attacking Mark Wendt in the lone FW06. By lap 25 Cullen is able to get past and looks to be in a secure 8th place.

Peter Koukouletas has been moving up the field from last on the grid and now has his target set on Paul MacFarlane. He has a good run on him on the straight, MacFarlane holds the inside, Koukouletas takes the outside and with a clean move dispatches MacFarlane taking 4th place off him. Not long after, MacFarlane spins and loses 5th place to Lewis, but almost immediately after Lewis also spins. MacFarlane is back in 5th! Up front Peter Junek makes another off track excursion and sees John Bolton storm past to take 2nd place.

Lap 30 and Troy Rosenberg spins into turn 1, he is in a dangerous position. Calabria is closing in; will he see him and get around him? Even worse news, Calabria has lost the rear end

and slid out entering the turn, before even seeing Rosenberg! They touch, but are able to continue on their way. Although it does appear they both may have been affected by some damage to their cars.



The next lap Rosenberg is back in the pits again for more repairs, it has not been his day today.

Lap 36, Curby leads and looks in great form, Bolton Jr is 2nd and Junek still 3rd, Koukouletas is in 4th, Lewis is in 5th with Bedelis slowly catching him in 6th. Calabria has now gone very wide into turn 3 and seems to be struggling with his car since the incident with Rosenberg, Pat Phillips is able to take advantage of this and take 10th place off him. Lap 39 is a decisive one, as Bolton Jr makes his

2nd mistake of the race and drops again back down to 3rd behind Junek. We also have a major incident, Paul MacFarlane has crashed entering the main straight, a similar incident to Longfield earlier, his day is done!

The only major battle now is between Pat Phillips and Mark Wendt. Phillips seems to have an edge on him and looking for a way past, Wendt holds him off. Daniel Curby is on his final lap now, he is understandably cruising, and on the final straight he powers through for a great victory! Peter Junek comes through for another 2nd place and John Bolton takes 3rd. 4th place man is Peter Koukouletas with a strong drive from last on the grid, Lewis who survived Bedelis' late surge takes another points finish in 5th. Bedelis takes his first points finish of the series in 6th. 7th place goes to Ed Cullen who after an early struggle he seemed to make a lot of ground, unfortunately though he is just out of the points. Mark Wendt takes 8th position after successfully holding off Pat Phillips in 9th, Calabria takes 10th, and Peter Latham who has a lonely race finishes in 11th, ahead of Paul MacFarlane who was still classified as finishing the race after his late crash. Troy Rosenberg comes through in an

unlucky 13th, 4 laps down and having done 3 pit stops.



But the man of the race is definitely Daniel Curby. He did not put a foot wrong, while his competitors around him fumbled he stayed focused and took a fantastic victory. He now is in equal 1st place in the driver's championship on 13 points, with his teammate John Bolton Jr too. Peter Junek is a point down with 12 points.

We now move onto Kyalami, where it is expected the Ferrari drivers will be stronger, will it be the end of the Ligier dominance? Or will they continue to outmuscle their opponents? It's something we will have to wait and see, thanks for joining us this race, we hope you enjoyed it!