



CRAWFORD PLACES STRONG SECOND IN F2 OPENING SPRINT RACE AT BAHRAIN

18-year-old Texan ran third for DAMS Lucas Oil in Feature Race before mechanical issue

SAKHIR, Bahrain (3 March 2024) – Jak Crawford opened his second season in the FIA Formula 2 Championship with an impressive second-place finish in Friday's Sprint Race at the Bahrain International Circuit. It was the sixth-career podium finish for the American Formula 1 hopeful.

The 18-year-old Texan was racing for the first time with DAMS Lucas Oil, and also driving his inaugural event in the all-new F2 Dallara race car with its distinctive curved rear wing. Following his impressive showing in the Sprint Race, Crawford was running third in Saturday's Feature Race when his car suddenly quit during a routine pit stop.



The new Aston Martin Driver Development pilot was impressive in pre-season official testing in Bahrain, running second in the final session at the three-day test. Crawford was sixth-fastest in Thursday morning's opening practice but didn't make the most of his first push lap effort in afternoon qualifying.

With F2 inverting the top 10 for the Sprint Race, Crawford started on the pole. Getting a clean start, he led the opening seven laps before falling to second in a spirited battle for the spot before moving into an unchallenged position as he preserved his tires on the final 23 laps on the challenging 3.363-mile circuit.



"We had a positive Sprint Race," he said. "The speed was strong and it was great to start the season on the podium. For sure, we wanted to win, but we just didn't have the pace compared to the winner. I struggled a bit early with the balance. Eventually, I realized I wasn't going to catch the leader, so then I had to focus on

making sure I had enough in the tires to fend off any attack from third. I was trying not to battle too hard, I just tried to keep it cool as much as possible and not push too hard."

For Saturday's 32-lap Feature, Crawford dove to the inside at lights-out and gained two positions in the first turn. He barely avoided an incident, and was up to seventh when the race was slowed for a safety car intervention.

He made a pass to get sixth on the ensuing restart, and made passes for positions five and four over the following laps. He took third when a competitor he was pressuring pitted on lap 16. On the following lap, Crawford pitted but his car lost drive and refused to re-fire – ending his race. Post race it was discovered the freak culprit being a blown ring in the drive shaft.



“I had a clutch failure at the start of the race, so I was actually doomed to retire once I made my pit stop because my clutch was no longer working,” said Crawford. “I had a very good start, but that was actually the end of my race because that’s when my clutch broke. Luckily, I was able to do half the race and show I could fight at the front, but it’s hard not to get the points. We were looking very good at the beginning for another top-three. We know we have good pace and we can take that with us for the rest of the year.”

Having made the rapid acclimation to a new car and a new team with a promising opening weekend, Crawford has his sights on continuing to develop with his new team, Lucas Oil DAMS.

“We came up to speed really well, and I feel very comfortable with my new team,” Crawford said. “They have a good understanding of the new car, but still there are so many things to learn. We were definitely up there, and I think we were comfortably a top-three car in both races. Then in the Feature Race I was on for another podium – just like the Sprint Race – but I had a clutch failure. In the end, the pace was really good all weekend long, across free practice right through the races.”

There will be only a few days rest before the next event, set for March 6-8 at the Jeddah Corniche Circuit in Saudi Arabia.



“I think to start the season is always good to start high, so you are not chasing results throughout the season,” he said. “It’s only the first round – 13 to go - and we hope to continue our momentum this weekend,” Crawford said. “It’s a brand-new car, and the only track we tested at was Bahrain. It

will be interesting to see how it will work when we come to a brand-new track. I think we will have a very good package when we arrive at Jeddah on Wednesday.”

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Additional information:

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<https://www.fiaformula2.com/>

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