

# PALMER TAKES GP2 SERIES POINTS LEAD

Briton thrilled with strong start to year after a fighting win in Bahrain



Palmer: points leader



Palmer battled to race two victory

## CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

GP2 Series  
After two of 22 rounds

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Jolyon Palmer (GBR)	38
2	Julian Leal (COL)	28
3	Stoffel Vandoorne (BEL)	25
4	Simon Trummer (SUI)	18
5	Felipe Nasr (BRA)	12
—	Stefano Colletti (MON)	12

### By Rob Ladbrook

**Jolyon Palmer reckons that he's in good shape to defend his GP2 Series points lead throughout the European leg of the championship after a winning start to the campaign in Bahrain last weekend.**

Palmer grabbed pole position, a third place and victory in Sunday's Sprint event to head the points table after the first weekend of the Formula One feeder series. Palmer showed impressive pace all weekend with the French DAMS team, claiming pole for race one ahead of series newcomer Stoffel Vandoorne, a McLaren development driver.

Palmer got a poor getaway, dropping to sixth by the first turn, but recovered to

finish third while Belgian Vandoorne won his maiden race. Palmer started sixth in the reversed grid second race on Sunday, but vaulted up to second at the start. The Briton then drafted past Simon Trummer for the lead before defending to the flag. Vandoorne dropped to 11th at the start before losing his front wing in a clash with Daniel de Jong. He wound up 22nd.

The results hand Palmer a ten-point lead over Julian Leal, with Vandoorne third, a further three adrift. The bulk of this year's championship takes place in Europe, with the next rounds in Barcelona on May 10/11.

"I'm absolutely delighted, it's almost more than I could have hoped for," said Palmer. "My start in race two really made up for what happened in race one and when I got ahead I drove conservatively to look

after the tyres. You never know if the guys behind are saving or struggling on theirs so I wanted to keep a lot in-hand.

"We worked really hard on the balance of the car, which will help for the rest of the season. I expected to be fighting at the front because we've shown the pace in testing. DAMS did a great job.

"There will be some new challenges in Barcelona. Usually we get some testing there beforehand but it's different this year so practice will be very important to get things right in just 45 minutes. But the car feels great and we've shown our pace. We found a big step and hopefully we'll be strong for the European season."

● British racer Adrian Quaife-Hobbs was tenth and sixth for Rapax and Jon Lancaster 17th and 15th for MP.