

= 2010 São Paulo Indy 300 =

The 2010 São Paulo Indy 300 was the first race of the 2010 IZOD IndyCar Series season . The race took place on March 14 , on the 2 @. @ 536 @- @ mile (4 @. @ 081 km) temporary street circuit in São Paulo , Brazil , and was telecast by Versus in the United States . Originally scheduled for 190 @. @ 2 miles (306 @. @ 1 km) , the race was shortened to 154 @. @ 696 miles (248 @. @ 959 km) due to a two @- @ hour time limit brought about by an extended red @- @ flag period due to heavy rain .

The race was won by Australian driver Will Power for Team Penske . Power was making his race return after an incident during a practice session at the 2009 Indy Grand Prix of Sonoma , which left him with two broken vertebrae in his back . Second place went to Ryan Hunter @- @ Reay , who was making his first start for Andretti Autosport , and third place went to another returnee , A. J. Foyt Enterprises ' Vitor Meira . Meira was making his first start since suffering similar injuries to Power , during the 2009 Indianapolis 500 .

Four drivers made their IndyCar Series débuts in the race . Former Formula One driver Takuma Sato , Firestone Indy Lights graduates Ana Beatriz and Mario Romancini , and Atlantic Championship title contender Simona de Silvestro were all classified outside the top ten at the conclusion of the race , with de Silvestro leading four laps during the race .

= = Report = =

= = = Background = = =

Plans for an IndyCar Series race in Brazil were confirmed on 25 November 2009 , with authorities in São Paulo and the Indy Racing League agreeing to a deal for the city to host the series . Race details for the São Paulo Indy 300 were announced on 25 January 2010 . It was the first American open @- @ wheel race in the country since the Rio 200 at Jacarepaguá in 2000 . Despite a lengthy distance to travel from most team bases , the event promoters offered each team a six @- @ figure sum of money , as well as paying for all expenses . A total of seven Brazilian drivers would compete in the race , including Ana Beatriz , Hélio Castroneves , Tony Kanaan , Raphael Matos , Vitor Meira , Mario Moraes and Mario Romancini . Of those seven , four drivers ? Beatriz , Castroneves , Moraes and Romancini ? are natives of São Paulo . The race weekend was scheduled to have two practice sessions on Saturday morning , qualifications on Saturday afternoon with the race on Sunday afternoon . In preparation for the race weekend , the public roads that made up areas of the track were closed off just before midnight on Friday evening .

= = = Practice and qualifying = = =

In the first practice session , Chip Ganassi Racing driver Scott Dixon recorded the fastest lap , ahead of Team Penske 's Ryan Briscoe , the Andretti Autosport car of Tony Kanaan and Briscoe 's teammate Will Power . Due to the slippery nature of the circuit , drivers were caught out and ended up inflicting damage to their cars . Defending series champion Dario Franchitti ventured down the escape road before damaging his suspension against the Turn 8 wall . He ended the session in seventeenth position . Other drivers to hit the wall included Romancini and Milka Duno . Incidents continued in the second practice session , with no less than five drivers spinning or making contact with the outside retaining walls . The session saw the same top four drivers as the first session .

Having observed the sessions and received feedback from the drivers and the teams about the circuit conditions , the series ' president of competition Brian Barnhart and course designer Tony Cotman opted to postpone the qualification session to race morning , with the running of a third practice session and a Sunday morning warm @- @ up instead of it . Power topped this extra session , ahead of Kanaan and Ryan Hunter @- @ Reay , with Justin Wilson ? a new arrival at Dreyer & Reinbold Racing ? in fourth position . After the session , track officials started grinding

down the concrete in order to provide a track surface that was suitable for racing the following day . Hunter @-@ Reay topped the Sunday morning warmup before qualifying , setting the fastest lap time by over half a second ahead of second @-@ year driver Mike Conway in another Dreyer & Reinbold car .

Qualifying followed the usual road and street course system , with the field being split into two groups . In the first group of twelve runners , Wilson topped the session , 0 @.@ 46 seconds ahead of the HVM Racing machine of Switzerland 's Simona de Silvestro ? one of four female drivers in the race ? with Alex Tagliani in third position . Other drivers to make it into the second session of qualifying were Power , Takuma Sato and Raphael Matos . The remaining twelve drivers took part in the second group , with Hunter @-@ Reay topping his second session of the day . Hélio Castroneves , Briscoe , Franchitti , Dixon and Kanaan were the other competitors in the top six , and thus progressed to the second round of qualifying . In the Top 12 , Power recorded the fastest lap time , holding off the British pair Wilson and Franchitti . Hunter @-@ Reay , Kanaan and Tagliani finished between fourth and sixth , and would be the other half of the drivers that progressed to the Fast Six . Franchitti saved his best lap of qualifying to the last possible moment , taking his thirteenth career IndyCar Series pole position , and his 24th in American open @-@ wheel racing . Tagliani took second on the grid , on his début with the FAZZT Race Team . Wilson took third ahead of Hunter @-@ Reay , Power and Kanaan .

= = = Race = = =

Minutes before the race start , reports of rain falling on the track caused the start to be delayed by around ten minutes . Race control eventually deemed the race to be dry enough to be called a dry race , thus the rain tyres were not necessary , but would be required later in the race . Dario Franchitti and Alex Tagliani led the field to the line , with the circuit still being dusty from the previous night 's repair work . Dust clouds engulfed the start @-@ finish straight , blinding many of the midfield runners . The top five runners managed to negotiate the first chicane cleanly , while behind , half a dozen cars were involved in a first @-@ corner crash . Takuma Sato misjudged his braking into the first corner and clipped the rear of Will Power 's Penske machine , which spun him into Scott Dixon . Hélio Castroneves could not avoid running into Dixon 's stationary car at the first corner . After many drivers went down the escape road to avoid being involved in the crash , a separate accident took place between Marco Andretti and Mario Moraes . Moraes lost control of his KV Racing Technology car behind Ana Beatriz , hit Andretti and became airborne before coming to rest across the cockpit of Andretti 's car . It took several minutes to extricate Andretti from his damaged machinery , but was uninjured and very critical of Moraes ' driving . The crash resulted in a seven @-@ lap caution period , and eliminated Sato , Moraes and Andretti from the race . Dixon and Castroneves both recovered to the pit lane to repair damage .

Franchitti led the field to the restart on lap eight , ahead of Tagliani , Hunter @-@ Reay (up from fourth) , Kanaan (up from sixth) , and Matos , who advanced seven positions while avoiding the mêlée at turn one . Franchitti became only the third driver in series history to lead the final lap of one season and the first lap of the next , having won the championship by winning the 2009 Firestone Indy 300 at Homestead @-@ Miami Speedway . The top five remained the same until lap 15 when Dan Wheldon passed the De Ferran Luczo Dragon Racing car of Matos for fifth place . Hunter @-@ Reay took second place from Tagliani into the final hairpin on lap 19 , before Milka Duno brought out the second caution of the afternoon on lap 22 by nudging her Dale Coyne Racing car into the wall at turn four . The entire field except for Simona de Silvestro headed to pit road for the first of two scheduled pit stops . De Silvestro became the first rookie driver since Graham Rahal in 2008 to lead at least one lap on début .

When the race returned to green flag conditions on lap 26 , de Silvestro held the lead ahead of Franchitti , Hunter @-@ Reay and Kanaan with Tagliani in fifth position . De Silvestro kept the lead for a further two laps , with Hunter @-@ Reay 's Andretti Autosport car moving ahead of Franchitti on lap 27 , repeating his move on Tagliani on the defending series champion . Not long after , Hunter @-@ Reay moved ahead of de Silvestro as the pair were under braking for turn five . Hunter

@-@ Reay nearly lost control of his car as his car bottomed out on the straight , with lifted the car slightly airborne . Franchitti further demoted the young Swiss driver to third , moving ahead on lap 29 . Behind them , Hideki Mutoh hit Vitor Meira which saw his retirement from the race , and Wheldon hit the back of Tagliani which sent him into Kanaan , resulting in the retirement of the Canadian driver . Rain started falling once again , more heavily than before and much of the field pitted to change from dry @-@ weather tyres to wet @-@ weather ones . Alex Lloyd aquaplaned into the wall in the second Dale Coyne car , bringing out the caution for the third time , and with rain falling relentlessly , series officials brought out the red flag to allow the weather conditions to pass . After a 36 @-@ minute red flag delay , cars returned to the circuit with slicks being the choice of tyre for the track , despite a few wet patches remaining on the circuit . Some cars gambled on wets thinking that the circuit would not dry quickly enough for their tyres to drop off compared to the slicks .

As the green flag flew on lap 38 , Chip Ganassi Racing held a one ? two with Franchitti leading Dixon , with two of the Dreyer & Reinbold cars ? Conway and Wilson ? holding third and fourth places , with the only remaining KV car of E. J. Viso holding fifth , the Venezuelan disposing of Castroneves just after the restart . Realising that the gamble had backfired , the lead quintet pitted on laps 41 and 42 , which cycled Hunter @-@ Reay back through to the lead . Power made an error which allowed Matos and Briscoe to move ahead of him . Briscoe moved ahead of Matos on lap 45 and set off in chase of Hunter @-@ Reay . Four laps later , the Australian was on the American 's tail , and moved ahead after an outbraking move into the final hairpin . Hunter @-@ Reay immediately regained the position into the first chicane on Lap 51 , before Briscoe sealed the place with a similar final hairpin move at the end of the lap . Briscoe 's luck would run out , however , when he overcooked it into turn five on lap 54 , and nudged the barriers with his nose assembly , bringing out the fourth and final caution of the race . The time limit meant that only six laps remained at the restart , with Hunter @-@ Reay leading Power , Matos , Meira and Wheldon . Meira soon passed his fellow Brazilian for third on Lap 57 , and began to chase down the lead duo , who had changed positions after Power used the slipstream to overtake Hunter @-@ Reay into the final corner . Power moved away from Hunter @-@ Reay in the final laps , taking the chequered flag to cap his return from injury with a victory . Hunter @-@ Reay took his best result for a year in second , with another injury returnee , Meira , finishing third . Matos was fourth , holding off seven other cars , as fourth to eleventh were covered by 3 @-@ 49 seconds at the race 's conclusion . Wheldon led those seven in fifth , ahead of the Ganassis , Conway , Castroneves , Kanaan and Wilson . Viso finished twelfth ahead of top rookie Beatriz , a recovering Briscoe , Danica Patrick and de Silvestro , the final two off the lead lap .

= = Classification = =

= = = Qualifying = = =

All cars were split into two groups of twelve , with the fastest six from each group going through to the " Top 12 " session . In this session , the fastest six runners progressed to the " Firestone Fast Six " . The fastest driver in the final session claimed pole , with the rest of the runners lining up in session order , regardless of qualifying times . (Fast Six from 1 @-@ 6 , Top 12 from 7 @-@ 12 and Round 1 from 13 @-@ 24 , with Group 1 drivers occupying the odd @-@ numbered grid positions , and Group 2 drivers occupying the even @-@ numbered grid positions) .

= = = Race = = =

= = Championship standings after the race = =