



Slater excluded from Race 1, Yamakoshi claims first victory

At Imola, Prema's Britishman is out of Race 1 final classification after being first at the finish line, the win was claimed by the poleman Yamakoshi

Imola, Saturday, June 1st, 2024 – The first race of the Italian F.4 Championship at the Autodromo Enzo e Dino Ferrari in Imola, for the second round of the 2024 season, was spectacular and full of excitement. The circuit, which just two weeks ago hosted F1 battles, once again welcomed the single-seaters, with 38 Tatuus Formula 4 cars battling through the treacherous Romagna corners. Further upheavals occurred post-race when Freddie Slater, first to cross the finish line after overtaking poleman Yamakoshi, was excluded from the Race 1 classification, following the Stewards' decision No. 28 published on the official notice board. This was due to an irregularity found with the front wing of his car during technical inspections.

The Race

In the first lap, several successive contacts caused the retirements of Ethan Ischer (Jenzer Motorsport), Kamal Mrad (PHM AIX Racing), Kean Nakamura Berta (Prema Racing), Matus Ryba (Jenzer Motorsport), Enzo Yeh (R-ace GP), and Jan Koller (BVM Racing). Capitalizing on the restart after the resulting Safety Car was Freddie Slater. The British driver from Prema Racing, who had dominated round 1 in Misano, jumped from P2 to take the lead, overtaking poleman Yamakoshi. From there, Slater controlled the race until the end. However, his exclusion from the Race 1 classification handed the victory back to Yamakoshi. The extremely fast Japanese driver from Van Amersfoort Racing had maintained his position even after a second Safety Car, called due to the stops of Nathaniel Berreby (Maffi Racing), Everett Stack (PHM AIX Racing), and Enea Frey (Jenzer Motorsport), defending against the attacks of Akshay Bohra (US Racing) and Dion Gowda (Prema Racing). He then showcased his pace, setting the fastest lap of Race 1. Thus, he secured his first victory of the season, with two more pole positions to try to capitalize on in Sunday's races.

Second was Akshay Bohra, the New York driver with Singaporean roots, who had also attempted to climb positions during the second restart but was blocked, having to "settle" for his second podium of the season. Third place went to Indian driver Dion Gowda from Prema Racing, who delivered an exciting performance as he attacked to secure his first podium of the year, in a weekend where he showcased front-runner pace. Fourth was Australian Jack Beeton from Van Amersfoort Racing. In fifth place overall, Tomass Stolcermanis, the Latvian driver from Prema Racing, claimed victory in the Rookie class, moving closer to the top of the Rookie standings, aided by the retirement of Alex Powell (forced to pit after damaging his front wing in a battle with Gustav Jonsson). It was a tough race for Stolcermanis, who had to face track conditions still unfamiliar in the Championship, requiring all his skill. Sixth in Race 1 was Maxim Rehm from US Racing, who thus climbed to the second step of the Rookie podium. The German put in an excellent performance, making the most of the restarts after race neutralizations. Seventh was Swedish Gustav Jonsson from Van Amersfoort Racing, involved in spectacular battles during the race, including the one that cost Alex Powell his front wing.



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Eighth place went to Rashid Al Dhaheri from Prema Racing, who continues to accumulate valuable points for himself and his team. Closing the Top 10 were Australian Gianmarco Pradel from US Racing and Emanuele Olivieri. The Italian driver from AKM Motorsport, competing in one of the most fiercely contested parts of the group, completed the Rookie podium in third place.

Post-race penalties were also assigned to: Ethan Ischer was penalized with the drop of four positions on the grid of the next race due to the incident with Kamal Mrad; Matus Ryba received the same penalty for the incident with Enzo Yeh; Reno Francot lost two grid positions for causing an incident with Jack Beeton; 10-second penalties were given to Luca Viisoreanu following an incident with Andrija Kostic, and to Davide Larini for an incident with Hodenius Lin.

Results are sub iudice for appeal lodged against Stewards dec. n. 28.

Hiyu Yamakoshi: *"I was very nervous before the start. It was my very first time in pole position. It was my first time starting behind the safety car in P1, and I made a mistake. Today the start was quite nice, I have to improve on the safety car restart, but the pace was quite good."*

Akshay Bohra: *"It was a pretty tough race. I kept it clean. At the second safety car I went for a gap. I'm not sure about the defending there, but we will see what the stewards think, overall, still a clean race, another podium. We look forward for tomorrow. We need to focus on our own weekend, we have good starting positions tomorrow. Anything is possible, I'm just going to keep my head down."*

Tomass Stolcermanis: *"we started quite nice, P5. I kept my position on first lap, then there were two safety cars. Between them I couldn't overtake, so I just stayed back. I didn't get the best launch after safety car 2, and I got overtaken in T2. After, I struggled a bit with the grip, behind others with dirty air. There is still a bit of speed to find, to improve; but at least it's a Rookie win."*

Maxim Rehm: *"I came in the race, with not so high expectations to be honest, because I was starting P13. Then I just tried to make the most out of it, obviously there was quite a lot of pressure in front of me. Especially in this track, the most position you can gain is after the safety car restart, when everything is a bit chaotic. I used that to my advantage, and tried to make up as many positions as possible, and it kind of worked out. Then I just had to push the last laps, don't make any mistakes and bring it home."*

Emanuele Olivieri: *"the qualifying was not easy at all; we had some issues. We worked well for the race, so I managed to make a few overtakes, thanks to the scramble that occurred. The pace was very good, but it's difficult to overtake here, and driving behind with so much dirty air is tough. I made a few overtakes that helped me to finish as the third Rookie. Tomorrow, I will push to do something better. I thank the entire AKM Team for the work done and my whole family."*



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