



Kacper Sztuka doubles up at Paul Ricard with a dominant win in Race 2 Second step of the podium for Tuukka Taponen, third for Ugo Ugochukwu

Paul Ricard Circuit, Sunday, July 23rd, 2023 – In the second race of the Italian F.4 Championship at the Paul Ricard Circuit, Kacper Sztuka adds to his weekend haul. The Polish driver from US Racing starts from pole position and secures his second win with exceptional pace. Behind him, the Finnish driver from Prema Racing with the Ferrari Driver Academy insignia, Tuukka Taponen, takes second place. Taponen makes the most of the spaces at the start and gains position, also benefiting from the issue that blocks his teammate James Wharton on the grid, who is then forced to pit in. With the P2 finish, Taponen secures his second Rookie win of the weekend. Third place goes to Ugo Ugochukwu, the junior McLaren driver from Prema Racing, who faces some grip issues in the early stages of the race and loses two positions. However, he manages to recover them later on. The long and exciting battle with Arvid Lindblad for P3 deserves a special mention, which includes a slight contact between the two cars. The young Londoner, junior Red Bull driver from Prema Racing, finishes then the race in P4.

Fifth in Race 2 is the Maltese-Filipino driver from US Racing, Zachary David, delivering an excellent performance after the misfortunes of yesterday, which saw him retiring due to a technical issue close to the end. Lindblad and David, together with Taponen, completed the Rookie podium. Behind David, his teammate Akshay Bohra also redeems himself from the misfortunes of Race 1 with an excellent placement. Seventh and eighth positions are secured by the duo from PHM Racing: the US driver James Egozi and the Thai driver Nandhavud Bhirombhakdi, both performing well in the intense battle for points positions. Rashid Al Dhaheri, the driver from the United Arab Emirates representing Prema Racing, finishes the race in ninth place after a brilliant comeback from starting in the nineteenth block of the grid. The last point available goes to the Australian driver from US Racing, Gianmarco Pradel. Just outside of the points, in eleventh place, is the Sicilian driver Alfio Spina from BVM Racing. Twelfth to cross the finish line was Raphael Narac. However, the French driver from Team Race GP received a post-race penalty of a drive-through converted into 25 seconds for the incident that ended Brando Badoer's race, the Italian driver from Van Amersfoort Racing.



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In the women's race, the victory goes to Tina Hausmann, Swiss driver from AKM Motorsport, who finishes sixteenth overall; followed on the podium by Victoria Blokhina from Team PHM Racing. The race comes to a stop for the Brazilian Ferrari Driver Academy driver from PREMA Racing, Aurelia Nobels. Nobels had an incident with the Chinese driver from US Racing, Ruiqi Liu, ending both of their races shortly after the start and requiring the intervention of the Safety Car.

Kacper Sztuka: *"I'm happy to win, to 2 wins already out of 2, I'm really happy. I think we have to just keep pushing for the third race and see what we can do. I had a decent start, again, then I think James stalled, so I had a bit of gap behind. Then we had the Safety Car, and the restart was really good. I still had the gap after the restart, from there it was just pushing. The car was fast again, like yesterday. Thank you to US Racing and to all my sponsors for the great job."*



Tuukka Taponen: *"We have done a good step forward. I think we were lacking a bit speed to fight with Sztuka, but anyway, really good improvement from previous races and we will continue like this. In Race 3 we will have slightly better tires than we had in Race 2, so I'm expecting to have a slightly better speed as well."*

Ugo Ugochukwu: *"I finished in P3, I made a little comeback because I struggled with the rear tires at the start. I lost two positions on the first lap, and after the Safety Car, I had to pass them again. The pace was very good again, I made a good overtaking maneuver on the outside of turns 10 and 11, and managed to get back on the podium. Today, my only thought was to aim for the podium and recover as many positions as possible after the first lap. The speed was there. In the next race I'll start P4, and if I can continue to perform strongly, I hope to be on the podium again and go for the win."*

The last race of the weekend will start this evening, at 17.30, with a duration of 30' + 1 lap. The weekend's races can be watched live with English commentary on the Italian F.4 Championship's Youtube and Facebook pages, and with Italian and English commentary on Motorsport TV (<https://eu.motorsport.tv/>). The three races will also be broadcasted with Italian commentary on ACI Sport TV (Sky channel 228), on www.acisport.it, and on the Facebook page @acisporttv.

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