



## The Italian F.4 Championship 2023 ends with the final win of Kacper Sztuka

The Polish driver from US Racing had won the first race of the season at Imola, and today he closed the circle by winning the final one at Vallelunga. Ugochukwu finished in P2 and Taponen in third on the last podium of the year

Vallelunga, Sunday, October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 – The Italian F.4 Championship 2023 bears the mark of Kacper Sztuka. The Polish driver of US Racing ended the season in style by winning the final race of the year at Vallelunga, thus completing the circle, in a season that began with his victory in the opening race. However, it wasn't all smooth sailing for the 10th Champion in the series promoted by ACI Sport and WSK Promotion. He faced several ups and downs before his definitive comeback around the mid-season break, during a positive streak that began at Paul Ricard. From there, he secured 6 consecutive victories, followed by another 2 at Vallelunga. With 9 wins and 2 podium finishes, Kacper Sztuka claimed the Italian Championship with a total of 323 points, 315 of which counted towards the tally (the best 16 results). For Sztuka, today's celebrations in the paddock included the customary photos and the award presentation by Pirelli, held in WSK's hospitality, who officially handed him the Pirelli Trophy. The final race at the circuit nearby Rome saw him triumphant once again on the podium, celebrating a season of great success with champagne.

By his side, in P2, was Ugo Ugochukwu, junior McLaren driver of Prema Racing. For the American who kept the title challenge alive until the penultimate race, the position in Race 3 also reflected his final standing in the driver's Championship. Ugochukwu concluded the season as the vice-Champion, with a total of 295 points and 280 valid points. With 10 podiums and 3 wins, he was the most frequent visitor to the podium in the Italian F.4 2023. Third in Race 3 was Tuukka Taponen, Finnish Ferrari Driver Academy member of Prema Racing, once again a significant contender at Vallelunga, finishing 2 times in P2 and once in P3 in the final round.

The fourth position in Race 3 went to Prema's Ferrari Driver Academy Driver James Wharton, skillful in launching in an excellent start that saw him starting from the seventh block of the grid. The Australian also outpaced the very fast Brando Badoer of Van Amersfoort Racing, who finished behind him in fifth. Badoer, third on the podium in Race 2, was the only Italian driver to step onto the podium in the last round of the Championship. The sixth position was secured by the Maltese-Filipino driver of US Racing, Zachary David, followed by his teammate Akshay Bohra, the American-Singaporean driver. The British driver Freddie Slater, representing Van Amersfoort Racing, finished eighth in Race 3, preceding the American driver James Egozi of PHM Racing. Closing the top 10 was the Jamaican driver Alex Powell, Prema Racing's junior Mercedes driver. Arvid Lindblad, one of the three contenders for the title on the eve of the final round, finished outside the points zone. The Red Bull junior of Prema Racing, after a long-standing lead in the standings in the first part of the season, ended the Championship in third place with a total of 266.5 points (263.5 valid points), 6 wins, and 4 podium finishes.

In the female battle, there was a head-to-head fight between Victoria Blokhina of PHM Racing, the standings leader, and Tina Hausmann of AKM Motorsport. For the lightning-fast



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Ferrari Driver Academy driver Aurelia Nobels of Prema Racing, who won her class in all 3 races at Vallelunga, the mathematics had already dashed her hopes after Race 1. While the Belgian-Brazilian driver struggled with absences in some races due to an injury, for the other two competing drivers, it all came down to the final race of the year. In the end, Tina Hausmann emerged victorious, with her direct rival hindered by an issue in the early stages, forcing her into the pits before rejoining to the race.

**Kacper Sztuka:** *"This season was a roller-coaster. Great start, then no luck for us. Then after of course coming back since Paul Ricard was great. Then battling with Arvid and Ugo was also great, in the end the pace was great. I think we just did an amazing job. It was a roller-coaster, but leave with the win. All the factors came together to make it good; we just had a bit more luck than in the first half, but we were strong all season."*

**Ugo Ugochukwu:** *"The last race went quite well. I had a good start and managed to quickly move into the second position. From there, I was still missing a bit to catch Sztuka. All in all, it has been a very good season, and we finish the Championship as vice-Champions, in second place. I would like to thank the entire Prema Team for their work this year. We'll see what the future holds."*

**Tuukka Taponen:** *"My first season in the Italian F.4 was a bit under expectations, after UAE Championship in Middle-East. We did a good improvement during the season, and we finish on the podium so it's really nice way to end the season. Now we got another season finale with Euro 4 Championship, there the win was already quite close, I definitely want to win one race in Barcelona. I will do an hard job for that, and finish the year on a high note."*

**Aurelia Nobels:** *"I had a very good season. Unfortunately, I missed Spa and Misano for an injury, and I lost of points, a lot of races for the Championship, but I won most of them. Here in Vallelunga I was very fast. I'm very happy. It was a good season; I could improve a lot through the year. It was a positive year."*

**Tina Hausmann:** *"The season finale was a bit of pressure for me, because I know I can do it and yes, we did it. We stay calm in the races. Obviously Race 2 didn't go as planned. Maybe we just did a little bit of show and made it cooler to watch it in Race 3, because everything comes down in Race 3! No, was not easy after Race 2, but I keep my head straight and I did it. I started with low experience in F4. We know that it was going to be hard, and it was hard in the beginning, but if you watch the results, you can see the learning curve is pretty steep, and I'm pretty happy with it. About the future, nothing is decided yet, but I can tell you it will be great!"*

**Victoria Blokhina:** *"In the first races of the year I just got used to the new set-up for the car and tried my best. Then I tried to slowly get more experience and get more pace. Things started to turn good, despite some difficulties. Overall, the final result of the season can be better, but I had what I had."*

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