

EURO 4 CHAMPIONSHIP

Kacper Sztuka conquers Monza in the first race of the Euro 4 Championship

The Polish driver, with a victory under his belt, now has two races as the poleman. On the first podium of the weekend is Arvid Lindblad in P2, and James Wharton in third place. Ugo Ugochukwu lost the podium after receiving a penalty.

Monza, Saturday, September 16th, 2023

The Autodromo Nazionale Monza is one of the most exciting and challenging venues in formula racing, as demonstrated by the first race of the Euro 4 Championship when 30 drivers took off from the starting blocks to battle it out until the checkered flag. The start was chaotic, with Kacper Sztuka of US Racing taking the lead, capitalizing on a less than perfect start by poleman Freddie Slater, making his debut in the series with PREMA Racing. Ahead of Slater were Ferrari Driver Academy's Prema, Tuukka Taponen, and the Maltese-Filipino driver from US Racing, Zachary David. A safety car was deployed due to an incident involving Nandhavud Bhirombhakdhi of PHM Racing, forcing him to stop.

After a few laps to restore track conditions, the race resumed, but the entry into the first chicane at Monza was still troubled, with Ismail Akhmed of Van Amersfoort Racing forced to stop due to a damaged suspension following contact with Giacomo Pedrini, a new entry from PHM Racing. Due to the incident, the Uzbek driver received a grid penalty of 4 positions for the next race. After the restart, Slater briefly managed to regain the lead, but he slowed visibly after contact with Ugo Ugochukwu and was overtaken. Sztuka returned to the front after battling with Taponen, who was also forced to stop due to suspension damage.

With Kacper Sztuka in the lead towards victory, there was an open battle among the Prema drivers. The junior McLaren driver Ugochukwu came out on top, passing second and breaking away from the rest of the group along with the Pole. The American then dropped to fourth, with a 5-second post-race penalty for contact with Slater. Arvid Lindblad, the Red Bull driver from Prema, therefore finished second. Lindblad had to fight for a long time, among others, with his teammate, Ferrari Driver Academy's James Wharton. Therefore, the first race of the weekend was extremely positive for Lindblad, who managed to recover positions from a rear start to finish on the podium.



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Australian Wharton finished third, continuing to collect valuable points in the series at the end of a well-interpreted race. The battle for the top positions, in which he was a protagonist, enriched the spectacle of Race 1. Fifth place went to Akshay Bohra, who, behind Lindblad, was second on the Rookie podium. For the American driver from US Racing, the balance of the Euro 4 series can be considered positive up to this point, with all races completed earning points, and two podiums achieved at Mugello. Sixth place went to the Portuguese driver Ivan Domingues, who brought Van Amersfoort Racing's colors to the upper part of the race standings. Following him was Prema driver Rashid Al Dhaheri, who was involved in a tough battle with his teammate Lindblad, while the latter climbed the ranks to reach the podium, and then again with Badoer. Al Dhaheri was able to celebrate success from the third step of the podium dedicated to Rookie drivers.

Eighth to cross the finish line was Brando Badoer, the Italian driver from Van Amersfoort Racing. However, Badoer was later penalized with 5 seconds for overtaking Al Dhaheri outside track limits. The eighth position at the end of Race 1 went to Gianmarco Pradel, the Australian from US Racing, who preceded Sicilian Alfio Spina, representing BVM Racing. Rounding out the Top 10 was the Red Bull driver from AKM Motorsport, Frenchman Enzo Deligny.

Rich in emotions and certainly not easy, the first of the three races that will thrill all motorsport enthusiasts this weekend. With two more chances tomorrow, the day's winner, Kacper Sztuka, will have the opportunity to go for a triple win, starting from the front of the grid in both races.

Kacper Sztuka: *"It was a really nice race, especially the start. Then of course the fight was on, as always in Monza, it's just really fun. I'm really happy to drive here, to fight with drivers and I'm really happy to win. The next two races are going to be from pole. For sure I'm positive, I know we have the pace. You never know in Monza, it's always changing, I'll have to just go for it and see what happens."*

Arvid Lindblad: *"It was a difficult race. I was meant to start P4, but we got a penalty from qualifying. I was starting P6 and I had an issue on the start, I tried to manage it as best as I could, but was really difficult. I dropped to P8 or P9, and then to be honest the first laps were completely crazy. It was so difficult to manage. I was trying my best to stay calm in the car, and don't do*



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anything stupid to lose a wing, or have any damage, or crash. I keep it on the track, then I managed to pick them off one by one on the restart. And we really had a strong pace in the race, I came forward and finished third. To be honest I'm really happy, because the comeback was really strong. Not the result I wanted, obviously, but I'm looking forward to tomorrow, because I think the pace is really strong."

The weekend's schedule: tomorrow, on Sunday, September 17th, it's time for Race 2, lasting 30 minutes + 1 lap, at 10:30, and then Race 3, also lasting 30 minutes + 1 lap, at 17:35.

The three races of the weekend will be broadcast live with English commentary on the Euro 4 Championship's YouTube and Facebook pages and on Motorsport TV (<https://eu.motorsport.tv/>); they will also be broadcast with Italian commentary on ACI Sport TV (Sky channel 228), on www.acisport.it, and on the Facebook page @acisporttv.



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