

FREDDIE SLATER FLIES TO POLE POSITION IN BARCELONA TAKING THE FIRST OF THE WEEKEND

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It was a tightly contested qualifying session at **Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya**, with **Freddie Slater (Prema Racing)** claiming his fifth pole position of the season. The current leader of the **Formula Regional European Championship by Alpine** delivered a flawless performance on Spanish soil, arriving with just a three-point advantage over closest rival **Matteo De Palo (Trident Motorsport)**. The Italian driver was the fastest in Group B, after also topping the timesheets in both of Friday's collective tests. As a result, the front row will see the two main title contenders line up side by side in what promises to be a thrilling and action-packed race.

As per championship tradition, Group A was the first to take to the track. Slater immediately made his intentions clear, setting a commanding pace and eventually stopping the clock at 1:35.250, the fastest lap of the session. Behind him came the **R-ace GP** duo **Enzo Deligny** and **Jin Nakamura**, both continuing the momentum from the previous round in Austria, where they secured second and third respectively in Race 2. A strong performance by **Nikita Bedrin (Saintéloc Racing)** secured him a fourth-row start, ahead of **Rashid Al Dhaheri (Prema Racing)**, the Mercedes Junior Team driver, who will line up ninth overall.

In Group B, it was De Palo who set the pace with a best lap of 1:35.279. Behind him, a fierce battle emerged for second in the group between **Pedro Clerot (Van Amersfoort Racing)** and **Nandhavud Bhirombhakdi (Trident Motorsport)**. Ultimately, it was the Brazilian who prevailed, the same driver who clinched victory in Race 2 at the Red Bull Ring just two weeks ago. Solid efforts also came from **Evan Giltaire (ART Grand Prix)** and **Jack Beeton (Prema Racing)**, who rounded out the top five of the session.

All eyes now turn to Race 1, scheduled to get underway this afternoon at 17:45, covering a distance of 30 minutes plus one lap. The race will be broadcast live on the official Formula Regional European Championship by Alpine [YouTube channel](#), as well as on ACI Sport TV and other international broadcasters listed in the [official TV distribution list](#).

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Freddie Slater (Prema Racing):

"It's great to start the weekend with another pole here in Barcelona, a nice way to get the job done this morning. The margins are incredibly small at the top, so you really need to focus on every detail because even the slightest mistake can make the difference. Degradation will be an important factor in the race, as it always is here, and the long run to Turn 1 could make the start quite chaotic. I've also heard the weather might play a role tomorrow, but we'll just have to maximise what we can today and be ready for whatever comes. Of course, the goal is to try and win."

Matteo De Palo (Trident):

"We were really quick here in Barcelona, especially after being fastest in all three practice sessions, so I felt very confident going into qualifying. It's a bit of a shame to miss overall pole by just a couple of thousandths, but we still start from the front row which is very positive. The start will be critical, as the run to Turn 1 is long and overtaking during the race isn't easy on this track. Still, I'm confident we have the pace to fight at the front and I believe we can go for the win."