

# FREDDIE SLATER TAKES VICTORY AND FASTEST LAP: FROM POLE, BUT NOT WITHOUT EXCITEMENT

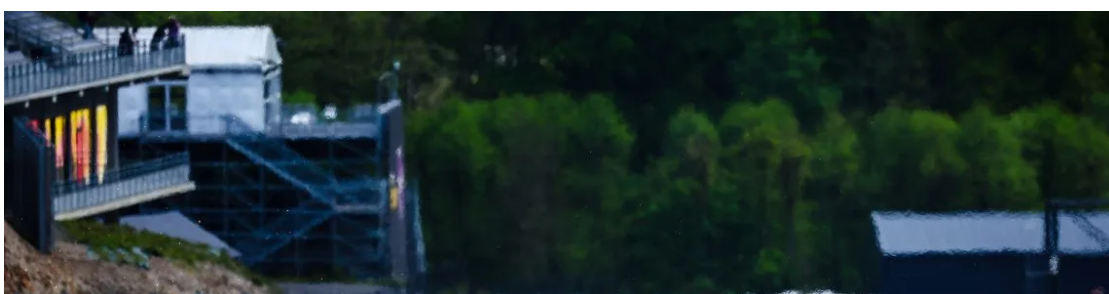
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The opening race at Spa-Francorchamps for the Formula Regional European Championship by Alpine delivered excitement from start to finish. After the morning's qualifying session was cancelled due to a lengthy red flag period caused by an incident and the time required to repair the barrier, Freddie Slater of Prema Racing started from pole position, having set the fastest lap in Friday's Collective Test 1.

At the start, the British driver was immediately challenged and overtaken by Enzo Deligny. The R-ace GP driver surged into the lead on the opening lap and held position through the early stages, before Slater struck back with a bold and decisive overtake that would prove to be the turning point of the race. From that moment on, the Prema Racing driver never looked back, controlling the pace, withstanding the slipstream effect typical of the Belgian circuit, and ultimately pulling away to secure victory. Slater also posted the fastest lap of the race, underlining his extremely strong performance.

Deligny remained in second place for much of the competition, but was eventually overtaken in the closing laps by a flying Matteo De Palo. The Trident driver from Rome delivered an impressive performance, showcasing exceptional race pace to finish second and take the lead in the drivers' championship standings. Deligny completed the podium in third after a spirited drive featuring multiple position changes and a hard-fought duel with De Palo.





Just off the podium, Evan Giltaire (ART Grand Prix) was among the main protagonists in the front group. While he showed podium potential, his charge was halted by a prolonged battle with Hiroyuki Yamakoshi. The Japanese driver for Van Amersfoort Racing crossed the line in fifth, just ahead of Rashid Al Dhaheri (Prema Racing), who gained ground late in the race by capitalizing on a mistake from Akshay Bohra (R-ace GP). Bohra had been firmly in the lead pack throughout almost the whole race, but dropped to seventh in the final stages.

Eighth went to Jack Beeton (Prema Racing), followed by ART Grand Prix teammates Kanato Le and Taito Kato in ninth and tenth, rounding out the points-paying positions. Dion Gowda (Van Amersfoort Racing) was initially classified 13th but dropped a place due to a track limits penalty. Nevertheless, he was able to celebrate on the podium as the top rookie of Race 1.

The race delivered plenty of thrilling action right from the start, with Jin Nakamura (R-ace GP) stalling from the second row of the grid. Several contacts occurred during the most intense phases of Race 1, eventually prompting a safety car intervention. As ever, Spa-Francorchamps proved to be a true test of talent, offering a spectacular challenge that demanded precision, nerve, and racecraft from every driver on the grid.



**Freddie Slater:** "It's mega. To get the first win on the board, especially around Spa, such a cool track to drive, feels amazing. The tow here is so powerful, and the racing is really close. At the start, it was all about biding my time and getting past Enzo. I just tried to open up the gap as much as I could. I used the push-to-pass when I needed it, and in the end, I got the job done. It was good, I timed the push-to-pass quite well. I was managing the situation, trying to pick the right

moment for the best opportunity, and it paid off."

**Matteo De Palo:** "It was quite tricky. We started P4, which is not bad, but it's not the same as being on the front row. I got a good start and gained a position straight away. After that, it was all about managing the tyres and the push-to-pass. In the final laps, my pace was really strong and I managed to get past Enzo. It was a pretty good race overall, and now we're also leading the Championship, which is another great takeaway from today."

**Enzo Deligny:** "It was a tough one for me. We took the lead on lap one and stayed there for the first part of the race. Then I just struggled with grip in the middle sector. It wasn't enough to win today, but I'm still happy to be on the podium."

**Dion Gowda:** "It's good, but a bit unlucky that qualifying got cancelled. Starting from the back was tough, but we managed to make up many places during the race, so it was a strong performance. We have a lot more pace for tomorrow. Hopefully qualifying goes well and we can fight for the overall podium. But I'm definitely happy with the Rookie win."