



Emanuele Olivieri wins Race 1 and seals the Rookie title at Imola

The R-ace GP driver is the new FIA Formula Regional European Championship leader

Imola, 5 September 2026

Emanuele Olivieri converted pole position into victory in the opening race of the Imola weekend, claiming his second win of the season, mathematically securing the Rookie title and moving into the lead of the FIA Formula Regional European Championship standings.

It was a masterful performance from the R-ace GP driver, who also set the fastest lap and expertly managed four restarts following as many Safety Car periods. MP Motorsport's Sebastian Wheldon finished second, retaining second place in the Championship and now trailing Olivieri by three points. Alexandre Munoz completed the podium for ART Grand Prix, earning his second top-three finish of 2026 following his victory at Spa.

Olivieri's teammate Rashid Al Dhaheri, meanwhile, was eliminated on the opening lap. He remains in contention for the title, as does PREMA Racing's

Kean Nakamura-Berta, who finished outside the points in 15th.

RACE REPORT

Olivieri made a strong start from pole position, while Wheldon immediately had to defend from Munoz, who attempted to make a move. Mattéo Giaccardi held fourth place from the second row of the grid.

Further back, Al Dhaheri went off following contact with PREMA Racing's Tomass Stolcermanis, bringing out the first Safety Car. Racing resumed after two laps under neutralised conditions, with Olivieri still leading from Wheldon, who was closely followed by the two ART Grand Prix drivers, Munoz and Giaccardi. MP Motorsport's Shota Abkhazava and CL Motorsport's Reno Francot moved up to fifth and sixth respectively.

Olivieri then began to pull away from Wheldon, repeatedly setting the fastest lap and extending his advantage to almost two seconds.

Giaccardi ran wide at Acque Minerali and dropped to sixth after being passed by both Abkhazava and Francot. A second Safety Car was then deployed when Rodin Motorsport's Alex Ninovic went off, bunching the field up once again on Lap 6.

The race resumed with 11 minutes remaining, and Olivieri fended off an attack from Wheldon into Tamburello, while the MP Motorsport driver was himself under pressure from Munoz. RPM's Miguel Costa then became stranded in the gravel at Rivazza, triggering a third Safety Car and wiping out the gaps once again.

Racing resumed with fewer than five minutes remaining. Olivieri continued to set the pace ahead of Wheldon, Munoz, Abkhazava and Francot. Kabir Anurag had moved up to sixth after passing Giaccardi.

There was still more drama to come, as three separate incidents involving several cars in the closing stages meant that the race ultimately finished behind the Safety Car.

Emanuele Olivieri (R-ace GP, winner and Rookie champion): *"It is fair to say that the weekend is going very well. The main objective today was to make a clean start because we knew our pace was very strong and the car was really enjoyable to drive. However, I wasn't expecting so many Safety Car periods, and that made the race very challenging. Wheldon was very quick on the straights. Although I think my pace through the infield was stronger, it was still*

difficult to keep him behind. Every restart was challenging, but I managed them well. I'm extremely happy with the performance and couldn't have asked for anything more. We have secured the Rookie title and we are leading the Championship for now, but it is not over yet. There are still plenty of points available, and I'm already looking ahead to Race 2."

Sebastian Wheldon (MP Motorsport, 2nd): *"Yesterday, we were originally due to start fifth after qualifying, but we benefited from another driver's disqualification, which promoted us to second. I knew I had to maximise the points available for the Championship because my title rivals were starting further back. It was a solid race, and now we have to keep improving and try to go one step higher."*

Alexandre Munoz (ART Grand Prix, 3rd): *"To be honest, it has been a while since we were able to fight at the front. We had three rounds that were really difficult, but we changed a few things coming into this weekend and the pace is finally back. We are fighting at the front again, so it feels really good. The race was very strong and our pace was really good. Olivieri, Wheldon and I were the three quickest drivers out there. It was a great race and I'm looking forward to the rest of the weekend."*

Race 2, which will feature a reverse grid for the top 12 from yesterday's Qualifying session, will get underway this afternoon at 16:30 CEST. It will be broadcast in more than 200 territories and streamed live on the Championship's official YouTube channel, @fiaformularegionaleu.

** Results are still provisional*

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