



Bondarev caps off a perfect weekend at Imola with Race 3 victory

The Ukrainian driver claims his maiden win in the series and delivers Van Amersfoort Racing its first-ever victory of the season

Imola, 6 September 2026

Oleksandr Bondarev rounded off his Imola weekend in perfect fashion. The Ukrainian driver, who impressed on his FIA Formula Regional European Championship debut, converted the pole position he secured in Sunday morning's Qualifying into his maiden victory. In doing so, he became the 10th different winner of the season and handed Van Amersfoort Racing its first victory of the year.

With his second-place finish, Emanuele Olivieri further extended his advantage at the top of the overall standings. The R-ace GP driver, who claimed victory in Race 1 on Saturday to mathematically secure the Rookie title, scored points in all three races and now holds a 20-point lead over MP Motorsport's Sebastian Wheldon, who finished outside the top 10 in Race 3. CL Motorsport's Reno Francot also made it onto the podium, with the Dutchman matching the third-place finish he achieved in Saturday's Race 2.

Wheldon finished 12th, while PREMA Racing's Kean Nakamura-Berta and Olivieri's team mate Rashid Al Dhaheri, who both remain in title contention, finished ninth and 10th respectively.

RACE REPORT

Bondarev made a strong getaway from pole, while Olivieri slotted into second and immediately shut the door on Francot. The Dutchman settled into third, with CL Motorsport team mate Jules Roussel close behind.

A collision between Yuki Sano of R-ace GP and CL Motorsport's René Lammers followed at Piratella, sending Lammers into the barriers and bringing out the Safety Car.

Racing resumed after almost three laps under neutralised conditions, with Bondarev retaining the lead. Olivieri set the provisional fastest lap, while further back Nakamura-Berta and Al Dhaheri battled over ninth place, with Wheldon running outside the top 10. Bondarev responded to Olivieri by setting the fastest lap himself.

On Lap 7, Giovanni Maschio and MP Motorsport's Alexander Abkhazava made contact at the first chicane, leaving the RPM driver stranded in the gravel and triggering another Safety Car period. The race restarted with nine minutes and 23 seconds remaining. Olivieri applied the pressure, but Bondarev did not put a foot wrong. At the start of Lap 10, PREMA Racing's Tomass Stolcermanis passed Roussel at the end of the main straight to move up to fourth.

Almost simultaneously, G4 Racing's Rahim Alibhai went off track, prompting a third Safety Car period. Racing resumed with three minutes remaining. Olivieri tried to attack Bondarev while coming under pressure himself from Francot, but the leading trio crossed the line in the same order.

Oleksandr Bondarev (Van Amersfoort Racing, winner): *"Honestly, after yesterday, I already felt that this would be a weekend to be really proud of, even if it had ended there. But today was simply amazing. I took pole position this morning with a really good lap, and the car felt fantastic. I got off the line well in the race, which was very important because overtaking is quite difficult here. When you are in front, you can control the race a little better. That is exactly what we did, staying in the lead throughout. It was my first time leading a restart in this car, and it is much more difficult than in Formula 4. I don't think my restarts were perfect, but they were good enough to keep the lead. I'm extremely happy with the result. A huge thank you to everyone at Van Amersfoort Racing, Williams, my family and all my sponsors, for supporting me throughout the year".*

Emanuele Olivieri (R-ace GP, 2nd): *"It was a mega weekend. I wasn't expecting to leave Imola leading the championship, but the team and I worked extremely hard during the summer break to find the performance that we were able to show here. I think we had the strongest pace. Yesterday's victory was amazing, while today there wasn't much more I could have done because of all the Safety Car periods. Even if you have more pace, it is very difficult to make a difference in those circumstances. I also didn't want to take too many risks because my championship rival was outside the points, so I focused on securing as many points as possible. Overall, I'm really happy with the weekend. In the final race, I never really had a clear opportunity to pass Oleksandr. Without all the safety-car periods, I might have had a chance towards the end of the race by using the push-to-pass, because he appeared to be using more of it than I was at the beginning. However, with so many safety-car periods, we reached the final two laps with almost all of our push-to-pass still available, so we were effectively using it everywhere and there was no real opportunity to save it and create a proper advantage. I tried to put him under pressure and force him into a mistake, but credit to him because he drove a fantastic race. There was nothing more I could have done. I don't have a particular strategy for Hockenheim. I'll simply do everything I can, give it my best and see what the outcome is".*

Reno Francot (CL Motorsport, 3rd): *"It was a very difficult race. Having three safety-car restarts made it almost impossible to get anything done. Even with the new Race Mode system, it is still extremely difficult to overtake at this circuit. We were all running in one long train. I did everything in my power to move up to second place, but in the end there was very little I could do. Nevertheless, I'll take the positives from this weekend. Two third-place finishes are definitely something to be proud of, especially after the difficult period we had before the summer break. I'm happy with the progress we have made. We can head to Hockenheim with this level of performance and see whether we can fight for another race victory."*

The next and final round of the FIA Formula Regional European Championship will take place in just a few days at Hockenheim in Germany, where the 2026 title will be decided next weekend.

** Results are still provisional*