



Kean Nakamura-Berta claims historic first pole in FIA Formula Regional European Championship

Prema Racing driver leads the way in opening Red Bull Ring qualifying

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Kean Nakamura-Berta has become the first-ever pole-sitter in the history of the FIA Formula Regional European Championship. The Prema Racing driver was the overall fastest across the two groups that took to the track at the Red Bull Ring in the opening qualifying session of the season, when he clocked 1:25.765. Alongside him on the front row for the first of the weekend's three races will be Rashid Al Dhaheri (R-ace GP), who set the pace in the second group with a 1:25.951.

Group A

With air temperatures hovering around 19°C and track conditions slightly slower than in the morning's free practice session - topped by Alex Ninovic (Rodin Motorsport) with a 1:25.590 - Kean Nakamura-Berta emerged as the fastest of the 15 drivers in Group A. The 18-year-old Williams F1 Team Academy driver produced a near-perfect lap in the opening two sectors with just under 50 seconds remaining, to surge to the top of the timesheets.

Over two and a half tenths off the pace, Alex Ninovic still underlined his strong form by securing second. Emanuele Olivieri followed in third for R-ace GP, four tenths down on the benchmark, emerging as the top Rookie. Maksimilian Popov (Trident Motorsport) and Zhenrui Chi (MP Motorsport) completed the top five.

Group B

With the time of 1:25.951 set with less than five minutes remaining, Rashid Al Dhaheri was the first to break the 1:26 barrier. Subsequently, on his final flying lap, he delivered a best 22.231 in the Sector 1, but traffic in the latter part of the track prevented any further improvement - leaving him at the top of Group B, yet still short of Group A leader Kean Nakamura-Berta.

Second fastest in the morning's free practice, Sebastian Wheldon (MP Motorsport) confirmed his pace by securing P2, just 0.064 seconds adrift of Al Dhaheri. Reno Francot (CL Racing) and Tomass Stolcermanis (Prema Racing) followed in third and fourth respectively, all covered by less than a tenth. Completing the top five was Alexandre Munoz, at the wheel of the first ART Grand Prix Tatuus T-326.

Kean Nakamura-Berta (Prema Racing): *"The team did a phenomenal job with the car. We were confident throughout the whole day. I think we didn't fully show our potential in free practice, but we put it all together in qualifying today. So I'm really, really happy. It's a great way to start the season. A massive thanks to the team."*

Rashid Al Dhaheri (R-ace GP): *"I'm really proud of the work we've been able to do. I think we had a strong chance of securing pole overall, but things didn't quite come together. We've learned a lot today, and we'll aim to carry that forward into tomorrow and the rest of the season."*

Tomorrow, the first of the weekend's three 30-minute races will get under way at 10:25 CEST. Race 2, which will see the top 12 from today's qualifying line up in reverse grid order, is scheduled to start at 16:40 CEST. Both races will be broadcast live on the championship's official YouTube channel @fiaformularegionaleu and on television by 78 different broadcasters across more than 200 territories. [Discover where to watch.](#)
