

Matevos Isaakyan (SMP Racing) scores maiden Formula V8 3.5 victory

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Matevos Isaakyan (SMP Racing) sailed to his maiden Formula V8 3.5 win today in race 1 at the Circuito de Jerez. The Russian driver inherited the point on lap 19 when the leading car of team-mate Matthieu Vaxiviere lost the braking point at the chicane and was forced to yield. Isaakyan, who was also the best rookie of the day, crossed the line in front of fellow SMP Racing-supported driver Egor Orudzhev (Arden Motorsport) and by Vaxiviere. Louis Delétraz (Fortec Motorsports) was penalized 10 seconds for a contact with Tom Dillmann (AVF) and ended up out of the points zone. As a consequence, the Frenchman did not relinquish the championship lead.

Starting from the pole, Aitken experienced a poor start and found himself swallowed by the field while Vaxiviere cruised to the lead. Delétraz and Isaakyan crossed swords in turn 1 with the Russian finally getting the nod in turn three followed by Orudzhev and Tom Dillmann.

Making his first start in the series, Thomas Randle (Comtec Racing) retired on lap 2 after ending up in the turn 10 gravel trap. On lap 4, Vaxiviere was running with a 0.9s margin on Isaakyan, with Orudzhev, Dillmann, Delétraz, Aurélien Panis (Arden Motorsport), René Binder (Lotus), Yu Kanamaru (Teo Martin Motorsport), Beitske Visser (Teo Martin Motorsport) and Pietro Fittipaldi (Fortec Motorsports) rounding out the top-10.

On lap 4, Panis went by Binder for sixth place and on lap 6 Delétraz got within striking distance of Dillmann as the two fought for fourth place. Alfonso Celis Jr (AVF) came back to the pits and retired on lap 10, while Orudzhev caught Isaakyan's slipstream while contending for P2.

By lap 15, two different packs were heading the race. The first featured the drivers battling for the lead and included Vaxiviere, Isaakyan and Orudzhev. The second, seven seconds back, saw Dillmann defend himself from Delétraz and Panis.

Drama struck on lap 16. Delétraz and Dillmann were fighting for fourth place when the Swissman went to the inside of his French rival but could not complete the move. The two made contact and Dillmann suffered the worst fate having to retire. Race control then sent the safety-car out on-track and also recovered the car of Giuseppe Cipriani (Durango) who spun into the gravel trap in turn 8.



The race re-started on lap 19 for a 10-minute dash to the chequered flag with Nissany passing Fittipaldi for ninth. On lap 20, Vaxiviere reclaimed third place from Delétraz, who was also penalized for the contact with Dillmann and ended up out of the points zone.

Isaakyan secured his first win in the series by crossing the line ahead of the pack on lap 27. He was also the best rookie of the day. On the other hand, the result scored by Aitken remains suspended. RP Motorsport decided to appeal the #2 decision taken by the stewards, who had disqualified his car from qualifying for breaching art.19.14 of the Sport Regulations.

Matevos Isaakyan (SMP Racing)

“The start was not so good but I managed to overtake Aitken, while Matthieu’s was incredible and he pulled away. Before the safety-car I began to catch him a bit but after that, unfortunately, he made a mistake that handed me first place. I just tried to do my best to maintain it so I got my first victory”.

Egor Orudzhev (Arden Motorsport)

“I had a decent start and I managed to move up to fourth and later to third with an outside overtake. After that I managed the tyres, trying to not kill them. I had a bit of oversteer, so I tried to save them even more. I didn’t want to make stupid mistakes so I kept my position behind Matevos, trying to close the gap although he was still a bit faster. I had a great car and I hope SMP Racing will be equally happy about this result with 3 cars on the podium”.

Matthieu Vaxievère (SMP Racing)

“On one hand I’m really happy we’ve written a piece of history for SMP Racing as they locked out the podium with three cars. I’m proud of Matevos and the team which made a great job for the whole week-end. As we’re new in the championship, every week-end has something new for us, so I’m happy we move forward every time. On the other hand, I did a mistake at the restart with the rear brakes that were too cold, but I still got some good points. Maybe I’m not happy for my personal result, but we got a valuable podium finish”.

Andrea Tesi Mancini, Race Engineer at SMP Racing

“It has been a great week-end since qualifying, with both cars and drivers in a great shape. The race has been amazing from the beginning with Matthieu and Matevos leading from the early laps. We really hoped to have 1-2 finish but there was a problem after the safety-car and we have to investigate what happened to Vaxiviere’s car, but we are really happy for Matevos’ maiden FV8 victory.”

