

## CHIAPPE BACK ON THE TOP STEP OF THE PODIUM AFTER WIN IN PORTUGAL

Sunday, 31 July, PORTIMAO (Portugal): Philippe Chiappe produced the perfect response after the disappointment of breaking at his home Grand Prix two weeks ago with a superb victory in the UIM F1H2O Grand Prix of Portugal taking his seventh career-win and his first in Portimao.

Second place went to pole-sitter Sami Selio, his first podium of the year signalling a long awaited return to form for Finland's two-time world champion, with Shaun Torrente taking his fourth consecutive podium with Victory Team.

A blistering start off the pontoon saw championship leader and three-time champion Alex Carella and Chiappe grab the advantage from pole-sitter Selio, with Torrente moving up a place into fourth ahead of Jonas Andersson. The big loser at the start was Emirates Racing's Erik Stark, dropping from second to sixth.

Carella held the advantage until lap 14 when a trim problem dropped his pace and allowed Chiappe to pass, the same problem reoccurring again on lap 30 and saw him drop down the field to fifth which he held to the chequered flag.

The pace throughout the 48 laps around the 1.97km Arade River seven-pin circuit was ferocious, Chiappe maintaining a comfortable lead from Selio who in turn was kept on his toes by Torrente, with Andersson having a good run in fourth and clearly over the reliability issues of the previous race and matching his best finish of the year.

Today's result for CTIC F1 China's Chiappe was a mirror image of a year ago, a breakdown in France followed by a victory in Portugal, his winning margin of 6.80s moving him to within two points of championship leader Carella on 42 points, with Torrente very much in touch in third spot on 36. "It is the same story as last year and we needed this result," said Chiappe. "I felt very confident today and especially after we took the lead. I wasn't sure who was behind me but after the troubles we had, today everything worked very well."

Pole position for BABA Racing's Selio and his first podium since China last year has put the Finn and the team back on track after a frustrating season. "We really needed this weekend. Quickest in qualifying and a podium is really very satisfying. I am extremely pleased," he said. "We showed we had the pace and finally the reliability so a big thanks to all of my team."

For Shaun Torrente his fourth podium on the bounce and his recovery after looking down and out in qualifying keeps the title very much in sight for him and the Victory Team. "Keep racking the points up that's what we have to do," he said. "The pace today was incredible but the main thing is we kept fighting and got through and over the problems we had."

Behind the front runners the race was somewhat processional with little sign of any movement, with Erik Stark unable to make up the ground he lost at the start and coming home in sixth to take his first points' finish of the year.

The tens-of-thousands who lined the banks of the Arade River saw their home driver Duarte Benavente deliver yet another very solid points finish coming home in eighth for F1 Atlantic behind Thani Al Qamzi, another to post his first points in 2016, and ahead of a competitive drive by Blaze Performance's Bartek Marszalek, getting a much need boost after a frustrating last event.

From the Algarve and Portimao the UIM F1H2O World Championship now heads to the Far East to the People's Republic of China and to its north-eastern most city, Harbin, on 2-4 September.