

ALPINE ELF ENDURANCE TEAM BEGINS ITS ASCENT DESPITE LE MANS HAZARDS

10/06/2023

- The 24 Hours of Le Mans centenary edition began this Saturday at 4 pm to a sold-out crowd.
- Alpine Elf Endurance Team took the lead in its category during an extraordinarily nervous and tricky start to the race.
- Starting from the nineteenth and twenty-third positions, the Alpine A470s are just outside the top ten heading into a night that promises to be more daunting than ever.



After revealing the A424_β on Friday, the precursor to the Hypercar that will compete in the premier class of the FIA Endurance World Championship from 2024, Alpine was back in action on Saturday lunchtime for a 15-minute warm-up session. André Negrão and Charles Milesi had the task whilst the technical team conducted a final check of all the systems and procedures on the 24 Hours of Le Mans Circuit, which was slightly damp for the first time of the long week.

The two drivers got behind the wheel of their Alpine A470s shortly before the start at 4 pm in the presence of Luca de Meo, Renault Group CEO. André Negrão and Charles Milesi started

on slicks on a track that was partly wet in places and took off cautiously to avoid the hazards of an opening lap that ended with a safety car period.

The team took advantage of this first neutralisation to change the strategy for the n°36 Alpine. Thanks to an excellent restart, impressive overtaking, and a remarkable driving from Charles Milesi took the lead of the LMP2 category for a short time, whilst André Negrão pulled off a series of moves to jump into the top ten. They then took advantage of the various incidents at the start of a hectic race to consolidate their places and realign with the competition.

Respectively second and ninth at the end of their triple stints, the Frenchman and the Brazilian handed over to Julien Canal and Memo Rojas after more than two hours in the car. Although they had to deal with the arrival of the rain, the two Silver drivers showed remarkable composure in the precarious grip conditions to seize the slightest opportunity and take command of their category hour four.

Both drivers came in for slick tyres at the restart, but Julien Canal got caught out when passing a GTE Am car. Thanks to a lightning intervention by the mechanics to change the front end, the n°36 Alpine was back on track after a short one-minute stop. Meanwhile, Memo Rojas continued showing his mettle in the field as the day began to turn to night before being replaced by Olli Caldwell shortly after 9 pm. A few minutes later, Julien Canal passed the baton to Matthieu Vaxiviere in the sister car.

After six hours of the race and as the night approached, the n°35 Alpine is 10th in the LMP2 category, three places ahead of the n°36 Alpine.

QUOTES

André Negrão

"We've got off to a good start. Overtaking is always a challenge, but the work we've been doing since Thursday has paid off. Avoiding getting caught up in one of the many collisions since the start of the race has been the hardest thing. We've had many close calls, but we're still in the race, and a lot can happen. We'll have to be impeccable."

Charles Milesi

"We adopted the correct strategy during my triple stint to gain positions with a solid pace, but we need to stay focused as this edition has already been full of twists and turns and unexpected pitfalls, as Julien unfortunately experienced. There is still a long way to go, and we must keep the car on the track and make it through the night, avoiding nasty surprises in these tricky conditions."

Philippe Sinault, Alpine Elf Endurance Team Principal

"We've rarely seen so many race incidents in all the categories, but we managed to come through with flying colours. Charles did a fantastic job climbing from second to last to first place through consistency, and André also moved up the order. Our real satisfaction is to have found a pace that puts us in contention. We were a little further back with slow zones and safety cars that were not favourable, as well as Julien's minor mistake which cost us a stop and put us off sequence with the lead group. The start to the race has been a mix of excellent performances and a little gloom, but anything is possible at Le Mans as long as we have the necessary speed."

CLASSIFICATIONS

Alpine Elf Endurance Team n°35

André Negrão – Olli Caldwell – Memo Rojas

Start: 19th / H+6 : 10th

Alpine Elf Endurance Team n°36

Matthieu Vaxiviere – Charles Milesi – Julien Canal

Start: 23rd / H+6 : 13th

ABOUT ALPINE

Founded in 1955 by Jean Rédélé, the brand has set itself apart with its French-style sports cars. In 2018, the brand presented the new A110, a sports car faithful to Alpine's timeless principles of compactness, lightness, agility and driving pleasure. The Alpine Business Unit was created in 2021 and thus became the brand dedicated to innovative, authentic, exclusive sportscars of the Renault Group, benefiting from the heritage and craftsmanship of its historic plant in Dieppe and the Alpine Racing and Alpine Cars teams engineering mastery.

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