

ALPINE ELF ENDURANCE TEAM ENJOYS A PRODUCTIVE PROLOGUE AT SEBRING

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- Alpine Elf Endurance Team officially launched its new FIA World Endurance Championship campaign this weekend.
- The Prologue allowed the six A-arrowed brand drivers to get back behind the wheel of the Alpine A470 at Sebring International Raceway.
- With more than 2,800 kilometres covered, the team now turns its focus to the opening race of the calendar this Friday on the same track.



The 2023 FIA World Endurance Championship season began this weekend with the Prologue. Held at Sebring (United States), this first meeting, or dress rehearsal, reunited all the competitors for the first time this year during two days of testing.

Alpine Elf Endurance Team used the four sessions to continue its preparations. André Negrão, Memo Rojas and Olli Caldwell in the #35 Alpine A470 and Matthieu Vaxiviere, Charles Milesi and Julien Canal in the #36 car all aimed to gather as much information as possible about one of the cradles of American motorsport.

On Saturday morning, André Negrão and Matthieu Vaxiviere were the first to tackle this mission on the 6,019-metre-long circuit before being relayed by their teammates. Despite a clutch hose problem quickly resolved on the #35 car, all six drivers got to grips with the Florida track while working on the set-up and use of the Goodyear tyres.

With more than 100 laps completed with each prototype at the end of day one, the team continued its intense programme on Sunday. Alternating short and long stints without focusing on pure performance, the two trios accumulated data and lowered their reference times courtesy of Matthieu Vaxiviere and André Negrão.

In the final session, a red flag cut short the Prologue as the team prepared to run a qualifying simulation. Nevertheless, *Les Bleus* finished with 479 laps to their credit, or more than 2,800 kilometres on a daunting track for mechanics and organisms alike with its numerous bumps and junctions between different surfaces.

Alpine Elf Endurance Team is now focusing on its final round of preparations, including a complete overhaul of the Alpine A470s. The two crews will return to the track on Wednesday towards their first challenge, the opening round of the 2023 FIA World Endurance Championship season, the 1000 Miles of Sebring.

André Negrão

"It's awesome to be back at Sebring, where we have fond memories after our win last year. The Prologue went well and we were able to try a lot of things, working on our race pace. Our times are not representative, and we keep improving step by step for next week. My teammates also did a great job with Olli discovering the track, Memo discovering the team, and both of them discovering the car. We are doing pretty well, so let's see what we can do next week."

Memo Rojas

"I am really happy with my first official appearance with Alpine Elf Endurance Team at the Prologue, and I'm so excited to be in the FIA WEC as well this year. We had two great test days where we gathered a lot of information with the engineers and my teammates André and Olli. I think we did a great job together and we are a strong package. There is still a lot of work to do as the LMP2 is so competitive this year with a high level in terms of drivers and teams, but we have two days to do our homework and prepare for the race week as best we can."

Olli Caldwell

"After this productive Prologue, I'm really excited for my first race at Sebring in the FIA WEC. It's an exciting time in my career, even though it's a big change for me. I'm still getting familiar with the team, but it is great to be part of this family. Testing has gone really well, we tested

a lot of different things, which is always the ultimate goal in these days, and now we can put it all together and hopefully have a great race week at Sebring."

Matthieu Vaxiviere

"It's a good and quite positive start. From Saturday morning to Sunday afternoon, we progressed in every session. We have shown a good margin of improvement and I am confident that the best is yet to come. We will now debrief and analyse all the data to start the race week with this momentum. The cohesion within the crews is good, and the team is positive with this interesting dynamic, but we still have some work to do with some areas to improve. In any case, I'm now looking forward to free practice!"

Charles Milesi

"We have had two productive days where we have been able to try many different set-up options on our car. I think we now know where we stand, and generally, that's quite positive. I'm delighted to continue the collaboration I started last year with Signatech, but this time in the Alpine colours. I'm thrilled about it, and the team is genuinely committed to this programme. Let's now focus on next week and the first race ahead to see what we can achieve together."

Julien Canal

"After a ten-year absence, I was thrilled to be back at Sebring, especially now that I am proud to have joined Alpine Elf Endurance Team. The Prologue went well, but we still have some work to do. We are close-knit, and with two cars and six drivers, we will put all our feedbacks and ideas together for the team and its technical baggage to tackle the next stage. We are not resting on our laurels, and we know that we will have to fight hard in this highly competitive LMP2 category against some of the best teams in the world. We remain focused and hopefully we can achieve a podium finish on Friday."

Philippe Sinault, Alpine Elf Endurance Team Principal

"We knew we had two intense days ahead of us in Sebring, and that was the case. Opening the season in Sebring is like starting the Tour de France with a stage in the Alps. Despite this challenge, the Prologue went smoothly and we gathered a lot of valuable information and data that we will analyse over the next two days before entering the first race week. We explored several set-up options to learn more about the car and to keep learning about these tyres, especially on this atypical track. The dynamic between our two teams is extremely positive and our six drivers fully understand the importance of working together to take the team as far as possible. We are satisfied as we have worked well as a team, the integration of our new members has gone well, and we now have all the necessary elements to prepare ideally the challenges ahead."

Prologue – Sebring 2023

1. United Autosports n°22 1:50.577s
2. Team WRT n°41 1:50.827s
3. Prema Racing n°63 1:50.860s
- 7. Alpine Elf Endurance Team n°36 1:51.286s**
- 12. Alpine Elf Endurance Team n°35 1:52.457s**

By the numbers

Alpine Elf Endurance Team n°35

Session 1 : 11th in 1:53.209s (33 laps)
Session 2 : 11th in 1:53.149s (68 laps)
Session 3 : 12th in 1:53.230s (72 laps)
Session 4 : 12th in 1:52.228s (54 laps)
Laps: 227 (André Negrão: 83; Olli Caldwell: 73; Memo Rojas: 71)

Alpine Elf Endurance Team n°36

Session 1 : 10th in 1:53.158s (59 laps)
Session 2 : 8th in 1:52.210s (53 laps)
Session 3 : 6th in 1:51.286s (81 laps)
Session 4 : 4th in 1:51.513s (59 laps)
Laps: 252 (Matthieu Vaxiviere: 97; Charles Milesi: 78; Julien Canal: 77)

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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