

# ALPINE POISED FOR BATTLE IN FIA WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP PROLOGUE AT SEBRING

08/03/2023

- The 2023 FIA World Endurance Championship season begins this week with the Prologue at Sebring International Raceway (USA).
- Alpine Elf Endurance Team will field two LMP2 prototypes for this year's opening encounter as the Alpine A470s return to the track in official sessions for the first time since 2020.
- André Negrão, Memo Rojas, Olli Caldwell as well as Matthieu Vaxiviere, Julien Canal and Charles Milesi will use these two days to fine-tune their preparations ahead of the 1000 Miles of Sebring (17 March).



Just shy of a year after a stunning victory at Sebring in the FIA WEC's premier category, Alpine is set to return to Florida to launch its new endurance campaign.

As tradition dictates, the Prologue will kick off the season this weekend. The two-day test is a dress rehearsal for the 1000 Miles of Sebring, the opening round of the season taking place the following week, and will bring all the competitors together on the same track as they ramp up their final preparations. With a maximum of twelve hours and a half of driving time across



four sessions, Alpine Elf Endurance Team and its drivers will be working hard to build up their speed and find the best setups to ensure the A470s can cope with the challenges of the American track.

Alpine is no stranger to Sebring, a genuine motorsport monument. Built on a former military airport, Sebring International Raceway is a mix of seventeen corners and several straights on a terribly abrasive, bumpy track with historic concrete and asphalt sections. This atypical configuration is considered one of the keys to the race, and it takes its toll on the shock absorbers and floors if the setup is not optimal on the transitions between the surfaces.

The A-arrowed brand has been competing at Sebring since 1964 and has a podium in LMP2 and a victory in Hypercar to its credit. Alpine Elf Endurance Team will build on its glorious history to complete two productive days and maximise its chances for success in an increasingly competitive and challenging LMP2 category.

The expertise of the drivers will also be precious in achieving this goal. André Negrão, who drove the A470 in its only previous appearance at Sebring, finished second in LMP2 in 2019 before winning the overall race with Matthieu Vaxiviere and Nicolas Lapierre in 2022. Like his new team-mate Memo Rojas, winner of the 12 Hours of Sebring in 2014, the Brazilian will bring his savoir-faire to the team and Olli Caldwell, the third man in the #35 A470 and a Sebring rookie.

Matthieu Vaxiviere's contribution in the sister car will be just as vital. After his triumph twelve months ago, the Frenchman is particularly keen to repeat his success in another category with Charles Milesi, who made his Sebring debut last year with the LMP2 run by Signatech, and Julien Canal. The latter will actually return to Sebring eleven years after excelling there in the inaugural round of the FIA World Endurance Championship!

Prior to this first meeting, both trios were able to get their bearings behind the wheel of the Alpine A470 at the Algarve International Circuit in Portimão. On 15 February, the two prototypes were sea-freighted to Sebring, where the team got their hands on them on Monday to prepare them for the Prologue, starting on Saturday at 8:45am local time. After the weekend, Alpine Elf Endurance Team will analyse all the data collected before embarking on a week-long celebration of North American motorsport, with the 1000 Miles of Sebring (FIA WEC) and the 12 Hours of Sebring (IMSA) sharing the billing.

### **Philippe Sinault, Alpine Elf Endurance Team Principal**

*"Sebring is always a huge challenge to start a new season, especially when returning to a category as competitive as LMP2 as we are doing this year. Beyond its rich history, unique atmosphere and status on the North American continent, this first meeting marks our return to the United States twelve months after our historic victory. This year, the context will be*

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*different. We need to make the most of the Prologue to continue the work we started in Portimão regarding the set-up, the line-ups chemistry or the tyre analysis. We had limited track time this winter, so we must make the most of every lap on this atypical circuit to readapt to the track and its specificities. We can rely on five drivers with experience at Sebring and I am confident Olli will acclimatise quickly. However, the level of LMP2 is so high that it will be important to hit the ground running on this track, which is even more demanding for bodies and machineries than Le Mans, to prepare properly for the first race of 2023. We must be ready and the whole team is working hard to meet our performance and reliability targets. We look forward to getting there and getting down to business!"*

## Timetable

### Saturday 11 March

8:45am-11:45am: Free practice 1

1:30pm-4:30pm: Free practice 2

### Sunday 12 March

9:00am-12:30am: Free practice 3

2:30pm-5:30pm: Free practice 4

## 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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