

GODARD ENDS THE SEASON WITH A FIRST WIN IN THE VAR

27/11/2023

- Ludovic Godard scored his maiden victory in the final round of the 2023 Alpine Elf Rally Trophy season at the Rallye du Var.
- Co-driven this weekend by Thomas Chauffray, the Team Minerva driver finishes the season runner-up to Pierre Roché, who secured the title on the Rallye Cœur de France.
- Third behind Grégory Fontalba, Vincent Leduc won among the Gentlemen to take the category title ahead of Jean-François Mourgues.
- The Alpine A110 Rally completed its clean sheet in the two-wheel drive ranks whilst claiming another overall podium result in the French Rally Championship in the hands of Cédric Robert.



Seven crews lined up at the start in Sainte-Maxime to conclude season three of the Alpine Elf Rally Trophy. Among the contenders, Pierre Roché quickly demonstrated his intention to score a fifth consecutive success after securing the crown in late September on the Rallye Cœur de France.

The Team FJ driver set the best time in the opening timed sector on Friday, but Ludovic Godard snatched the lead from him in Bormes-les-Mimosas before out-pacing him again in Collobrières. Despite Pierre Roché's reply in the last special stage of the day, Ludovic Godard

returned to the service park with a 1.6s lead, with Gregory Fontalba still in the hunt. Behind the leading trio, Loïc Panagiotis and Vincent Leduc battled for fourth place ahead of Jean-François Mourgues and Éric Royère, partnered by a new co-driver this weekend.

The duel for victory changed in the early hours of the second leg. Pierre Roché suffered a mechanical problem following a contact the day before and lost ground on SS5 and SS6 before calling it a day. Ludovic Godard set three consecutive fastest times to extend his advantage over Grégory Fontalba to 28.6s before Fontalba broke the leader's run of best times before midday.

Ludovic Godard began to manage his lead in the afternoon. Despite the performances of his rivals on three of the loop's four stages, the Team Minerva driver increased the gap with his stage win in Pignans, relegating his closest challenger to 49.9s. With two scratch times, Loïc Panagiotis moved up to third place while Vincent Leduc gradually pulled away from Jean-François Mourgues in the battle for the Gentlemen's title after Éric Royère went off on SS12.

On Sunday, Ludovic Godard controlled the proceedings with two more best times in the three final stages to seal his first victory in the Alpine Elf Rally Trophy, 1:20.8s ahead of Grégory Fontalba. However, the waning kilometres of the year provided a final twist as Loïc Panagiotis conceded more than three minutes due to a puncture in Notre-Dame des Anges. At the end of the 35.44 km stage, Vincent Leduc took the opportunity to move up to third place on the podium.

Meanwhile, Alpine completed its clean sheet with a ninth victory in as many rounds of the French Two-Wheel Drive Rally Championship with the success of Cédric Robert, third overall at the finish. He was joined by Ludovic Godard and Grégory Fontalba in the overall top seven to form the eighth all-Alpine A110 Rally podium on the national scene this season.

At the end of the season finale, Pierre Roché officially succeeded Julien Saunier and Grégory Fontalba in the Alpine Elf Rally Trophy and completed the double with the Challengers title. Vincent Leduc takes over from Fabrice Bect in the Gentlemen category. The main contenders of this campaign, which saw a record number of 21 crews challenge for the trophy, will be rewarded at an awards ceremony in early 2024. Edition four of the Alpine Elf Rally Trophy will kick off on the roads of the Rallye Rhône Charbonnières from 18 to 20 April 2024.

Ludovic Godard: "I am really happy to get my first win, which is a real boost for the whole team to wrap up the trophy. I would have liked it to be a bit sooner, but it was worth the wait with a great rally this weekend. We managed our pace well without slowing things down too much, and we finished with a strong lead. We had to stay focused while attacking. There were some difficult moments, like on Sunday when we started with four hard tyres. I had to recalibrate myself, and then I had a few scares while pushing and trying to avoid punctures.

Thomas did an excellent job. He's a professional, and you could see and feel that. Now I've got one more rally in a fortnight to enjoy the Alpine one last time this year!"

Vincent Leduc: "I'm delighted to win the Gentlemen's title. It's the culmination of a full season in which we excelled despite our relative unfamiliarity with the French Rally Championship compared to our rivals. I'm even more delighted because this Rallye du Var was very tricky, so it's a real bonus to finish on the third step of the overall podium."

Classification

1. Ludovic Godard – Thomas Chauffray 2h26:36.2s
 2. Grégory Fontalba – Marine Lacruz +1:20.8s
 3. Vincent Leduc – Caroline Puel +3:47.2s
 4. Jean-François Mourgues – Michel Roissard +4:13.0s
 5. Loïc Panagiotis – Caroline Goddi +5:36.0s
- Ret. Éric Royère – Yaelle Fleury
Ret. Pierre Roché – Martine Roché

General classification

1. Pierre Roché 80 points
2. Ludovic Godard 62 points
3. Vincent Leduc 62 points
4. Jean-François Mourgues 57 points
5. Grégory Fontalba 35 points
6. Jérémy Crétien 30 points
7. Fabrice Bect 29 points
8. Éric Royère 19 points
9. Éric Giannini 18 points
10. Loïc Panagiotis 16 points
11. Armand Fumal 10 points
12. Jean-Luc Roché 8 points
13. Bertrand Fassio 8 points
14. David Ferraro 6 points
15. Romain Haut-Labourdette 4 points
16. Cyrille Traglia 4 points
17. Philippe Baffoun 3 points
18. Élodie Gines 1 point
19. Romuald Lamboley, Alain Marechau & Frédéric Perriat 0 point

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 sports cars 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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