

# ALPINE ENDURANCE TEAM FACES ITS FIRST CHALLENGE WITH THE FIA WEC PROLOGUE IN QATAR

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- The FIA World Endurance Championship opens its 2024 season with the Prologue this weekend (24-25 February) at the Lusail International Circuit.
- Alpine Endurance Team will field its two A424 Hypercars for the first time in official sessions.
- The team and its six drivers will use this two-day test to get the Alpine A424s ready for the Qatar Airways Qatar 1812 km (2 March).



With a decade of experience in endurance racing but Hypercar newcomers, Alpine returns to the sport's premier class with the A424, a prototype developed over the last year and a half.

As tradition dictates, the Prologue kicks off the FIA WEC season. A true rehearsal, this two-day test gathers all the competitors for their final preparations before the first race. With a maximum of 14 hours of track time over four sessions, Alpine Endurance Team and its crews are about to step up their efforts to perfect their automatisms with the A424.

The Lusail International Circuit, a new addition to the calendar, represents an unprecedented challenge for the entire field. Inaugurated in 2004, the 5.419 km track features a rhythmic sequence of 16 medium and high-speed corners, coupled with one of the longest straights of the season (1,068 metres). Although the track offers flexibility in terms of set-up, the French team will have to deal with challenges specific to Qatar. As Alpine discovered when it scored a podium finish at the inaugural Formula 1 Qatar Grand Prix in 2021, gusty winds and sand can dramatically impact conditions, while the kerbs can be particularly aggressive towards the cars.

To make the most of this two-day test, the A-arrow brand can rely on the talent and adaptability of its drivers, as well as Mick Schumacher's previous experience of the track. One of the few competitors to have already raced at Lusail, the German will be accelerating his endurance learning curve with the support of teammates Nicolas Lapierre and Matthieu Vaxiviere in the n°36, as well as Paul-Loup Chatin, Ferdinand Habsburg and Charles Milesi in the n°35. Involved in the A424's development programme, the crews will also seek to collect valuable set-up and handling data on their prototype in the traffic.

Before that, the two trios got their bearings back with the Alpine A424 earlier this month at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya, shortly before its official presentation on 7 February. Since then, the two Hypercars have been sent to Qatar, where the team will start work on their preparation tomorrow before the first session on Saturday at midday (local time). At the end of the weekend, Alpine Endurance Team will review all the data collected before taking on its first challenge of the year: the Qatar Airways Qatar 1812 km from 29 February to 2 March.

#### **Bruno Famin, VP Alpine Motorsports**

*"It's not a baptism of fire yet, but we're getting close! This will be our first test session in real conditions, with all our rivals on track. We know that we have a lot to learn at every level. So the priority will be to make the best use of the track time available in order, among other things, to work on the set-up - both for the chassis and the systems - to get the technical team and crews working together by finding the right automatisms, and to understand the tyres on this very atypical track. The whole Alpine Endurance Team is working hard to make this session as productive as possible. There's a long way to go, but I'm confident in everyone's commitment, from the mechanics to the drivers."*

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

*"We can't wait to get to Qatar for the first events on the calendar. It is our first real test after our development phase. We know that it will be a big challenge, but we also have to appreciate the importance of lining up two cars at the start of the FIA World Endurance Championship. This moment rewards the huge collective effort made by the whole team."*

*However, being in Qatar is not the goal itself, and we know we have a long way to go in this learning season. We began fine-tuning our preparations in the simulator last week ahead of the Prologue and a truly challenging event: a ten-hour race on a track extremely particular concerning tyre wear, as our F1 colleagues have experienced."*

## **Prologue – Schedule (CET)**

### **Saturday 24 February**

10:00-13:00: Practice session 1

15:00-19:00: Practice session 2

### **Sunday 25 February**

9:00-12:00: Practice session 3

14:00-18:00: Practice session 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 sportscar faithful to Alpine's timeless principles of compactness, lightness, agility and driving pleasure. In 2021, the Alpine Business Unit was created. It 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 team's engineering mastery.

## **CONTACTS**

### **Orianne Tamburini**

Head of Product Communication Alpine  
orianne.tamburini@alpinecars.com  
+33 6 26 63 28 14

### **India de la Fressange**

Alpine Motorsport Press Officer  
india.deseignarddelafressange@fr.alpineracing.com  
+33 6 34 48 51 31

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