

ALPINE ENDURANCE TEAM TO CONTINUE ITS LEARNING PROCESS AT IMOLA

15/04/2024

- Round two of the 2024 FIA World Endurance Championship season takes place this week at the Autodromo Internazionale Enzo e Dino Ferrari in Imola.
- Following a reliable and encouraging first race in the points in Qatar, the two Alpine A424s head to a new circuit where the team will continue to optimise its package in race conditions.
- Jules Gounon will make his prototype racing debut, standing in for Ferdinand Habsburg in this race, along with Charles Milesi and Paul-Loup Chatin in the #35 car.



Less than 50 days after the season opener in Qatar, the FIA WEC returns to the Old Continent to kick off its European tour, which includes stops at Imola, Spa-Francorchamps and the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

Located in the heart of Emilia-Romagna, the Imola circuit hosted 30 Formula 1 Grands Prix between 1980 and 2022. Although it is about to debut on the FIA Endurance World Championship calendar, the Autodromo Enzo e Dino Ferrari is by no means a stranger to the discipline or to Alpine history.

Jean-Pierre Jarier took pole position in the 1976 Imola 500 before setting the fastest race lap in the Trofeo Ignazio Giunti in the #2 Alpine-Renault A442 Turbo he shared with Jacques Laffite. More recently, on a slightly

revised track, Alpine scored its first podium result in its second LMP2 start at the 3 Hours of Imola in 2013. The team did it again the following year in a four-hour format, still in European Le Mans Series.

A favourite with the public since its inauguration in 1953, this fast and narrow 4,909-metre track offers specific challenges to the competitors. One of the rare counter-clockwise tracks on the calendar, Imola features several brutal braking zones that test the drivers' bravery. Mistakes are seldom forgiven, and its old-school layout emphasises traffic management to maintain a constant race pace.

The Alpine A424s head to a new circuit, the second after Qatar. For Alpine Endurance Team, the objective is to continue and deepen the learning process and optimise its race package. To accelerate this process, the engineers and mechanics can draw on the experience of Mick Schumacher and Paul-Loup Chatin, respectively winners in F4 and LMPC at Imola, and that of Nicolas Lapierre, who has previously finished on the podium in both GP2 and LMP2 in Emilia-Romagna.

Supported by their teammates Matthieu Vaxiviere in the #36 car and Charles Milesi in the #35 car, the two crews' mission is to gather as much data as possible about their Hypercars and help them progress in a highly competitive 37-car field. Ferdinand Habsburg, injured in an accident during testing at Motorland Aragón (Spain) in late March, continues to recover while remaining in constant contact with the team. Jules Gounon will replace him in Italy. The team's reserve driver will contest his first race behind the wheel of a prototype on a circuit he knows well, having scored a podium finish there in GT World Challenge Europe in 2022.

The weekend gets underway on Friday with two 90-minute free practice sessions. A final one-hour session will precede qualifying and the Hyperpole on Saturday. On Sunday at 1 pm, *Les Bleus* will take on the 6 Hours of Imola with a clearly defined objective: to finish and gain more valuable experience.

To follow the 6 Hours of Imola live, go to www.fiaawec.com.

Philippe Sinault, Alpine Endurance Team Principal

"Qatar certainly went well, and we got off to a good start, but our goal at the 6 Hours of Imola is to continue our learning process to be increasingly ready and gain momentum for the forthcoming races. We'll discover a circuit quite different from what we've experienced since the first runs of the A424. Our experience will be quite relative on this atypical track as the cars and the environment changed so much since our last race in Imola. The traffic will be a crucial factor, but we also know that the kerbs are quite aggressive and will influence the set-up so that we can negotiate them properly and make the most of them. Ferdinand will be on our minds. It is a hard blow, but that is part of the life of a team, and everything is in place to ensure that he is with us thanks to modern communication methods. We've decided to replace him with Jules at Imola. It's never easy to make your debut in such a context, but Jules was identified, selected and signed to fill this role, even though we never imagined it would happen so early like this. He's fundamentally ready but still has much to learn, even if he has

already demonstrated his mastery of several aspects, given his track record in GT. We honed his preparation during our latest tests with his six teammates and then in the simulator to prepare him for all our processes. This weekend promises to be extraordinarily instructive for the whole team."

Timetable (CEST)

Friday 19 April

12-13:30: Free practice 1

17:15-18:45: Free practice 2

Saturday 20 April

11:10-12:10: Free practice 3

15:25-15:37: Hypercar Qualifying

15:45-15:55: Hypercar Hyperpole

Sunday 21 April

13:00-19:00: 6 Hours of Imola

About Alpine

Founded in 1955 by Jean Rédélé, Alpine has established itself over the years with its French-style sports cars. The brand first delivered the new A110 in 2018, faithful to Alpine's timeless principles of compactness, lightness, agility and driving pleasure. The Alpine Business Unit was created in 2021, building on the heritage and know-how of its historic Dieppe factory, as well as the engineering expertise of the Alpine Racing and Alpine Cars teams. Within Renault Group, it is the dedicated brand to innovative, authentic, and exclusive sports cars. This expertise enables the brand to compete in the two major FIA championships: Formula 1 and the World Endurance Championship. Alpine is also present in other mechanical disciplines through customer competition in Rally, Cup and GT4. 2024 marks a turning point in Alpine's ambitions, as it inaugurates its 100% electric "Dream Garage" with the launch of its first electric urban sports car, the A290.

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