

GERACI AND FAVRE SET THEIR PACE AT SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS

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Round three of the 2023 Alpine Elf Europa Cup season saw Juniors Enzo Geraci (Chazel Technologie Course Junior) and Romain Favre (VPS Racing) share the spoils at the iconic Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps. While Enzo Geraci continues to lead the general classification, Romain Favre and his team, newcomers in the category, are closing in on him ahead of the next round of the calendar at Dijon (16-18 June).



Twenty-four competitors were in Belgium, including three newcomers. Thibaut Bossy and Pierre-Étienne Bordet launched their campaign with Herrero Racing while Philippe Bourgois (Chazel Technologie Course) was back on home soil.

On Thursday, the contenders took to the track for three private test sessions and two free practice sessions. Alpine Elf Europa Cup leader Enzo Geraci was dethroned at the end of the day by Romain Favre, who set the best time of 2:34.510s. Enzo Geraci replied the following day by setting the A110 Cup track record in qualifying with a lap of 2:32.734s, but Romain Favre hit back a few hours later to claim pole for race two with a time of 2:32.820s.

RACE 1: GERACI LEADS A CHAZEL SWEEP

First driver to score two pole positions this season, Enzo Geraci started ahead of Léo Jousset (Race Cars Consulting) and Romain Favre. When the lights turned green for the rolling start, the poleman held on to the lead whilst Lorens Lecertua (Chazel Technologie Course Junior) and Alexis Garcin (Chazel Technologie Course Junior) leapt from fourth and fifth to follow in their teammate's wake.

Following a safety car period after an incident leading to Lukas Papin (Autosport GP) and Laurent Richard (Herrero Racing) retirements, Enzo Geraci kept the lead of a nervous field, with contact between Louis Maurice (Code Racing Development) and Alain Jacono (Chazel Technologie Course). Meanwhile, Margaux Verza (Autosport GP) and Anthony Fournier (Race Cars Consulting) also retired after separate incidents.

At the front, the trio of Enzo Geraci, Lorens Lecertua and Alexis Garcin quickly pulled away. On home soil, the Belgian went on the offensive on lap six, but the leader resisted brilliantly before Alexis Garcin tried to take advantage. After a second safety car period as Pierre Macchi (Autosport GP) was stuck in the gravels, Enzo Geraci held off the chasing pack again, whilst Romain Brun (Herrero Racing) lost several positions when he spun.

Enzo Geraci became the first two-time winner this season despite pressure from his teammates. Lorens Lecertua and Alexis Garcin followed him to the chequered flag on a podium monopolised by the Juniors. Léo Jousset finished fourth ahead of Tim Mérieux (Autosport GP), who started tenth on the grid. Romain Favre was sixth, followed by the Challengers category winner, Adrien Catelin (Code Racing Development). Ethan Bernard (Herrero Racing), Willyam Gosselin (VPS Racing) and Sami Dhahri (VPS Racing) completed the top ten, while Philippe Bourgois won on his return to the Gentlemen category.

RACE 2: MAIDEN WIN FOR FAVRE AND VPS RACING

On Sunday morning, Romain Favre started from pole ahead of Alexis Garcin and Enzo Geraci for what promised to be a lively race with the top nine drivers within a second in Q2. The poleman held on to first place at the start, which was marked by a chain reaction that sent Tim Mérieux spinning and a four-car-wide battle heading into the Raidillon.

While Alexis Garcin quickly pressured Romain Favre, Lorens Lecertua jumped to third place. Enzo Geraci regained the advantage over Léo Jousset on lap three. For a time, the leading trio pulled away from the rest of the field, but a breathless battle ensued, with Enzo Geraci and Léo Jousset coming back into contention.

Romain Favre held off Alexis Garcin's attacks with a fine defensive display in the braking zones. Behind them, Enzo Geraci and Lorens Lecertua began a superb duel before the Belgian tried to overtake Alexis Garcin. Slight contact between the two drivers was exploited

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by Léo Jousset, who climbed onto the provisional podium before losing four positions by going wide later. The intensity continued to build, but Romain Favre managed to pull away from Alexis Garcin just before the safety car was deployed, following Enzo Geraci's spin at the exit of Blanchimont.

The race finished behind the safety car. Junior Romain Favre and the VPS Racing team of Matthieu Vaxiviere, Aurélien Panis and Raphaël Serrano claimed their first victory in the Alpine Elf Europa Cup. Alexis Garcin and Lorens Lecertua completed the podium ahead of Romain Brun and Léo Jousset. Sixth-placed Thibaut Bossy scored his first win in the Challengers category ahead of Sami Dhahri, Louis Maurice and Jules Gougeon (Chazel Technologie Course Junior) after Ethan Bernard was penalised five seconds for track limits. Meanwhile, Anthony Fournier led the Gentlemen category from start to finish to secure his second victory this season.

Despite not scoring points on Sunday, Enzo Geraci remains on top of the general classification, but the leader is now just nine points clear of his closest rival, Romain Favre. Meanwhile, Adrien Catelin extended his lead in the Challengers category, as did Chazel Technologie Course Junior in the team category. Lastly, Alain Jacono's consistency puts him atop the Gentlemen category classification.

The Alpine Elf Europa Cup will be back in action soon at the Circuit de Dijon-Prenois (16-18 June) for the fourth of six rounds on the calendar. After the postponement of the second race at Magny-Cours, three races will be on the bill on the other iconic track in Burgundy.

QUOTES

Enzo Geraci (Race 1 winner)

"This second win confirms our excellent start to the season. We're working hard with the team to get the best-performing car, and I'm also training in the simulator to be sharp as soon as I get behind the wheel. It's paying off, despite some difficult races with several restarts and hard-fought battles with my teammates, but I'm coming home with another success before heading to Dijon."

Romain Favre (Race 2 winner)

"This first victory in the Alpine Elf Europa Cup is a culmination, an achievement and a relief for the whole team and myself. We couldn't take advantage of our pole at Magny-Cours, but we managed to do it at Spa, and I'm delighted. VPS Racing and I are new to this series, so this success gives us confidence for the future, and we'll be giving it everything we've got for the rest of the season."

Adrien Catelin (Race 1 Challengers winner)

"I was able to continue my streak on Saturday with the early retirement of Thibaut Bossy, but it was an intense race with some great on-track battles and a good overall result. It's always quite difficult to race in the middle of the Juniors, but Spa is still a pleasure, even more so behind the wheel of an Alpine."

Thibaut Bossy (Race 2 Challengers winner)

"I'm pleased with this maiden win, especially as I was driving well on Saturday before being forced to retire due to a minor mechanical problem. On Sunday, I repeated my level of performance and closed in on the leading group. If I can improve in qualifying and the race, a podium finish may be possible, and I will work towards that."

Philippe Bourgois (Race 1 Gentlemen winner)

"It's a winning return on home soil, which I wasn't expecting before a very opportunistic start! I managed to sneak up on my rivals before controlling my race despite the pressure to ensure the win. I'm doing a partial programme this year, so I'm not aiming for the title, but I want to stay on top and battle against the fastest Gentlemen."

Anthony Fournier (Race 1 Gentlemen winner)

"This win is a relief as we've clearly been lacking success up until now. We've had excellent speed since Magny-Cours, but the main thing was to finish. Thanks to our performances, we could aim higher with a great battle against Laurent Richard, which was cut short when he went off track, but I know he'll fight back in the next few rounds. I'm confident ahead of Dijon, a fast track that I really enjoy!"

CLASSIFICATIONS

Race 1

1. Enzo Geraci (Chazel Technologie Course Junior)
 2. Lorens Lecertua (Chazel Technologie Course Junior) +0.991s
 3. Alexis Garcin (Chazel Technologie Course Junior) +1.224s
 4. Léo Jousset (Race Cars Consulting) +1.611s
 5. Tim Mérieux (Autosport GP) +3.751s
- Pole position: Enzo Geraci (Chazel Technologie Course Junior) – 2:32.734s
Fastest lap: Enzo Geraci (Chazel Technologie Course Junior) – 2:35.617s

Race 2

1. Romain Favre (VPS Racing)
2. Alexis Garcin (Chazel Technologie Course Junior) +4.567s
3. Lorens Lecertua (Chazel Technologie Course Junior) +6.213s

- 4. Romain Brun (Herrero Racing) +6.794s
- 5. Léo Jousset (Race Cars Consulting) +7.973s
- Pole position: Romain Favre (VPS Racing) – 2:32.820s
- Fastest lap: Romain Brun (Herrero Racing) – 2:34.831s

General classification

- 1. Enzo Geraci – 72 points
- 2. Romain Favre – 63 points
- 3. Alexis Garcin – 59 points
- 4. Lorens Lecertua – 57 points
- 5. Tim Mérieux – 45 points

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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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