

SUCCESSFUL BAPTISM OF FIRE FOR THE ALPINE A424 IN QATAR

03/03/2024

- After months of intense work, the Alpine A424 contested its first race in the premier category of the FIA World Endurance Championship.
- Alpine Endurance Team achieved its goal of finishing the Qatar Airways Qatar 1812 Km to accumulate as much information as possible with its two crews.
- Following this encouraging start to its learning season, the A-arrow brand now looks ahead to the next round, the 6 Hours of Imola (19-21 April).



With over 2,500 kilometres covered during the Prologue, Alpine Endurance Team embarked humbly on the A424's racing debut in the FIA World Endurance Championship Hypercar category.

The team continued its week with 220 laps of free practice on Thursday and Friday at the Lusail International Circuit. The first qualifying session of the season saw Nicolas Lapierre finish 14th with the #36, less than twelve-hundredths of a second shy of a place in Hyperpole and first among the new manufacturers in Hypercar. Meanwhile, Paul-Loup Chatin qualified three places further back in the #35.

On Saturday, the two Alpine A424s made their first start, with Nicolas Lapierre and Ferdinand Habsburg avoiding the hazards of the first corner. On hard tyres, both drivers applied themselves in their double stint, and the #35 car briefly took the lead just before the two-hour mark.

Mick Schumacher and Charles Milesi took over shortly afterwards to continue their teammates' efforts despite a five-second penalty for incorrect positioning during a pit-stop for the #35 and contact with an LMGT3 for the #36. Matthieu Vaxiviere and Paul-Loup Chatin relayed them, with each putting in a double stint on hard tyres.

As night fell, Mick Schumacher and Ferdinand Habsburg were back behind the wheel, with the hard compound on the left flank and medium tyres on the right. On a track becoming increasingly treacherous with gravel on the racing line, the two trios increased the pace before handing over the final sprint to Nicolas Lapierre and Charles Milesi.

Thanks to excellent energy management during a race that included two short neutralisations, the #35 Alpine made one less stop, with Charles Milesi taking the opportunity to move up the order. The team's efforts paid off as the Frenchman crossed the line in ninth place and first among the new manufacturers in the Hypercar category. Meanwhile, the #36 and Nicolas Lapierre were 13th after changing front-end bodywork damaged by contact in the field earlier on.

After the race, both crews moved up one position following the disqualification of the #93 car. With a wealth of data gathered on the A424 in race conditions, Alpine Endurance Team is now focusing on the next race of the season, the 6 Hours of Imola (April 19-21).

Charles Milesi

"It was a good race, and we didn't expect to finish in the top ten on our debut on a new track. It was a great achievement to cross the finish line with both cars, but having one in eighth place is a genuine bonus. Our pace looks promising against several other manufacturers, which is encouraging for the future, even though there's still much to learn and understand. The team has done a great job, and we are all looking forward to Imola."

Ferdinand Habsburg

"I was extremely proud and happy to be in the Alpine A424 for its first start. I was also a little nervous, but I knew I was in the right place with the right people. We had an excellent strategy and almost made a faultless run to get this result, which we're thrilled with. It's a bit like climbing a mountain from the bottom up. As an Austrian, I've climbed many of them before, and I can guarantee you the feeling is incredible when you are at the top. That's how I feel at the moment!"

Paul-Loup Chatin

"It was a good one, and I'm delighted for the team, who have done an amazing job over the last two years to give us a competitive and reliable car right from the first race. I don't think anyone know all the effort that goes into this behind the scenes. It was important not to make any mistakes and see where it would take us. In the end, we finished first among the newcomers and eighth out of 19 Hypercars, ahead of some of the big names in the championship. These first points are just great and reward the whole team's efforts."

Matthieu Vaxiviere

"It's a true achievement to finish our first race with both cars and even more so with one in the points. We can all be satisfied with the work done during the development phase, as we didn't encounter the slightest issue. We had to be humble for our debut, and we were. This great adventure starts on a positive note, but the hard work will continue at Imola."

Mick Schumacher

"This first race week ends with many positives and a lot of learning in the Endurance racing world. We had the pace to fight for the points, which was a bit unexpected, so we can be happy about it and proud of ourselves. It's great the sister car managed to score. We have a strong, united and ambitious team for the next round, and we're all already looking forward to Imola."

Nicolas Lapierre

"It was a very satisfying weekend overall. We achieved our main objective, which was to learn, and we even did better than we had hoped with a car in the points and ours on the pace throughout the week. The team has been excellent and serene from an operational point of view, which bodes well for the future. After a test session, we'll head to a very different track in Imola. We're looking forward to going there and continuing to work hard after this rather positive start."

Philippe Sinault, Team Principal Alpine Endurance Team

"We knew it would be challenging to start with a ten-hour race on a new track, but we're happy with this performance. We ran a clean race and finishing with our two cars, including one in the top ten, is a nice achievement."

Getting to the finish line with both crews enabled the entire team, from the mechanics to the engineers to the drivers, to learn a great deal about our technical and human package. I want to thank and congratulate every member of the team. Rarely have I seen people so committed to a project."

The foundations are now in place after these ten intense days in Qatar. We've taken another step forward, but know there's still a long way to go. We must continue to learn and acquire expertise and experience in every area."

CLASSIFICATIONS

Qatar Airways Qatar 1812 Km

1. Porsche Penske Motorsport #6
2. Hertz Team JOTA #12
3. Porsche Penske Motorsport #5

8. Alpine Elf Endurance Team #35

12. Alpine Elf Endurance Team #36

FIA Hypercar World Endurance Drivers' Championship

1. Estre / Lotterer / Vanthoor – 38 points
2. Stevens / Iltis / Nato – 27 points
3. Campbell / Christensen / Makowiecki – 24 points

8. Chatin / Habsburg / Milesi – 6 points

12. Lapierre / Schumacher / Vaxiviere – 0 point

FIA Hypercar World Endurance Manufacturers' Championship

1. Porsche – 39 points
2. Cadillac – 23 points
3. Ferrari – 18 points
4. Toyota – 15 points
- 5. Alpine – 12 points**

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. 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.

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