

PRESS RELEASE
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ALPINE FINISHES THE 24 HOURS OF LE MANS ON THE PODIUM



- 43 years after its historic win, Alpine finishes on the 24 Hours of Le Mans podium in its return to the race's premier category.
- Alpine Elf Matmut Endurance Team did what it came to do In a race marked by several incidents to finish in third place.
- This result is Alpine's second overall podium in the twice-around the clock French classic.
- Nicolas Lapierre, André Negrão and Matthieu Vaxiviere remain in contention for the FIA World Endurance Championship title.
- The podium is the culmination of an extraordinary week highlighted by an exceptional parade organised by Alpine, which saw the first Formula 1 car complete a lap on the Circuit de la Sarthe.

Shortly before the start ceremony, Alpine celebrated its passion for motorsport by bringing together its best ambassadors and frontrunners behind the wheel of competition and road cars in front of an enthusiastic crowd. In this prestigious setting, the brand also demonstrated the full extent of its savoir-faire and stunned the world in becoming the first to run an F1 car on the Circuit de la Sarthe with Fernando Alonso at the wheel.

After this highlight in Le Mans, the rain arrived less than an hour before the race. Like its rivals, the team used Michelin grooved tyres on its A480 for the first time this year. Nicolas Lapierre was tasked to start on the wet track and made a superb pass on the n°8 Toyota to move up to second place.

Caught out when accelerating coming out of Indianapolis, he then began an impressive comeback from seventeenth place to re-enter the top ten in less than two laps, then the top five three laps later. A series of fastest times on an increasingly dry track saw him take the lead before his first pit-stop when he switched to slick tyres.

Nicolas Lapierre came back out in fifth place and continued pushing hard to move up to third place after nearly two and a half hours of the race. Despite the pitfalls and several caution periods that were not favourable to the team, André Negrão and Matthieu Vaxiviere also gave everything they had. The crew's junior member had to deal with an unscheduled change of the rear bodywork assembly due to a problem with the lights. That was followed by an off-track excursion at the first chicane on the Mulsanne Straight at 11:10 pm.

While he lost more than four minutes in the process, he managed to get going before handing over to Nicolas Lapierre, who once again charged back to third place. From then on, the battle with the n° 708 Glickenhaus for the final step of the podium place heated up. In the late hours of the evening, André Negrão continued at the same pace despite a slow right-rear puncture.

The team then adjusted its tyre strategy by tripling the stints of its drivers to save fresh tyres for the final stretch. In this intense tactical duel, with several tough on-track battles, the trio emerged from the dreaded night in contention for the podium thanks to a flawless performance by the technical team. Despite a trip through the gravel trap, Nicolas Lapierre accelerated the pace in the dawn fog to put his teammates in an ideal position.

Under the impetus of André Negrão and Alpine Elf Matmut Endurance Team tacticians, the team took advantage of a slow zone to slightly anticipate Matthieu Vaxiviere's return to the track. The decision proved crucial as the Frenchman undercut his rival and set the pace to pull away from his closest challenger by over two minutes.

With three hours to go, Nicolas Lapierre followed him and applied the finishing touches to the race to make up over a lap to the leaders. Despite a neutralisation at the beginning of the final hour, the team kept its composure, demonstrating its mastery with a lightning-fast refuelling with half an hour to go to make it a quadruple stint for Nicolas Lapierre.

In the waning minutes of the race, the Alpine A480 was in control, taking the chequered flag shortly after 4 pm in third place by more than half a lap over its rival, despite making three more stops. The result was witnessed by Laurent Rossi, Alpine CEO and Luca de Meo, Groupe Renault CEO, emphasising the importance of the 2021 edition of the 24 Hours of Le Mans for Alpine.

This performance also sees the crew of Nicolas Lapierre, André Negrão, and Matthieu Vaxiviere consolidate their third place in the FIA Hypercar Endurance World Championship and Alpine's second position in the manufacturers' classification ahead of the next meeting in Bahrain (28-30 October).

Philippe Sinault, Team Principal Alpine Elf Matmut Endurance Team

"Alpine definitely loves Le Mans. As I stood in blue on the podium, I realised that this is such a great story going on. While victory would have been fantastic to reinforce the legend of Alpine and Le Mans, we have no reason to be disappointed. It is an excellent result, achieved after an extremely difficult and tricky race. We are a small team with only one car. We can't afford to make any mistakes and we came very close to throwing it all away during the night. We quickly realised that we could not match the level of performance of the winners and we focused all of our attention on this important podium for all the people who support us. After this race, I think that we also have a more accurate picture of the field. Lastly, I am thinking of Jean-Pierre Jaussaud, a man who knew how to break the conventions of his time by being simple, efficient, serious, passionate and incredibly humble in order to perform incredibly well!"

Nicolas Lapierre

"It was great to see all the fans with French flags and Alpine colours. We missed them so much last year. We felt a great support all over the week and we would like to thank them. This third place is not what we expected, but it is the best we could have done today. Toyota were stronger than us. We must accept that, congratulate them and work even harder even if we can be proud of what we have achieved for a first 24 Hours of Le Mans start in the top-flight category."

André Negrão

"Every time I come to Le Mans with Nicolas, we finish on the podium together and we have a new kid with us this year in Matthieu! It's a great result for Alpine and for the team that has worked hard alongside us to meet the challenge of the Hypercar class and its new regulations, new processes and a new car for us. We weren't close enough to the leaders to capitalise on their technical issues and both Glickenhaus were also very strong on this track. We managed to outrun them in the final hours and it was a great satisfaction."

Matthieu Vaxiviere

"From the start of the race we saw quite quickly and clearly that the Toyotas had solid pace. We had to be flawless while pushing our limits. I made a mistake, which I accept, but we were able to get going without losing too much time. We stayed committed to our philosophy and our approach, we never overreacted and we managed to get this podium of which we can be proud. The team did a perfect job as they have done since the beginning of the year."

CLASSIFICATIONS

2021 24 Hours of Le Mans

1. Toyota Gazoo Racing n°7 – 371 laps
2. Toyota Gazoo Racing n°8 + 2 laps
- 3. Alpine Elf Matmut Endurance Team n°36 + 4 laps**
4. Glickenhaus Racing n°708 + 4 laps
5. Glickenhaus Racing n°709 + 7 laps

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Intermediate classifications

Start: 3rd (3rd Hypercar)
Hour 1: 5th (3rd Hypercar) at 1:17.046s - 14 laps
Hour 2: 3rd (3rd Hypercar) at 1:15.463s - 30 laps
Hour 3: 3rd (3rd Hypercar) at 1:54.121s - 46 laps
Hour 4: 3rd (3rd Hypercar) at 1:54.990s - 60 laps
Hour 5: 3rd (3rd Hypercar) at 1 lap - 75 laps
Hour 6: 3rd (3rd Hypercar) at 1 lap - 87 laps
Hour 7: 3rd (3rd Hypercar) at 1 lap - 100 laps
Hour 8: 8th (4th Hypercar) at 3 laps - 113 laps
Hour 9: 5th (4th Hypercar) at 3 laps - 126 laps
Hour 10: 4th (4th Hypercar) at 3 laps - 141 laps
Hour 11: 3rd (3rd Hypercar) at 3 laps – 157 laps
Hour 12: 3rd (3rd Hypercar) at 3 laps - 174 laps
Hour 13: 3rd (3rd Hypercar) at 3 laps - 190 laps
Hour 14: 3rd (3rd Hypercar) at 4 laps - 206 laps
Hour 15: 3rd (3rd Hypercar) at 3 laps - 222 laps
Hour 16: 3rd (3rd Hypercar) at 3 laps - 239 laps
Hour 17: 4th (4th Hypercar) at 5 laps - 254 laps
Hour 18: 3rd (3rd Hypercar) at 5 laps - 271 laps
Hour 19: 3rd (3rd Hypercar) at 5 laps - 287 laps
Hour 20: 3rd (3rd Hypercar) at 5 laps - 302 laps
Hour 21: 3rd (3rd Hypercar) at 4 laps - 319 laps
Hour 22: 3rd (3rd Hypercar) at 4 laps - 335 laps
Hour 23: 3rd (3rd Hypercar) at 4 laps - 351 laps
Hour 24: 3rd (3rd Hypercar) at 4 laps - 367 laps

FIA World Endurance Championship Hypercar

1. Toyota Gazoo Racing – 141 points
- 2. Alpine Elf Matmut Endurance Team – 90 points**
3. Glickenhaus Racing – 37 points

About Alpine

Founded in 1955 by Jean Rédélé, the brand has set itself apart with its French-style sports car. 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, Alpine Cars, Renault Sport Cars and Renault Sport Racing joined forces under the Alpine flagship. It thus became the brand dedicated to innovative, authentic, exclusive sportscars of Groupe Renault, benefiting from the heritage and craftsmanship of its historical plant in Dieppe, as well as the engineering mastery from the Formula One and Renault Sport teams.

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