

ALPINE RETAINS FIA WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP LEAD WITH SECOND IN SPA

07/05/2022

- Alpine Elf Endurance Team overcame the challenges of a rain-swept race with many twists and turns to secure its eighth consecutive podium finish in the FIA World Endurance Championship (FIA WEC).
- Starting from the front row, André Negrão, Nicolas Lapierre and Matthieu Vaxiviere had to deal with three red flags and several full course yellows and safety cars at the TotalEnergies 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps.
- Alpine will head to the 24 Hours of Le Mans still atop the FIA Hypercar World Endurance Championship.



Victorious at Sebring, Alpine Elf Endurance Team and its three drivers arrived in Belgium intending to carry on their strong start to the season.

From Thursday, the team used the three free practice sessions to deal with the balance of performances adjustments, focusing most particularly on energy management and fuel consumption. After this thorough preparation for the race, Matthieu Vaxiviere was given the task of qualifying the car. The Frenchman was on the pace immediately, taking second place in an immensely competitive session, with the entire Hypercar category covered by four-tenths of a second.



For his second consecutive start on the front row, André Negrão got away strong before being boxed in at the exit of turn one by the polesitter. Vulnerable to those tucked in his slipstream, the Brazilian slipped back to fourth place. After a solid first stint where he managed to stay in contact with the leaders despite the traffic, the race became chaotic with an accident causing a safety car period, then a red flag during which the heavens opened.

Hour two was all about strategic tyre tension before the restart, which was marked by the retirement of the race-leading n°8 Toyota. The team then decided to shift its strategy with a short stop to favour track position, allowing the Alpine A480 to exit the pits in the lead of the Hypercar category. After a subsequent interruption due to rain, André Negrão succumbed to the attacks of his four-wheel drive prototype rival.

Nicolas Lapierre took over from the Brazilian halfway through the race, and after more safety car periods and red flags, the French driver caught up with his closest rival before taking advantage of a full course yellow to hand over to Matthieu Vaxiviere. Slotting in second place, when he got behind the wheel, the crew's youngest member did his bit to keep the leaders under pressure before going for slick tyres in the final half-hour.

Despite his best efforts, Matthieu Vaxiviere and the Alpine A480 took the chequered flag in second place, less than half a minute behind the winners. This second podium finish of the season, the eighth in a row in the premier category, allows the A-arrowed brand to maintain its lead in the FIA World Endurance Championship ahead of the 24 Hours of Le Mans next month.

Nicolas Lapierre

"It was a solid race for the whole team. The rain made it difficult and it was pretty easy to make mistakes, but we rose to the challenge to claim second place. It's difficult to draw clear conclusions about our performance level in these changing conditions, but it was important to get to the end with a trouble-free race to head to Le Mans. We can't wait for June."

André Negrão

"It was a long day with three hours in the car. I expected to be outpaced by the Toyotas at the start, but we settled into our pace afterwards. It was my first real experience of racing in the rain with the A480. Despite this, we got a good result that strengthens our position as championship leaders before Le Mans. Like every year, we have a huge challenge ahead of us, but I'm confident because the team is doing such a good job."

Matthieu Vaxiviere

"The outcome of this race is extremely positive. We put in a solid performance thanks to the perfect job done by the team. There is nothing we can do about the weather, but we managed to avoid making mistakes in tricky conditions, and our position as championship



leaders allowed us to adopt a cautious but effective strategy. I'm confident for Le Mans, and we'll fight to do the best job possible in the 24 Hours."

Philippe Sinault, Alpine Elf Endurance Team Principal

"It was a good race despite its difficulty. After Sebring, this race underscores just how tough the start of the season has been, but we're doing very well both operationally and in terms of the results. We have been able to deal with the adjustments to the balance of performance to be in contention, but what I like most is the calmness and serenity of our squad despite the torrential conditions. This eighth consecutive podium shows that our car and drivers are extremely reliable. I am very proud of this as we look forward to our second appearance in the 24 Hours of Le Mans in the premier category. We know that we have a better grasp of our car compared to last year and this is in line with our ambitions. It's a great source of pride to go to Le Mans in the lead of the championship. This edition is shaping up to be a fantastic event that I'm looking forward to sharing with many people despite the three weeks of intense preparation that awaits us."

CLASSIFICATIONS

TotalEnergies 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps

1. Toyota Gazoo Racing n°7 103 laps
- 2. Alpine Elf Endurance Team n°36 +27.473s**
3. Team WRT n°31 +1:06.185s
4. Realteam Racing by WRT n°41 +1:40.676s
5. JOTA n°38 +1:48.571s

FIA World Endurance Championship Hypercar

- 1. Alpine Elf Endurance Team – 57 points**
2. Toyota Gazoo Racing – 52 points
3. Glickenhaus Racing – 39 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. 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.

Press Contacts

Orianne TAMBURINI

GM Communications Alpine

orianne.tamburini@alpinecars.com

+33 (6) 26 63 28 14

Websites

www.alpinecars.com

fr.media.alpinecars.com

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