



PRESS RELEASE

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8 HOURS OF BAHRAIN: SIGNATECH ALPINE ELF REMAINS IN THE TITLE FIGHT

- **With a third top five in four races, André Negrão, Pierre Ragues and Thomas Laurent keep the Signatech Alpine Elf team just 16-point adrift of LMP2 leaders at the mid-way point of the season.**
- **The team will make the most of the winter break to make a strong return in the 6 Hours of Austin on 23 February, 2020**

After missing out on a podium finish in the two most recent rounds of the FIA World Endurance Championship, Signatech Alpine Elf headed to Sakhir with a strong desire to end 2019 on a high.

Following the first two productive free-practice sessions, with one run during the day and the other at night, *Les Bleus* continued to work on the balance of the Alpine A470 before Pierre Ragues and André Negrão got behind the wheel for qualifying.

For the first time in its history, Alpine didn't take the pole position at the Bahrain International Circuit due to a spin early in the session as the duo had to make do with large flat spots on their tyres. Seventh in LMP2 and with one less set of tyres prior to the start, the Philippe Sinault led squad lined up for the race with the bit between their teeth.

André Negrão got off to a strong start on the opening lap that was marked by contact between two LMP1 cars. Briefly fourth overall, the Brazilian driver settled into the top five in LMP2 when the safety car was called into service.

He did a fantastic job in traffic in his first double-stint to put the n°36 Alpine A470 into the top three at end of hour one. In the middle of a tightly bunched chase group, André Negrão oscillated between third and fourth place before briefly occupying the lead by extending his second stint compared to the competition to make up for the handicap resulting from qualifying.

Pierre Ragues got in the car while the sun gradually set over the Kingdom of Bahrain. The Silver driver did his part in perfectly managing the tyres on this demanding track on the tyres before Thomas Laurent began his opening double-stint.

Thanks to the Frenchman's solid pace, the crew was fifth at half-distance, then picked up a position before André Negrão took over for another double-stint. The Brazilian was again

relayed by Pierre Ragues who reached his minimum driving time.

With one hour and twenty minutes remaining, Thomas Laurent went back out in fifth place and immediately went on the attack while the different strategies lined up with a full course yellow 45 minutes from the finish. The team took advantage to put in its final pit stop before the Frenchman did a masterful job with fuel consumption to secure fifth place, 13 seconds behind a competitor ineligible to score points and a lap ahead of the leaders in the general classification coming into the weekend.

With 18 points scored in Bahrain, Signatech Alpine Elf stays in contact with the leaders in an LMP2 category that is as close as ever with the top six cars covered by less than 25 points, which is equal to a win at the next round.

After the rookie tests today, the Signatech Elf Alpine team will receive this evening the FIA LMP2 Endurance Trophy for its title won during the 2018-2019 season. The winter break then begins just until the return of the FIA World Endurance Championship at the Circuit of the Americas in Austin from 21-23 February, 2020. The round will begin a string of four races that will conclude at the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

Philippe Sinault, Team principal Signatech Alpine Elf

“ We always said this season would be extremely close. Not only is it the case, but the statement is an understatement with the top-five teams separated by just 16 points at the mid-season point. Nothing is settled and it will be a battle all the way to the end. In this context, the smallest error can be costly. We made one in qualifying, where we needed some time to find the right set-up. The car was perhaps a bit ‘difficult’, Pierre lost control and locked up the four wheels to avoid much more serious consequences. Unfortunately, it cost us a set of tyres while we are limited to six and a half sets, a quota that we absolutely needed for an eight-hour race. We actually made one less stop, which was obviously detrimental to our pace. This didn’t help us, but there were several positive points. André put in an excellent start to move us into the leading trio and in a good momentum after our tricky qualifying. The setup also seemed to be good as Thomas posted the third fastest lap in the race at just 0.09s to the reference time. This showed that we had the same pace as the leaders on equal tyre wear. We are still in the leading group, just 16 points behind first place, and it is an important point when taking into account the quality and reliability of our rivals since the start of the season, including an eight-hour race like today’s.

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André Negrão

“ It wasn't a difficult weekend, but once again we had to work hard to have a good car for qualifying. We have to fix this, because our race pace was quite solid. I got a good start and finished my first double-stint with the lead. Pierre struggled a little more, but we managed to settle into fifth place and it is worth fourth place points as the G-Drive is ineligible to score. It is a rather positive result, but we need to do better in Austin, and even more so in qualifying. ”

Pierre Ragues

“ We improved a lot with the car throughout the free-practice sessions, but my mistake in qualifying cost us a set of tyres so we knew that an eight-hour race on a circuit that severely degrades tyres would be complicated. We focused our strategy on this aspect to make a minimum number of stops and we made one less than everyone else. We did our best and there are positives to be taken away. We did show some good things and were on solid pace when we were battling for the lead. We are still in the hunt and I hope that the winter break will allow us to come back in the best of conditions. ”

Thomas Laurent

“ The 8 Hours of Bahrain was gruelling between the heat and humidity, but we can draw some positives. It was probably our best race of the season, although our position on the grid and our fewer tyres explain the final result. I think we were among the three fastest crews on track as our times have shown. The team did an excellent job with the pit stops and set-ups, but we know that we need to work on qualifying to make things easier. The engineers were able to gather a lot of data to prepare for Austin, where Alpine won last time out. The goal will thus be to repeat this result. ”

Classification

8 Hours of Bahrain – LMP2

1. United Autosports n°22 182 laps

2. JOTA n°38 +21.500s
3. Jackie Chan DC Racing n°37 + 1 lap
4. G-Drive Racing n°26 + 1 lap *
- 5. Signatech Alpine Elf n°36 + 1 lap**
6. Racing Team Nederland n°29 + 2 laps
7. Cool Racing n°42 + 4 laps
8. High Class Racing n°33 + 5 laps
9. Cetilar Racing n°33 + 9 laps

** competitor ineligible to score points*

FIA LMP2 Teams' Trophy

1. Jackie Chan DC Racing n°37 – 72 points
2. United Autosports n°22 – 69 points
3. Racing Team Nederland n°29 – 66 points
4. JOTA n°38 – 62 points
- 5. Signatech Alpine Elf n°36 – 56 points**
6. Cool Racing n°42 – 48 points
7. High Class Racing n°33 – 35 points
8. Cetilar Racing n°33 – 26 points

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