

A1 Team France, Round 5, Gauteng

Out of luck!

Today, A1 Team France took part in qualifying practice for the 2 races in the fifth round of the A1GP World Cup of Motorsport Championship on the Kyalami circuit in the Gauteng province in South Africa.

In the morning, the team finished free practice in fifth place and its hopes were high when qualifying began. The first 2 segments went off well and Nicolas Prost set the seventh-quickest time without using his power boost. He will start from this place for the Sprint race.

A1 Team France decided to use its power boost in the fourth segment and it looked like it was going to set a stunning time and start the Feature race from the front of the grid. Unfortunately, Nicolas had only done a few hundred metres when the session was interrupted by a red flag. The Brazilian car had gone off bringing qualifying to a premature end. This incident put A1 Team France in eleventh place, as it was unable to do a flying lap.

Knowing it is as quick as the front-runners A1 Team France is feeling disappointed this evening. But it is determined to bounce back tomorrow by using an aggressive strategy.

Olivier Panis, sporting director: *“Since the return of the rule using the power boost only once in the four segments, qualifying has become a gamble. That’s the A1GP hallmark, which emphasizes excitement. To start from the front of the grid you have to risk leaving it to the very last minute to go out, so you can fall foul of race incidents. Today, we were out of luck but we made the right choice. In addition, Nicolas did all we asked of him. His analytic approach is a joy for the engineers and for the mechanics too.”*

Nicolas Prost: *“I’m disappointed. We all thought it’d be possible to finish at the top of the time sheets and we knew it was achievable. My place on the grid for race one isn’t too bad knowing that two teams have already used their power boost, which gives an advantage of around 1.5 secs per lap. Then I had to lift off after only two corners in the last segment because of a red flag, and it was impossible to defend our chances. Of course, it’s frustrating but that’s racing. I’ll do all I can to pull back places on the track tomorrow and obtain two good results for the team, even if overtaking seems difficult here.”*

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A1GP Press Office

Ann Bradshaw
+44 20 7908 6250

Ann.Bradshaw@A1GP.com

A1 Team FRA Press Office

Yan Lefort
+33 625 402 052

media@a1teamfra.com

A1 Team FRA On-Track

Claire Magnant
+33 673 556 419

cmagnant@a1teamfra.com