

Round 5: Gauteng, Sprint and Feature Races

A blank weekend!

Today, A1 Team France took part in the Sprint and Feature races in the fifth round of the 2008-09 A1GP World Cup of Motorsport Championship on the Kyalami circuit in the Gauteng province in South Africa. Overall, it has been a disappointing weekend for the team. Yesterday, Nicolas Prost did not have any luck in qualifying and today, he finished in 10th place in the Sprint race and was knocked off in the Feature event after only a few laps. The team leaves South Africa empty handed.

In the Sprint race Nicolas lost a place at the start and then another on the track in the opening laps. The A1 Team France driver was struggling with braking problems, and was unable to get the best out of his car. He lost another place after being hindered by a rival during his pit stop, but the car's balance was better and he began lapping at the same speed as his opponents. He saw the flag in 10th spot, as the small number of laps did not give him enough time to fight his way back up through the field.

In the Feature Race he was unable to defend his chances. The team had opted for an aggressive strategy to gain positions but Nicolas was hit by another driver after only 6 laps. His car was too badly damaged to continue.

After Kyalami, A1 Team France has fallen back 1 place to fifth in the teams' classification with 41 points. The next round is on 20th-22nd April on the new Algarve International circuit in Portugal.

Olivier Panis, sporting director: *"This weekend Lady Luck hasn't smiled on us. We had everything it took to score a couple of good results but a red flag in qualifying and an accident in the race dashed our hopes. It just goes to show that the slightest mistake in A1GP can have serious consequences. But we've done our best as our results in Kyalami are due to race incidents that had nothing to do with A1 Team France. We hope to have more success at the next event."*

Nicolas Prost: *"It's very frustrating to have the speed to fight at the front and to finish the weekend without scoring any points. Apart from the result, our working method and our speed here on the Kyalami circuit have given us cause for satisfaction. We've got the pace to be up among the front-runners, and we owe our setbacks to unfavourable circumstances rather than any direct mistakes on the part of the team. I'm confident that we'll bounce back quickly."*

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