

Round 2, Chengdu, Practice: ON THE RIGHT TRACK

Today, A1 Team France took part in the rookie session and the first free practice on the Chengdu circuit in China, which is hosting the second round of the 2008-09 A1GP World Cup of Motorsport Championship.

Nicolas Prost replacing Loïc Duval was on the pace right away. On his first flying lap he was already up among the front-runners, and he finished the rookie session in second place just 1/100s off the best time. In free practice in which all the drivers took part Nico showed the same fighting spirit. He held on to 1st place for a long time despite numerous interruptions and ended the session in 2nd spot. These performances augur well for the rest of the weekend.

AB Motors will show the Chengdu qualifying session tomorrow at 14h00, and will televise the 1st race at 14h00 on Sunday. Race 2 will be shown at 15h00 on NT1. A1 Team France currently leads the championship after the first 2 rounds on the Zandvoort circuit.

A1 Team France has concluded a one-off partnership agreement for the Chinese round with the Carrefour Hypermarket chain, which has 5 outlets in the Chengdu province. Its logo will appear on the rear wing of the car, and A1 Team France will be given a lot of publicity in the catalogues published by the local shops. A competition will allow some of the 100 000 daily visitors to win tickets to attend the 2 races on Sunday.

Olivier Panis, sporting director: *"We managed to put in a lot of good laps today. We seem to be on the pace, which is very encouraging. Tomorrow, we're going to fine tune our set-up even more and Nicolas will use every lap to up his speed. Overall, the first sessions have been positive, and we're tackling the rest of the weekend in a confident frame of mind."*

Nicolas Prost, driver: *"It's been a good day's preparation. We were able to run through our technical programme, and I felt at home in the car right away. The circuit's bumpy and fairly twisty and we seem to have found the right set-up. I was a bit surprised to be at the front, but I mustn't raise my hopes too much, as it's only the first day. The hardest is still to come and I'm looking forward to doing battle in qualifying!"*