

A1GP: 2008/09 SUMMARY

1. Nicolas, how would you sum up your experience as nominated driver in A1GP with A1 Team France?

NP: "As is often the case, there are both positive and negative conclusions to be drawn from this season. From a positive point of view, I showed that I was able to fight at the front in Chengdu (China), Kyalami (South Africa) and Brands Hatch (Great Britain). We were able to match the pace of the quickest, which is encouraging for my first year. Negatively speaking, we didn't score many telling results, sometimes because of errors on my part, and other times because of mechanical problems for which the team wasn't responsible. I don't like talking too much about luck, but I have to say that we didn't have a lot at certain moments!"

2. Is the car designed by Ferrari quicker in relation to the old one?

NP: "Honestly, Ferrari's done a fantastic job with this car. The Italian manufacturer discovered a completely new role by supplying a monotype car and the result is excellent. Even if it ran into a few reliability problems, which is normal at that level of racing, Ferrari was able to solve them very quickly. In addition, the car's level of competitiveness is excellent. I'm sure it'll progress a lot during the break."

3. In season 4 the team seemed to be standing still in relation to previous years. Why?

NP: "I think that several factors explain this situation. First of all, with the arrival of the new car the overall level of the championship made a big step forward, and A1GP attracted quicker and quicker drivers. Then changing drivers in the middle of the season isn't ideal. I also suffered because of a lack of experience. But don't confuse lack of results with lack of competitiveness: with a little bit more luck we could have scored at least two rostrum finishes."

4. So, overall, the performance is encouraging for next season...

NP: "Brands Hatch was very encouraging as we had the speed to win. We worked well in the final races and we learned from our mistakes. We've now got a good base for the future. At the moment nothing's been decided for next year, but the team and I get on like a house on fire at every level. The quality of the championship is very high and you have to work really hard to be at the front. The teams that won showed that stability is crucial if you want to win the championship."





5. You're also racing in the LMS Championship. You'll be at Spa-Francorchamps this weekend in the Speedy Sebah Racing LM P1 prototype. Is it another kind of challenge?

NP: "It's a completely different challenge but just as exciting with other parameters to be taken into account. The two programmes dovetail very well."

6. What are your aims for the LM P1 season?

NP: "The overall level is very high, but I'll be really disappointed if we don't manage to fight at the front in all the LMS races. After that, the aim's to finish on the championship rostrum."

7. In a short time you'll be racing in the Le Mans 24 Hours. Is it an important event for you?

NP: "It's a mythic race and it means a lot to me. I can't wait to be there and I hope we'll have a strong race. But it's difficult to know at exactly what level we'll be able to fight."

8. Finally, is the A1GP one of your priorities for next season?

NP: "For a driver, single-seaters are the ultimate pleasure. Today, A1GP is one of the few attractive single-seater championships with F1 and Indy Car. I'd really love to continue with Team France, build something on a medium-term basis and try and win the title. It's up to the team to decide which driver it wants to invest in, but with the evolution of the championship, a certain stability is vital if you want to fight for the title."

