

World's best Autonomous Racing teams push the limits of driverless technology during A2RL qualifying

- Six international teams qualify for the world-first six-car autonomous Grand Final on November 15
- Reigning champions TUM claim pole position after thrilling multi-car qualification performance
- Italy's Unimore sets fastest-ever autonomous lap, beating a professional driver benchmark at Yas Marina Circuit, demonstrates remarkable precision in autonomous racing avoiding collisions during qualifying sprint.

Abu Dhabi, UAE – 23, October 2025: Qualification for the Abu Dhabi Autonomous Racing League (A2RL) has concluded with a thrilling pole position for reigning champions, TUM. The German team is one of six that have made it through a demanding, multi-stage qualification process to the Grand Final on November 15.

A2RL is a demonstration of cutting-edge autonomous technology, accelerating AI development through competition in extreme conditions. Eleven international teams travelled to Abu Dhabi to qualify for the second season of the world's most advanced autonomous racing championship.

The competition is designed to push artificial intelligence to its physical limits as the best minds from academic institutions, private companies, and privateer race teams compete on the world stage for a US\$2.25 million prize pool.

Record lap times

Further pushing the frontier of driverless technology, history was also made during the week of intensive qualification as teams began to consistently set sub-1-minute lap times on the North Circuit configuration of the Yas Marina track. Italy's Unimore team, a returning finalist, set an autonomous lap record of 58.87 seconds - seven hundredths of a second faster than the benchmark lap set by a professional human racing driver during data collection laps (59.20 seconds).

The record-setting lap was achieved during Pace Qualification, where all teams completed three separate 15-minute sessions to set their fastest possible times. This was followed by Multi-Car Qualification, four heats of twelve laps, where performance highlights included a spectacular overtake on Unimore from TUM, securing pole position in their pursuit of back-to-back wins.

World First: Six-Car Grand Final

Six teams – TUM, Unimore, Kinetiz, TII Racing, PoliMOVE and Constructor – qualified for the Grand Final on 15th of November 2025 at Yas Marina Circuit. Representing four countries, they will compete in a 24-lap multi-car race, the largest race of its kind and a spectacle like no other. The event will also feature a Silver Race time trial for the remaining five A2RL teams.

This year, former F1 driver Daniil Kvyat returns for the second instalment of the Human vs AI showcase - a demonstration of machine precision versus human instinct and the rapid evolution of AI performance.

Stephane Timpano, CEO of ASPIRE, commented: *“This season, we’re pushing the boundaries of autonomous racing even further and redefining what is possible. From week to week, we are seeing ‘machine’ capabilities rapidly approaching human performance - even surpassing some human benchmark times set during data collection. This week, Unimore has thrown down the gauntlet with a record-breaking lap time.*

“Next month, we will witness six formidably competitive teams race for victory. Last year’s A2RL Champion TUM is in pole position, but given the intense competition during qualification, the Grand Final in November is set to be an exhilarating conclusion!”

Ayoub Raji, Co-Lead of Unimore Racing said: *“We are proud to have demonstrated that an autonomous race car can deliver close to human capabilities. The competition was fierce, with many teams bringing extensive experience and strong technical resources. Our autonomous stack proved not only to be the fastest but also the safest, skillfully exploiting the kerbs to avoid a collision during TUM’s overtake. We can’t wait to be back on track for the Grand Final on November 15, pushing our software to the absolute limit in pursuit of first place. “*

Abu Dhabi Autonomous Week

The 2025 A2RL race will be the climax of the first-ever Abu Dhabi Autonomous Week (ADAW). This new six-day event brings together researchers and industry experts across a series of high-profile summits, exhibitions, and events. ADAW includes the Abu Dhabi Autonomous Summit, DRIFTx Exhibition, and RoboCup Asia-Pacific.

A2RL was conceptualized under the vision and direction of H.E. Faisal Al Bannai, Adviser to the UAE President and Secretary General of Abu Dhabi’s Advanced Technology Research Council (ATRC). It is organized and driven by ASPIRE, part of the ATRC that is responsible for technological “Grand Challenges”. ASPIRE leads the UAE’s efforts to advance breakthrough research, foster global collaborations, and translate high-impact technologies into real-world applications.

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About Abu Dhabi Autonomous Racing League

The Abu Dhabi Autonomous Racing League (A2RL) is a pioneering new series of competition that combines the push for artificial intelligence (AI) innovation through extreme sports. Each year, engineers, programmers, and scientists will come together to develop leading-edge AI for a variety of autonomous vehicles, including cars and drones, ready to compete in a series of challenges and claim their stake in a multi-million-dollar prize pool.

Organized by ASPIRE, the innovation acceleration arm of Abu Dhabi’s Advanced Technology and Research Council, A2RL aims to accelerate the global development of autonomous systems and technologies. It is also intended to help make Abu Dhabi a global R&D hub for autonomous vehicle technology while also inspiring the next generation of STEM talent.

List of Teams in Grand Final (in order of qualification)

1. TUM Autonomous Motorsport (Technical University of Munich - Germany)
2. Unimore Racing (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia - Italy)
3. Kinetiz (Kinetiz Racing – (Singapore / UAE collaboration)
4. TII Racing (Technology Innovation Institute - UAE)
5. Polimove Autonomous Racing Team (Politecnico di Milano - Italy)

6. Constructor University Racing Team (Constructor University - Germany)

List of Teams in Silver Race (in order of qualification)

1. RAPSON (HUMDA Lab - Hungary)
2. Code 19 (Privateer - USA)
3. Fly Eagle (Beijing Institute of Technology & Khalifa University - China & UAE)
4. FR4IAV (Academic & industry partnership - France)
5. TGM (Servus Japan Inc. - Japan)