

Press Information



Sebring, 15 March 2001

All Audi front rows at Sebring

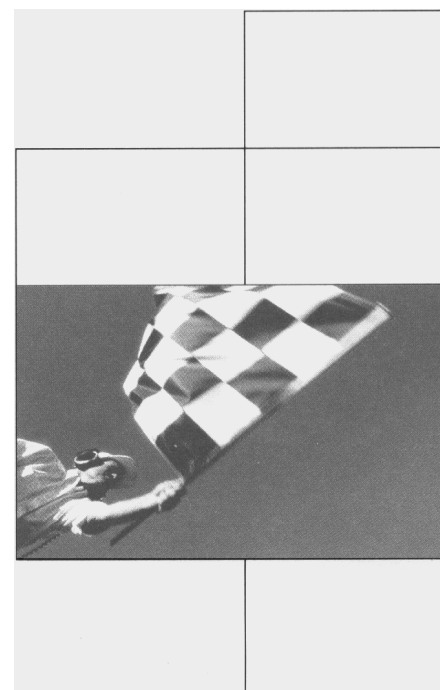
Saturday's 12 Hours of Sebring/Florida (start at 10:40 a.m. local time) will see two all Audi front rows: Positions on top of the grid of the 40 car-strong field did not change during the final qualifying session on Thursday held under the humid heat of Florida.

The two silver Infineon Audi R8 sportscars of the Team Audi Sport North America will share the front row. Italy's Emanuele Pirro secured his first pole position in the American Le Mans Series (ALMS). His teammate Rinaldo Capello was almost as fast in the companion Infineon R8.

While most of the teams struggled to find a perfect setup for the bumpy track at Sebring, the two R8s entered by the Audi customer teams of Champion and Johansson convinced as well: They will start the race from the second row on Saturday.

Audi does not only look for a repeat of last year's Sebring victory: Like in 1999 and 2000, the famous endurance race in Florida is a dress rehearsal for the 24 Hours of Le Mans on June 16/17.

Frank Biela (#2) and Rinaldo Capello (#1) will be the start drivers in the two Infineon Audi R8s on Saturday.



Quotes after final qualifying

Emanuele Pirro (#2): "This is the first pole position for me in this championship. Putting the car on pole is satisfying. It does not mean a lot for the race, but we have been the fastest car so far. To keep the pole gives us the confidence to get some clear laps at the beginning of the race. I am happy to have delivered the car in first place to Frank, who will start the race on Saturday."

Frank Biela (#2): "We expected to be in a strong position here, because we had a good setup from last year. We played a little bit with the shock absorbers and were able to cure the understeer we had on Monday. The car runs very well, it is reliable and we are on top of the field - you can't expect more. Of course we will get a lot of pressure from the customer teams which makes it not easy for us."

Tom Kristensen (#2): "I am ready to race. The car is good and Emanuele proved the speed of the car in qualifying. However, I am a little bit disappointed about the Panoz. They seem to have problems on this bumpy circuit and have gone a step back from Texas where they have been much closer to us. But with four Audi sportscars on top the race will be very exciting."

Rinaldo Capello (#1): "We improved the car compared to yesterday and solved all the problems we had. Now we are very close to the other car. I

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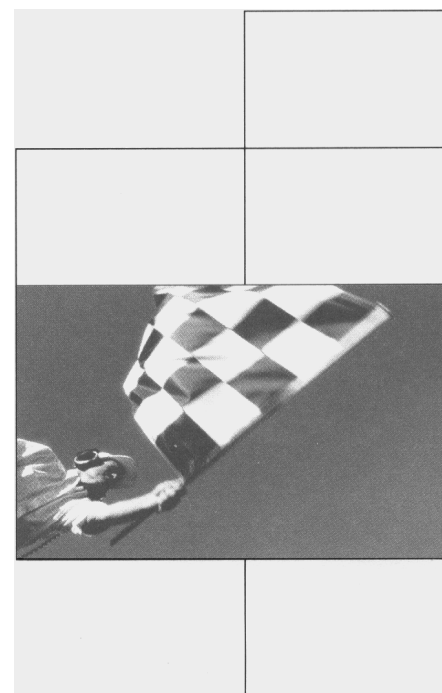
just could not improve my time because the track was slower than yesterday. I think it will be a very tough race, especially if it stays so hot."

Laurent Aiello (#1): "I like these kind of circuits very much because they have very little grip and therefore you get to the limit of the car quickly. This is a big challenge and I find that very interesting. The Sebring circuit reminds me of the air field tracks in Germany during my time in the Super Touring Car Championship. For me it's the first time that I race in the States. The atmosphere here at Sebring is very special and apart from that it is nice to be in warm weather after the long winter months in Europe."

Michele Alboreto (#1): "We are first and second with our team, but the competition is now between four Audi sportscars. So life for the Joest team is a little bit more complicated. It is a long race, you have to be focussed not to make any mistakes. Especially in the beginning, when there are many GT cars on the track, you can lose or gain a lot of time."

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich, Head of Audi Sport: "Today the track was slower than yesterday, because of dirt. Emanuele and Dindo drove very close times and also our customer teams are really quick. Four Audi sportscars in front of course makes me happy. It looks like Panoz has some problems with their cars, but until the race they still have one and a half days to work."

Reinhold Joest, Team Director Audi Sport North America: "There are still a few differences between the setup of our two cars, but I'm confident that we will work out the best for both cars. Both of the Audi customer teams are close on our heels. We know what we are able to do and if nothing unpredictable happens in the race, I believe that we will stay in front."





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Starting grid at Sebring

1. Biela/Kristensen/Pirro (Infineon Audi R8)	1m 49.110s
2. Aiello/Alboreto/Capello (Infineon Audi R8)	1m 49.477s
3. Kelleners/Schroeder/Wallace (Audi R8)	1m 49.974s
4. Johansson/Smith (Audi R8)	1m 50.903s
5. Field/Dayton/Sutherland (Lola-Judd)	1m 53.182s
6. Magnussen/Brabham (Panoz)	1m 53.257s
7. Weaver/Leitzinger/Forbes-R. (Riley&Scott)	1m 53.536s
8. Bourdais/Boullion/Redon (Courage-Peugeot)	1m 54.283s
9. Konrad/Borcheller/Gavin (Saleen)	2m 00.426s
10. Fellows/Kneifel/O'Connell (Chevrolet)	2m 00.728s

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