



Press Information

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Audi 1-2 at Infineon Raceway

ALMS: Round three of the American Le Mans Series (ALMS) will go down in history. Not only did the spectators see the first overall victory of an LMP675 sportscar, but also one of the most exiting races that remained undecided until the last of its 102 laps.

The lighter prototypes of the 675 class took full advantage of their 225 kilogram weight advantage over the LMP900 sportscars for the first time on the hilly and twisty circuit in the vineyards of Sonoma Valley close to San Francisco. The two MG Lolas of the Dyson team secured the front row of the grid for themselves ahead of the Audi R8 sports cars of the Joest and Champion customer teams.

Although ALMS points are only awarded in the various classes, the Audi teams did not surrender victory to the MG Lola so easily. "We are not driving for class wins, but for overall victories," declared Ralf Jüttner, Infineon Team Joest Technical Director. The Audi drivers followed his words: Initially, during the opening stages of the race, it was JJ Lehto in the Team Champion Audi R8 who put the MG Lolas under pressure. The Finn split the leading pair as early as on lap seven. He followed pole sitter Butch Leitzinger like a shadow till the first full course yellow.

Frank Biela was also able to reduce the gap to Leitzinger and Lehto. During the first of a total of four caution periods, the Infineon Team Joest Audi R8 took the lead. "The boys did a fantastic job in the pits," enthused Biela after handing the R8 over to Marco Werner. Werner rapidly was able to open a gap of over ten seconds before the sensor of the left rear tyre alerted a loss of pressure. The Joest crew was able to change the punctured tyre during another caution period, despite that the Joest R8 dropped to fourth.

Johnny Herbert in the Champion Audi took advantage of the Joest team's bad luck only for a very short time. Also the Briton thought he had a puncture and came into the pits. "However, it transpired it was only 'pick-up' on the tyres," explained Herbert, who lost almost a lap due to the unscheduled pit-stop and also his chances to win the race. He was still able to bring the Champion R8 back from fifth to third capturing the place on the podium for Team ADT Champion Racing with a stunning overtaking manoeuvre on the very last corner.

Meanwhile, Infineon Team Joest once again took advantage of the economic fuel consumption of the FSI engine in the rear of the Audi R8. By saving fuel, Marco Werner was able to avoid a third pit-stop and to take the lead again. However, another caution period in the thrilling closing stages of the exciting race, again cost the advantage. 15 laps from the finish, James Weaver squeezed his MG Lola past Marco Werner. "I put pressure on until the very end and hoped for a chance in traffic, but it did not come," said Werner, who crossed the finish line just 3.708 seconds behind Weaver after 2:45 hours of exciting racing.

By winning the LMP900 class, Audi drivers Marco Werner and Frank Biela are now leading the overall classification of the ALMS. JJ Lehto and Johnny Herbert, who made it an Audi 1-2 in the LMP900 category at Infineon Raceway, are just behind them. The next race will take place as soon as next Sunday on the street course in Trois-Rivières (Canada).

AUDI AG
Communication Motorsport
D-85045 Ingolstadt

Phone +49 (0)841 89-34200
Telefax +49 (0)841 89-38617
motorsport-media@audi.de



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Infineon Raceway (USA), 27 July, Round 3 of the American Le Mans-Series (ALMS)

1 Weaver/Leitzinger (MG Lola) 102 laps in 2h 45m 57.739s

2 Biela/Werner (Audi R8) + 3.708s

3 Herbert/Lehto (Audi R8) + 39.750s

4 Auberlen/Theys (Dallara-MG) + 39.878s

5 Beretta/Jeanette (Panoz) - 1 lap

Positions after 3 of 9 rounds: 1 Biela and Werner, 62 points; 3 Lehto, 58; 4 Herbert, 55; 5 Theys, 36.

Next race: Trois-Rivières (CDN), 3 August

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