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Motorsport

Mosport, 18 August 2002

Audi achieves hat-trick in Mosport

On the fastest track of the American Le Mans Series (ALMS), Team Audi Sport North America achieved yet another hat-trick: After the 24 Hours of Le Mans and the 12 Hour race at Sebring, Audi has also won the „Grand Prix at Mosport“ for the third time in a row. Like two weeks ago in Trois-Rivières, Rinaldo Capello and Tom Kristensen drove their Infineon Audi R8 to victory.

While Johnny Herbert and Stefan Johansson made it an Audi 1-2 victory in their 2001-spec R8 entered by the Audi customer team Champion Racing, the Mosport race ended early on the 89th of 121 laps for Frank Biela and Emanuele Pirro. Following an exciting fight between Biela/Pirro, JJ Lehto's Cadillac and the eventual winning Infineon Audi R8 of Capello/Kristensen during the first half of the race, Emanuele Pirro spun off in second position in a fast left hand corner crashing at quite an obtuse angle against a concrete wall protected by tyres, just before his second scheduled pitstop. The safety cell of the Infineon Audi R8 withstood the enormous impact. An x-ray at the nearby hospital at Oshawa revealed that Emanuele Pirro had no injuries.

After their fifth victory in seven races, Audi continues to be on title course in the American Le Mans Series. Before the last three rounds at Laguna Seca, Miami and Road Atlanta, Audi driver Tom Kristensen is three points ahead of his teammate Rinaldo Capello. Johnny Herbert moved to third in the overall classification thanks to his second place at Mosport.

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Quotes after the race

Rinaldo Capello (Infineon Audi R8 #2): "Of course, our victory is overshadowed by Emanuele's accident. It would have been an exciting fight until the very end. Today the track was very slippery and coming through traffic was the deciding factor. This time I was a little bit more lucky, I was able to take the lead after a few laps and to defend it until the end of my stint. Depending on the traffic, I could move away from Frank or he closed in on me. It was a difficult race."

Tom Kristensen (Infineon Audi R8 #2): "Concerning the set up we kept what we had yesterday in qualifying and it proved to be the right decision. It was a hard race especially to keep the gap to Emanuele. He had bad luck with the accident and I am really happy that he is okay. In the race you couldn't keep any rhythm because of all the traffic. After I did the quickest lap time I knew I could respond in case it would become really close. In the end I had a very good and tough fight with Johnny right to the limit. The team told me on the radio that they would like to be one lap in front in case another yellow comes. That was not easy, but it worked out. Johnny went right to the edge. After the race we both said: Great racing!"

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Frank Biela (Infineon Audi R8 #1): "Our series of bad luck continues. The car is good, the team works superbly, at the moment we simply have no luck. Thank god Emanuele is okay, that's the most important thing. We had a little oversteer today, presumably because it was hotter than during the previous days. Despite that we were fast. I just had an unlucky situation one time in traffic, that's why Dindo was able to pass me."

Emanuele Pirro (Infineon Audi R8 #1): "The accident happened just before my second scheduled pitstop. I wanted to lose as little time as possible on my way to the pits. I came on the dirty line and crashed into the tyre wall. It was a heavy impact, but I am okay."

Johnny Herbert (ADT Champion Audi R8 #38): "We weren't as competitive as we were hoping. But second place is a good result for Champion Racing. Of course it is unfortunate with Emanuele, but it is the way it goes sometimes. It has become more difficult for me in the championship with Tom and Dindo winning."

Stefan Johansson (ADT Champion Audi R8 #38): "We have to be happy with second under this circumstances. We had a fairly eventful day. We tried to play strategy when we stopped earlier for refuelling hoping to fall in the right window which we did not. Then Johnny got a stop-and-go. But anyway we did not have the speed to match the 'works' cars so second place is acceptable."

Ralf Jüttner, Technical Director Team Audi Sport North America: "Today the most important thing is that nothing serious happened to Emanuele, the rest is irrelevant. This was quite a fright. There were no television pictures, but the impact must have been very hard. Until the accident it had been a great race. Our cars were absolutely equal and Cadillac was also able to stay close to us for quite a long time."

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich, Head of Audi Sport: "Again this year Mosport was the race which cannot go without an accident. This time it happened to Emanuele. After the first medical check by the race doctors I had the chance to talk to Emanuele. He told me he is quite okay and is sorry that he had this accident. Mosport once again offered mixed fortune for us, on one hand our two 'works' Audi R8 sportscars were in the lead until the accident, on the other hand the bad luck because of Emanuele's accident. In the end we managed the victory, our customer team Champion caught second place and Cadillac proved that we always have to consider them serious competitors."

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Race results

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| 1. Capello/Kristensen (Infineon Audi R8) | 121 laps |
| 2. Herbert/Johansson (Audi R8) | - 1 lap |
| 3. Lehto/Angelelli (Cadillac) | - 2 laps |
| 4. Magnussen/Brabham (Panoz) | - 3 laps |
| 5. Herta/Auberlen (Panoz) | - 3 laps |
| 6. Bernard/Collard (Cadillac) | - 3 laps |
| 7. Fellows/O'Connell (Chevrolet) | - 8 laps |

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| 8. Pilgrim/Collins (Chevrolet) | - 9 laps |
| 9. Konrad/Borcheller (Saleen) | - 11 laps |
| 10. Neuhaus/Field (Lola-Judd) | - 13 laps |

Photos and further information can be found on the internet:
www.audi-sportpress.com (accreditation required)

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