

**Audi**

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Motorsport

Washington, 21 July 2002

Audi achieves two podium positions in US capital

60.000 spectators in the heart of Washington saw an enthusiastic debut of the American Le Mans Series (ALMS) in the US capital. The main protagonists of the 2:45 hrs long thriller were once again the Infineon Audi R8 sportcars of the Team Audi Sport North America and the fastest Panoz of David Brabham and Jan Magnussen. With many lead changes and intensive paint exchange, the outcome was left open until the very last of the 140 race laps. Then Tom Kristensen had to admit defeat to fellow Dane Jan Magnussen and crossed the finish line with a marginal gap of 0.766 seconds in second place.

Frank Biela and Emanuele Pirro, who started the fifth round from pole position, completed the three-way battle at the front during the entire race and achieved third place. Again and again, the lead changed on the narrow, concrete wall-lined track in the shadows of the Robert F. Kennedy stadium, the margin between first and second place was never greater than one second. Continuous overtaking action with only centimetres between the dicing trio produced one the most exciting races of this year to the fans in the grandstands.

The Infineon Audi R8 sportcars shared the hectic pursuit of the expected strong Panoz: First Tom Kristensen hunted his opponent around the short 1.661 mile circuit. After the Dane had to pit for a stop-and-go-penalty, which his partner Rinaldo Capello got for a collision with the Champion Audi earlier in the race, Emanuele Pirro took over the pursuit. During the last 45 minutes of racing, it was again the all-Danish duel which excited spectators and teams until the chequered flag came out.

Johnny Herbert and Stefan Johansson experienced a rather unlucky race weekend in their 2001-spec Champion Audi R8. As Herbert damaged his tyres in an accident during the qualifying session, the team had to put on four new tyres for the race – and due to the ALMS regulations, this meant they must start from last position on the grid. Stefan Johansson fought his way brilliantly through the field after the start and soon reached the top ten. But after two spins, Johnny Herbert and Stefan Johansson had to be satisfied with fifth position.

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Quotes after the race

Rinaldo Capello (Infineon Audi R8 #2): "While watching Tom fighting for the victory today I remembered the Mosport race two years ago when the battle ended in a photo finish – on that occasion we won, today we didn't. We saw a fantastic race with the lead constantly changing. We 'only' finished second, but we should not forget this is still a good result."

Tom Kristensen (Infineon Audi R8 #2): "The winner today is Washington DC for organising such a great event for the fans and the drivers. On my pitstop, we decided to stay on old tyres, but then I collected a lot of pick-up, lost some tyre pressure on the slow laps and so couldn't push as hard as I had hoped to. When Jan was behind me, I could almost see his eyes in my rear mirror. I didn't want to take any risk with all the walls around and let him pass."

Frank Biela (Infineon Audi R8 #1): "Of course it's a little bit disappointing that we didn't win this race. But the Panoz guys simply did a great job this weekend and clearly deserve this victory. The third place doesn't help us a lot concerning the championship but makes the second half of the season a lot more interesting. We've got five more races to come and today was a good example of what we will see during the coming months."

Emanuele Pirro (Infineon Audi R8 #1): "That was a very tough race and also very unfortunate for us. During a safety car period they opened the pit-lane immediately after I passed the entry and so we could only stop one lap later. We've lost a lot of time because of that. But that's racing and we will be back next time for sure."

Johnny Herbert (ADT Champion Audi R8 #38): "It turned into a disappointing weekend after I flat-spotted the tyres in qualifying yesterday. That meant we needed to use a new set of tyres and start the race from the back. Stefan did a good job fighting to the front but after I took over I lost power due to a technical problem and surrendered fourth place - I just wanted to reach the finish."

Stefan Johansson (ADT Champion Audi R8 #38): "It wasn't a good day for us - we had hoped for and expected a lot more from this race. Early in the race I spun because the brakes were marginal and later I had a contact with Dindo which again caused a spin. I was obviously determined not to lose a lap to him while Dindo wanted to get past quickly. It was a racing incident and I'm really sorry he was given a stop-go penalty."

Ralf Jüttner, Technical Director Team Audi Sport North America: "We expected a tight race on this track and that's what happened. You can put the stop-go penalty for Dindo and Tom up for debate. In addition, the race control opened the pit-lane too late so the leading Panoz and Emanuele had to drive by and were behind the safety car again. All in all, this race varied although for us it ended unfortunately."

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich, Head of Audi Sport: "It was an extremely exciting race, which for us did not end positively this time. 15 minutes before the end, Tom was beside the Panoz, but it was not possible for him to overtake. They drove a faultless race and we showed some

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weaknesses and therefore there is only one well-deserved winner, which is Panoz. We lost too much time when Dindo was behind the Champion Audi. When he tried to pass he pushed too much which ended in a spin for both cars, for which we got a stop-go penalty. Like that you cannot win a race against Panoz.”

Race results

1. Magnussen/Brabham (Panoz)	140 laps
2. Capello/Kristensen (Infineon Audi R8)	+ 0.766s
3. Biela/Pirro (Infineon Audi R8)	+ 8.701s
4. Tinseau/Angelelli (Cadillac)	- 1 lap
5. Herbert/Johansson (Audi R8)	- 2 laps
6. Herta/Auberlen (Panoz)	- 2 laps
7. Dyson/Weaver (Riley & Scott)	- 7 laps
8. Fellows/O'Connell (Chevrolet)	- 9 laps
9. Pilgrim/Collins (Chevrolet)	- 10 laps
10. Naspetti/Schiattarella (Ferrari)	- 11 laps

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

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