

Sebring, 20 March 2005

## Motorsport

### Audi equals Sebring winning streak

- **Sixth 1-2 victory in row for the Audi R8**
- **First Sebring victory for Champion Racing**
- **Record crowd of 180,000 spectators**

The success story of the Audi R8 continues. In front of a record crowd of 180,000 spectators, Audi celebrated their sixth consecutive 1-2 victory in the 12-hour race at Sebring (USA). In the opening race of the 2005 sports car season, Audi thus equalled the record of six consecutive double victories for a manufacturer dating back to 1981. Since its debut in March 2000, the Audi R8 remains unbeaten at Sebring.

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“This winning streak shows, that Audi is able to prove ‘Vorsprung durch Technik’ also on the race track,” explained Prof. Dr. rer. nat. Martin Winterkorn. The Chairman of the Board of Management of AUDI AG waved the green flag at 10:45 a.m. local time as the honorary starter of the endurance classic, which has been held since 1952. What followed was an impressive demonstration of technical superiority and reliability: Despite an enormous fast pace, Team ADT Champion Racing’s two Audi R8 sports cars ran without the slightest technical problem for all of the twelve hours and without any unscheduled pit stops.

In the opening stages, the Audi drivers exchanged the lead with the fastest MG Lola. However, the proverbial reliability of the Audi R8 was the key factor on Florida’s material-wrecking track. Technical problems cost the competitors more and more time. The two Audi R8 sports cars eventually took victory by a margin of 20 laps on the third placed MG Lola.

The Audi crews battled fiercely against each other: The lead continued to swap among the two R8 cars. Even two stop-and-go penalties served by the #2 Audi following contacts and a premature driver-change for the #1 Audi did not decide the fight. Various caution periods and the equal speed made both cars stay close together for the entire distance.

In the final stages both Audi crews raced for tenths of a second. Eventually Tom Kristensen, JJ Lehto and Marco Werner were a little bit more lucky giving Team ADT Champion Racing the first victory on “home soil” at Sebring. Frank Biela, Allan McNish and Emanuele Pirro completed the 1-2 victory of the largest Audi dealer of the USA just 6.365 seconds behind.

For Tom Kristensen this victory was a very special one: After Olivier Gendebien, Phil Hill, Mario Andretti, Hans-Joachim Stuck and Frank Biela the Audi works driver is only the sixth driver who has achieved three Sebring victories.

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## Quotes after the race

**Tom Kristensen (Team ADT Champion Racing Audi R8 #1):** “It was a great race for both Audi teams which makes the victory even sweeter. I am really happy being part of Champion’s first Sebring victory. I know how much this means to Dave Maraj. I was battling with Allan for most of the time. It was really close. At the end of the day the crucial thing was we shortened one fuel stop. This allowed me to go ahead of Allan and I could keep him behind me despite cold tyres. I was struggling for one lap, but it was worth struggling.”

**JJ Lehto (Team ADT Champion Racing Audi R8 #1):** “It cannot be any tougher than it was today. It was so close until the end. This victory is really for Dave Maraj. We have been so close in the last couple of years always finishing second. Now it was even a one and two. Champion Racing did a fantastic job. Two cars both running so strong – the team did an incredible job today.”

**Marco Werner (Team ADT Champion Racing Audi R8 #1):** “This was more a thriller than an endurance race. In the end it was almost worse to watch the race from the pits. But while I was driving I always felt the other car in my neck. This time we’ve done everything right. I’m proud having added the Audi R8 to the Sebring winners list for probably the last time. And I’m proud that Champion finally did it after finishing second so often.”

**Frank Biela (Team ADT Champion Racing Audi R8 #2):** “Of course it would have been nice to win if you come so close. But there are no ‘ifs’ and ‘buts’. It was a very exciting and very close race. For Champion Racing this is a superb result. We are very happy with our performance. Now I’m sure we will have a great season. I enjoyed this race.”

**Allan McNish (Team ADT Champion Racing Audi R8 #2):** “This has been the most exciting race I’ve been involved in. Less than seven seconds of difference after twelve hours of racing and the gap never being more than 30 proves how hot the race was. It was a very good start for Audi and Champion Racing considering that this is presumably the last year for the Audi R8. Now let’s go to Le Mans!”

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**Emanuele Pirro (Team ADT Champion Racing Audi R8 #2):** “What a great race! It is good for Team Champion to take a 1-2 victory in their ‘home’ race. It was very positive for us that the second car with the new crew performed so well. It was a race with fortune and misfortune on both sides. I think we all did a good job, we gave everything. We squeezed the cars to the maximum for the whole race. And they made it to the end without any problem. This shows how good the Audi R8 is.”

**Dave Maraj (Team Director Team ADT Champion Racing):** “Finally we made it! I have a great respect for all three drivers of both cars. They performed well. The team performed excellently. I think we could not have done better. I have also to thank Audi for building such great cars. In its sixth year the Audi R8 is still competitive.”

**Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport):** “We’ve seen a fantastic sports car race. That the top two cars were separated by less than seven seconds after twelve hours, is extraordinary. Both teams did great jobs. The Champion team can be proud of this success. And Audi can be proud of building cars you can simply go flat out from the first to the very last lap.”

## The results at Sebring

- 1 Kristensen/Lehto/Werner (Audi R8) 361 laps in 12hrs 01m 49.211s
- 2 Biela/McNish/Pirro (Audi R8) + 6.365s
- 3 Weaver/Wallace/Leitzinger (MG Lola) - 20 laps
- 4 Brabham/Turner/Ortelli (Aston Martin) - 23 laps
- 5 Fellows/O'Connell/Papis (Chevrolet) - 24 laps
- 6 Gavin/Beretta/Magnussen (Chevrolet) - 38 laps
- 7 Long/Bergmeister/Luhr (Porsche) - 40 laps
- 8 Kelleners/Borcheller/Mowlem (Saleen) - 43 laps
- 9 Bertolini/de Simone/Barbini (Maserati) - 45 laps
- 10 Figge/Dalziel/Empringham (Chevrolet) - 46 laps

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