

Mid-Ohio, 21 May 2006

Audi extends American Le Mans Series lead

- **Capello and McNish claim third consecutive LM P1 victory**
- **Five-year-old Audi R8 reigns supreme once again**
- **“Farewell race” for the Audi R8 on 1 July**

Audi will return to American Le Mans Series action in six weeks time leading the LM P1 class following a third consecutive maximum score. Dindo Capello (Italy) and Allan McNish (Scotland) claimed a hard earned class victory – third place overall – in their Audi Sport North America “factory” Audi R8 in the third round of the 10-race series at Mid-Ohio (US state of Ohio) on Sunday.

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In cool weather conditions, McNish started the 165-minute race from the front row of the grid and despite intense pressure kept second position and the lead of the LM P1 class for a long time before handing the R8 over to Dindo Capello.

Capello slipped behind the Dyson Lola of Butch Leitzinger and James Weaver immediately after a full course yellow at mid-distance but made a decisive “early” second and final “fuel only” pit-stop and was catching the Lola when it went off the track due to a rear puncture with 45mins to run.

Despite weighing 160kg heavier as requested by the regulations, the five-year-old Audi R8 finished third – less than eight seconds behind the latest LM P2 Porsches.

Capello and McNish will finally bring down the curtain on the successful racing “career” of the Audi R8 when they contest the next race of the American Le Mans Series at Lime Rock (US State Connecticut) on 1 July.

From the fifth round at Salt Lake City (15 Jul) and for the remainder of the season, Capello and McNish plus reigning ALMS champions Frank Biela and Emanuele Pirro will compete with the new Audi R10 TDI which is currently being prepared in Europe for the Le Mans 24 Hours (17/18 June).

Quotes after the race at Mid-Ohio

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “We scored again important points for our title defence in the American Le Mans Series. Unfortunately, due to the latest handicaps imposed on the R8, it is now almost impossible to compete with the lighter LM P2 cars – especially on a track with the characteristics like at Mid-Ohio.”

Dindo Capello (Audi R8 #2): “It is a great result for us – another maximum points score to extend our championship lead. It was a struggle to get temperature into the tyres. Once we had some heat it was okay, but after each full course yellow safety car period it took about five laps to get good grip. The Audi R8 is such a heavy car and this weight, combined with the small restrictor, allows even a GT1 class car to pull away from us.”

Allan McNish (Audi R8 #2): “The overall speed was lacking compared to LM P2 machines on this occasion. I was forced to work very hard during my stint and had to defend for much of it to keep the Dyson Lola and the second Porsche behind me. The opening laps were very difficult, the cold conditions giving us a problem with low grip from the tyres and as my stint progressed I had a handling imbalance.”

Dave Maraj (Team Director, Team Audi Sport North America): “I have to compliment the entire team – they deserve massive praise for this class victory. They had to work hard after accidents yesterday and again after this morning’s warm-up which caused substantial bodywork damage on both occasions. This enabled Allan and Dindo to score maximum points in their repaired car – which is likely to be very valuable in terms of the championship. I’m very proud of the Audi Sport North America team.”

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Photographs, sound bites and additional information can be found in the Internet at: www.audi-motorsport.info (accreditation required)

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Results

- 1 Bernhard/Dumas (Porsche) 119 laps
- 2 Luhr/Maassen (Porsche) + 0.434s
- 3 Capello/McNish (Audi R8) + 7.303s
- 4 Weaver/Leitzinger (Lola-AER) - 3 laps
- 5 Beretta/Gavin (Chevrolet) - 3 laps

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