



Press Information

Le Mans, 6 May 2001

Audi fastest in Le Mans pre-practice

Audi was fastest in the pre-practice for the 24 Hours of Le Mans (June 16/17) on Sunday. Rinaldo Capello recorded the quickest lap of the day in his Infineon Audi R8 breaking last year's qualifying record by more than three seconds with his time of 3m 32.742s.

During pre-practice, the two Infineon Audi R8 sportscars ran with modified aerodynamics they will also use for the race in June. After eleven consecutive wins in the American Le Mans Series and the triple triumph at the Le Mans 24 Hours classic last year, the Audi technicians not only optimised details under the body of the sportscar, but also visibly changed the aerodynamics of the Infineon Audi R8.

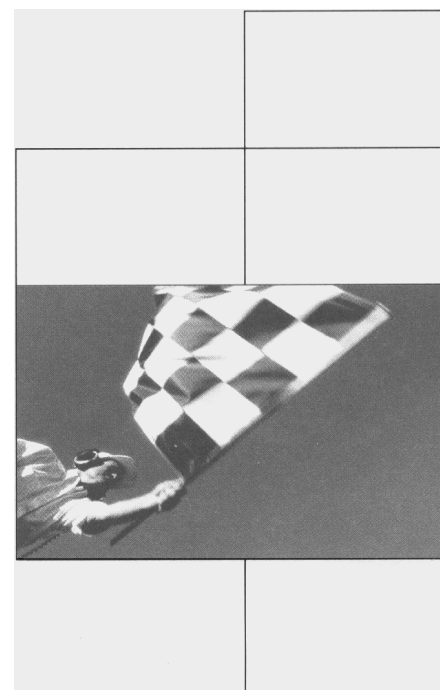
"We attempted to tailor the body as closely to the monocoque as possible in order to further minimize the frontal area of our car," explains Dr Wolfgang Ullrich, Head of Audi Sport. Thanks to the new aerodynamic shape, the Infineon Audi R8 features increased downforce and a lower aerodynamic drag. The airflow through the radiators and around the front part of the car was also improved.

Audi engineers not only expect higher top speeds on the straights, but at the same time anticipate lower fuel consumption. The aim is to manage one additional lap from each tank during the Le Mans race compared to last year.

At the pre-practice, the latest Infineon Audi R8 for the first time encountered its competitors in the "big" prototype class, including Bentley, Cadillac, Chrysler, Courage-Peugeot, Dome and Panoz. However, as the pre-practice offered teams the only chance to test on the demanding Le Mans track, fast lap times were not the first priority for the Audi Sport Team Joest during the eight hours of practice. "Our task was to find the best suspension and aerodynamic set-up for the race, and to test our tyres," explains team director Reinhold Joest. "We ran through our programme and now have a lot of important data at our disposal."

After the tragic death of Michele Alboreto, Audi Sport Team Joest had only four drivers present for the pre-practice. Last year's winners Frank Biela and Emanuele Pirro drove the no. 1 Infineon Audi R8, Tom Kristensen shared the other Infineon R8 with Rinaldo Capello. Laurent Aiello was released by Audi this weekend for the clashing DTM race at the Nürburgring.

Both Audi customer teams, Champion and Johansson, proved that they are in a strong position for Le Mans on June 16/17. Both cars also went faster than the 2000 pole position time.



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Pre-practice results

1. Capello/Kristensen (Infineon Audi R8)	3m 32.742s
2. Herbert/Kelleners/Theys (Audi R8)	3m 33.205s
3. Brundle/Ortelli/Smith (Bentley)	3m 34.050s
4. Lammers/Hillebrand/Crevels (Dome-Judd)	3m 34.883s
5. Biela/Pirro (Infineon Audi R8)	3m 34.915s
6. Johansson/Gounon (Audi R8)	3m 35.124s
7. Wallace/Smith/McCarthy (Bentley)	3m 36.329s
8. Dalmás/Montagny/Simon (Chrysler)	3m 36.988s
9. Bourdais/Boullion/Redon (Courage-Peugeot)	3m 37.542s
10. Lupberger/Collins (Ascari-Judd)	3m 38.399s

Photos of the Infineon Audi R8 featuring the modified aerodynamics, as well as further information are available on the internet: www.audi-sportpress.com (password required)

