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Audi in motorsport 2002: Hat-trick in sight

AUDI AG again takes on one of the greatest challenges in motorsport in the 2002 season. After recently securing two consecutive victories, the Audi Sport Team Joest again tackles the legendary Le Mans 24 Hour race on 15/16 June, 2002, and with this have the hat-trick in sight. "This goal is very ambitious and is particularly enticing," declares Head of Audi Sport, Dr Wolfgang Ullrich. "There are only a few major manufacturers who've managed to win Le Mans three times in succession and taken the historic trophy home for good."

The Audi R8 has already become one of the most successful racing sportscars in the history of motorsport. Two Le Mans victories and a total of 20 wins within just two years are ample proof. Once again Audi has impressively confirmed the company slogan "Vorsprung durch Technik" (Advantage through technology). Using the direct fuel injection (FSI) for the double victory in Le Mans 2001 and afterwards in the American Le Mans Series (ALMS), Audi introduced a new engine technology that this year will be used in standard production. Audi customers profit directly from the experience gathered on the race track, as the race engines used in long distance events are very similar in characteristic to the standard power unit. "Unlike in Formula 1 the rev ranges of the racing engines are on similar levels to production units," explains Dr Ullrich. "Optimal performance characteristics, low fuel consumption and higher reliability are as important in Le Mans as in standard production." Which is one reason why Audi competes in sportscar racing.

For the 2002 season, Audi Sport made minor changes to details of the 610 bhp Infineon Audi R8. "The vehicle and the new FSI engine still had potential which we found and utilised," says Dr Ullrich. This should not only pay off in Le Mans, but also at the races of this year's American Le Mans Series (ALMS), in which Audi also strives for a hat-trick after securing the 2000 and 2001 titles.

Heading the events in Le Mans and in North America is again the team under the direction of Reinhold Joest, an important partner to Audi Sport since the beginning of the sportscar project. Additionally, Audi's customer team Champion Racing will again tackle the American Le Mans Series with a 2001-spec R8. The Goh International team from Japan has also acquired an R8 from last year with which they will contest the Le Mans 24 Hour race. Customer teams also enjoy the new FSI technology which last year played an important role in the repeat Le Mans triumph.