



Press Information

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Audi prematurely ALMS Champion

ALMS: Audi has prematurely clinched the Manufacturers' title of the American Le Mans Series (ALMS). After a dominant victory of Frank Biela and Marco Werner at Laguna Seca (California), Audi is out of reach for its rivals before the two final races. After 2000, 2001 and 2002 Audi has won the title already a fourth time in a row.

Frank Biela and Marco Werner steered their Infineon Team Joest Audi R8 to a brilliant victory on the demanding track near Monterey (US state of California). The two Germans were setting the pace at Laguna Seca since the first day of practice. On Saturday, Biela took his 10th pole position in the ALMS by quite a margin. In the race, Biela and Werner were leading 115 of the 120 laps with their Audi R8. Only after the first scheduled pit-stop, Infineon Team Joest briefly lost the lead to the MG Lola of James Weaver and Butch Leitzinger, which was almost a full lap down at the end of the 2:45-hour race.

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"This has been a perfect weekend", said a glad Frank Biela after Team Joest's fourth outright victory of the season. "We had a superb car from the very beginning. The race went perfectly. It was nice to set the pace. I was able to pull away from the competitors." Biela handed the R8 to Marco Werner shortly before the half-time mark of the race with almost one minute advantage. Werner stayed in the lead even after the second refuelling stop. "It was a completely new feeling for me to drive without pressure," said Werner. "In such a case it is difficult to keep the concentration. That's why the race was not so easy."

Frank Biela and Marco Werner extended their lead in the Drivers' Championship to 18 points, the two Germans also taking advantage from Team ADT Champion Racing's bad luck. Johnny Herbert was running second with the Champion Audi after the start behind Frank Biela. He dropped to third when a circuit breaker for the turbo boost pressure control popped out – apparently a consequence of a wiring fire in the morning warm-up.

Shortly before the end of the first hour, the Champion Team decided to change the rear section of the Audi R8 as precaution. "I heard some strange noise coming from the gearbox," explained Johnny Herbert. "The team did not want to take any risk and decided to change the gearbox." This change cost eight minutes and dropped the Champion R8 to 24th position. Recording fast lap times, JJ Lehto was able to fight his way back to fourth place. Herbert/Lehto even finished on the podium in the LMP900 class.

Audi Junior Martin Tomczyk grabs first point

DTM: Three Audi drivers managed to finish in the points in front of 60,000 spectators in the season's eighth round of the DTM (German Touring Car Masters) at the A1-Ring in Austria. Martin Tomczyk had more reason to