

Press Information

Portland, 4 August 2001

Audi secures second starting position in qualifying thriller

Spectators along Portland International Raceway will find a rather unusual picture on Sunday: For the first time in almost 15 months there is not an Audi at the front of the starting grid. After a qualifying thriller for the American

Le Mans Series (ALMS) round at Portland, Rinaldo Capello and Tom Kristensen had to relinquish pole position to the fastest Panoz. Team mates Frank Biela and Emanuele Pirro in the companion Infineon Audi R8 will start the race from third place.

During only 20 minutes of qualifying on the circuit situated in the US state of Oregon, the Audi drivers executed exciting duels with a lot of position changes on the time screen. The Audi Sport North America team not only fought against the two Panoz cars, but also against the 2000-spec Champion Audi R8 of Andy Wallace and Johnny Herbert. At the end, the former Formula 1 driver achieved fifth position on the grid.

The race starts on Sunday at 13 hours local time and runs over a distance of 2:45 hours. Tom Kristensen (#1) and Frank Biela (#2) will start the race in the two Infineon Audi R8s.

Quotes after qualifying

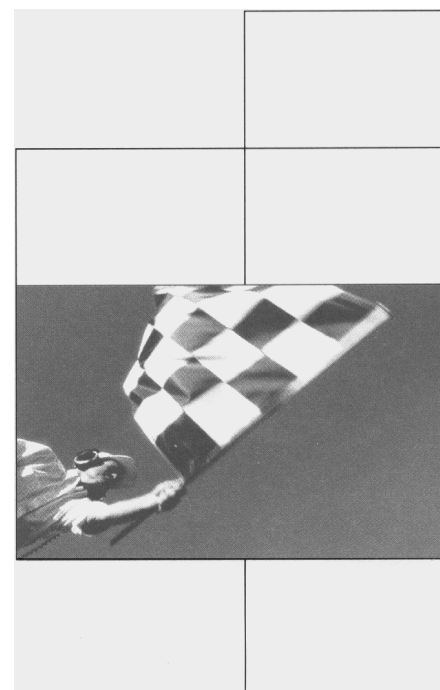
Rinaldo Capello (#1): "Concerning our tire choice, we were a little bit conservative in qualifying. We knew we would not be that strong in this session because we wanted to work mainly for the race tomorrow."

Tom Kristensen (#1): "Of course it's a little bit disappointing to be so close to pole and then have to start only from second position. I did my very best and so I have to give my compliments to Panoz – today they were simply faster. Best thing would be to get into the lead right at the start, but that is a very difficult goal."

Frank Biela (#2): "After all the great races we had, second row is a very unusual starting position for me. The strong performance of the Panoz team impresses me a lot. So I think this will be one of the closest races this year."

Emanuele Pirro (#2): "Today was a difficult day for us because we had to change a lot of little things on the car. For qualifying it was better, so I'm very confident for the race. I would have preferred to be on pole. Of course we still have all chances but a better grid position would have made it much easier."

Johnny Herbert (#38): "We need a little more bite in the front end. We have been working hard on the car since yesterday and it has gotten progressively better. We were attacking the track hard, we have some



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ideas to try in the warm-up so we can be maybe a little better for the race.”

Andy Wallace (#38): “Johnny put in a good effort, it is the fastest that we have gone all weekend. The Panoz is impressive, they seem to have the right package for this track. The front five cars are separated by a second, so we should be in for a good battle. We still have some work to do on the car for the race, so we hope to be better tomorrow.”

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich, Head of Audi Sport: “After qualifying we have the best conditions for a really thrilling race. We have to be very careful at the start because otherwise there could be two Panoz cars in front. Overtaking is very difficult on this circuit so it will depend a lot on the precise work of the team. Every second we gain in the pits will decide positions.”

Reinhold Joest, Team Director Audi Sport North America: “The track is exactly as we had expected it to be: Since Friday the circuit conditions changed again and again and so it’s very difficult to find a perfect setup for the car. We are just slightly behind, but it’s enough to not be on pole position. I’m sure we will see an exciting race tomorrow.”

Starting grid at Portland

1. Magnussen/Brabham (Panoz)	1m 04.121s
2. Capello/Kristensen (Infineon Audi R8)	1m 04.255s
3. Biela/Pirro (Infineon Audi R8)	1m 04.300s
4. Graf/Lagorce (Panoz)	1m 04.508s
5. Herbert/Wallace (Audi R8)	1m 05.136s
6. Duno/Graham/de Radigues (Reynard)	1m 07.910s
7. Hawkins/Night (Lola)	1m 11.281s
8. Fellows/O’Connell (Chevrolet)	1m 12.324s
9. Konrad/Borcheller (Saleen)	1m 12.390s
10. Pilgrim/Collins (Chevrolet)	1m 12.682s

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