

Road Atlanta, 6 October 2001

Audi wins Petit Le Mans, title for Pirro

Audi closed its successful 2001 motorsport season with a superb 1-2-3 victory at the "Petit Le Mans" and managed to repeat a hat-trick for the second time in row: Just as last year, Audi won the three long distance classics at Sebring, Le Mans and Road Atlanta.

The incredible reliability of the Infineon Audi R8 was once more a key to success in the season's final race of the American Le Mans Series (ALMS). Race winners Frank Biela and Emanuele Pirro encountered not one technical problem during the 1000-mile distance and gave Team Audi Sport North America its eighth victory in the tenth ALMS race of the season.

Despite that, the „Petit Le Mans“ was not easy for the Audi works team as the Audi customer teams Champion and Johansson once more put on a great performance. Both customer cars were leading the race at Road Atlanta and had to settle behind the Audi works team only during the second half of the race. Stop-and-go-penalties were imposed against the two customer cars and some minor incidents, a broken wheel on the Champion R8 and non working rear lights on the Johansson R8 eventually played the race into the hands of the Audi works team. Stefan Johansson/Patrick Lemarié finished second, Johnny Herbert/Andy Wallace completed the Audi 1-2-3 victory with their third place in the Champion R8.

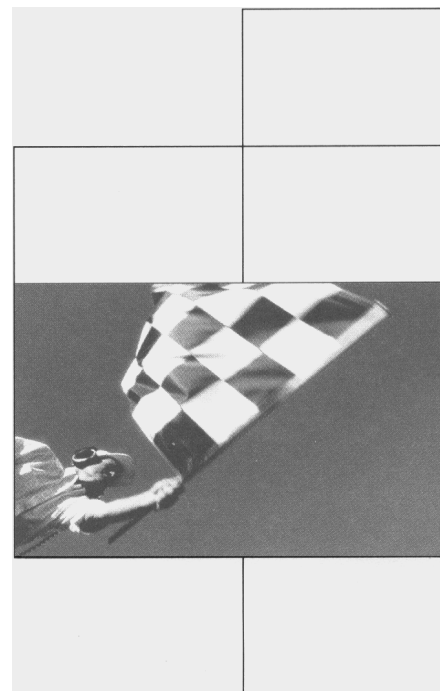
With their second ALMS victory in a row Emanuele Pirro and Frank Biela also decided the Drivers' championship of the American Le Mans Series for themselves. Because of the controversial ALMS point system, which gives various extra points, Emanuele Pirro secured the title. Frank Biela has to be content with the second place in the championship by a narrow margin.

The title dreams of Rinaldo Capello and Tom Kristensen in the other Infineon Audi R8 ended very early. Shortly before the end of the first hour Kristensen had to retire after an accident while leading the race. Capello and Kristensen finished the ALMS season 3rd and 4th.

Audi had already clinched the Manufacturers' and Teams' championships of the American Le Mans Series. Therewith Audi has successfully defended all its titles in the ALMS.

Quotes after the race

Frank Biela (#2): "The race was not easy, and I had some big moments during my first two stints. You had to leave the race line very often because of the heavy traffic. That's why I got pick-up on the tyres and went off more than once. Apart from that the car was perfect. I enjoyed the race very much from the first to the last minute. I feel sorry for Dindo and Tom that it was decided in this way. But that's racing. For us though it has been a perfect race. This result makes me feel happy."



Press Information



Emanuele Pirro (#2): "The race was very hard and very hot. Not in temperature but in terms of competition, especially at the beginning. We tried to keep out of trouble and we succeeded. Of course I am really happy about the title. The only sad thing is that I am not able to share the title with Frank who has done exactly the same job and not one percent less than I did. Dindo and Tom also did a great championship. It would have been nice to have all four of us in first place. I also want to give a thought to the people who can not celebrate because of the problems that are going on in the world now. If I could give the championship away for a little bit of peace I would do it."

Rinaldo Capello (#1): "Of course I am disappointed for Tom and me because we were still hoping to win the championship. It is unbelievable that we retired three times in the last six races. This never happened in the past and I hope it will never happen again. Tom and me showed everybody that we are quick enough to win the championship. But we had some bad luck at the end of the season. Congratulations to Emanuele and of course to Frank. Both of them had a great season winning Le Mans and Emanuele winning the championship. I am happy for them."

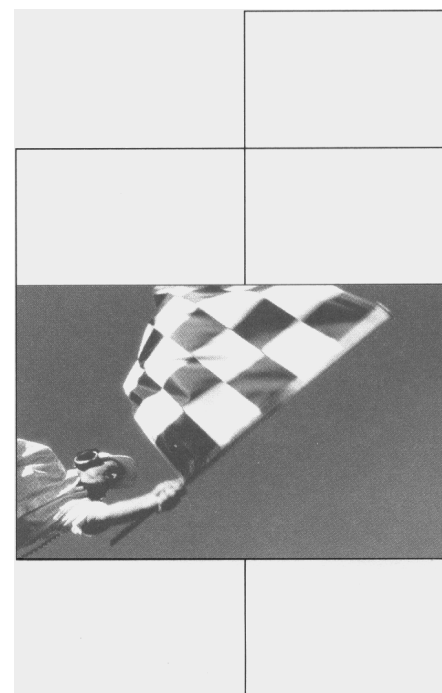
Tom Kristensen (#1): "I am happy to be okay. The car proved to be very strong because it was the biggest impact I have ever had in my whole career. When I braked for Turn 1, everything was fine, but when I accelerated and steered more, the car just went straight. I suddenly lost so much front end grip, that I thought I had a puncture. But after having checked all the data it looks like there was pick-up on the front left tyre and the compound appeared to have broken loose. Frank had similar problems later on. But he was warned after my accident while I was completely surprised. Hats off for Emanuele and Frank."

Stefan Johansson (#18): "I suffered a stop-and-go penalty early on when I was adjudged to have overtaken Pirro before the green flag after a caution period but I thought he was slowing. It was a really fun race but frantic from start to finish involving pure racing. The Audi ran strongly throughout - a great car."

Patrick Lemarié (#18): "After three hours I served a 20-secs penalty because a mechanic had cleaned the brake duct while the car was being re-fuelled. The car was superb, I was really enjoying myself, but I lost a lot of time when we needed to change the rear body section due to a rear light problem. That looked to have cost us any chance of finishing second but then Herbert hit trouble."

Johnny Herbert (#38): "I had enjoyed a pretty steady race until 50 minutes from the end when I lost the rear brakes. The car had been superb until that point and we looked good for a solid second - there was nothing we could do about the Pirro/Biela Audi, they were just too fast."

Andy Wallace (#38): "When I took over from Johnny I felt a bad vibration through a front wheel which lost me time. We got a penalty after almost three hours when I run over some equipment in our pit area. Then a wheel



AUDI AG
Sport Press
D-85045 Ingolstadt
Phone + 49 841 89-34200
Fax + 49 841 89-38617
sportpresse@audi.de

Press Information



centre broke on the left rear after seven hours when we were placed second, just 45secs behind the leading Audi.“

Reinhold Joest, Team Director Audi Sport North America: “The beginning of the race was very turbulent. After the accident of Tom Kristensen our chances to win the race had been cut in half very early. But I am more than happy that we were still able to put a nice end to the season for Audi, our team and the drivers.”

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich, Head of Audi Sport: “This victory was a great team effort. We had not a single problem with Frank’s and Emanuele’s car. Of course, the end of the race for Tom and Dindo caused by the accident is a pity. But we had also an exciting battle with our two customer cars. Congratulations to the Johansson and the Champion teams.”

Race results

1. Biela/Pirro (Infineon Audi R8)	394 laps
2. Johansson/Lemarié (Audi R8)	- 3 laps
3. Herbert/Wallace (Audi R8)	- 6 laps
4. Taylor/Angelelli/Tinseau (Cadillac)	- 12 laps
5. Bernard/Collard/Goossens (Cadillac)	- 30 laps
6. Pilgrim/Collins/Freon (Chevrolet)	- 32 laps
7. Duno/Graham/Maxwell (Reynard)	- 33 laps
8. Said/Stuck/Auberlen (BMW)	- 34 laps
9. Müller/Müller (BMW)	- 35 laps
10. Magnussen/Brabham (Panoz)	- 36 laps

Find updated photos and information on the internet:
www.audi-sportpress.com (password required)

