



Press Information

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Audi's team Champion celebrates home victory in Miami

ALMS: Audi customer teams ADT Champion Racing and Infineon Team Joest walked away from the penultimate round of the American Le Mans Series (ALMS) in Miami (Florida) with a dominant double victory. In doing so, Johnny Herbert and JJ Lehto provided Florida-based Team Champion Racing with a home victory, finishing ahead of Frank Biela and Marco Werner in Infineon Team Joest's Audi R8.

The two Audi R8 cars were in a class of their own on the short course in Downtown Miami. Already in training both cars were setting the pace. Throughout the entire 2:45-hour race one of the Audi was in the lead. The spectators were, nonetheless, able to feast their eyes on an amazing and turbulent race, in which both Audi customer teams – like so many other times this year – did not let up and were hot on each others' tails for the whole race.

The preliminary decision was already made in qualifying on Friday. In the last second JJ Lehto squeezed Marco Werner, who had been leading by 39 thousandths of a second, out of first place to secure the pole position for the Champion Team for the first time this year – and that immense edge he gained on the tight city circuit that offers extremely few passing possibilities!

In the beginning phase of the race JJ Lehto and Marco Werner continued their enthralling duel under tremendous heat. As a duo at an enormously high speed, the two Audi drivers slowed down their pursuers. Only centimetres separated their Audi R8 cars during the first laps. Time after time Marco Werner attacked, until he got stuck behind. "With all the traffic, passing would have presented a very precarious situation," said Werner. "Champion drove at high risk. It would have been too dangerous to allow a mistake to take place because of that."

Werner, despite it all, took over the lead after 45 minutes into the race as the Champion Team was using one of the five caution periods to change drivers. While refueling the R8 caught fire but it was quickly thereafter extinguished. "It got a bit hot," commented Johnny Herbert, who was sitting behind the wheel at the time the flames began to kindle. "Luckily, it didn't get any worse than it did."

The unusually early pit stop proved in the end to be a clever move for the Champion Team: Because of the many caution phases, Herbert managed to finish the remaining two hours without having to refuel again. "I was trying to save fuel," explained the former Formula 1 driver. "It worked! The warning light came on for the first time in the last lap. Already last year there were several caution phases, and we adjusted our strategy accordingly. I am so glad that we were able to give Dave Maraj such an awesome home victory."

Team Joest, which which has been leading in the overall standing, decided on a conservative strategy and contented themselves with a secure second place, especially since it began raining in the final laps of the race. "With an eye on the championship, we were simply not able to allow ourselves a retirement here," explained Frank Biela. "It was important for us to finish. We achieved this and were thus able to take a large step in the direction of a championship win."

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Now after the fourth Audi double victory in the current season only an Audi driver can become champion at Road Atlanta on 18 October. Frank Biela and Marco Werner have a 14-point lead on JJ Lehto. Audi has already won in the manufacturers' standing.

Miami (USA), 27 September, Round 8 American Le Mans Series (ALMS)

1 Herbert/Lehto (Audi R8) 157 laps in 2h 42m 06.617s

2 Biela/Werner (Audi R8) + 40.642s

3 Beretta/Saelens (Panoz) 2 laps behind

4 Brabham/Turner (Ferrari) 3 laps behind

5 Kox/Enge (Ferrari) 3 laps behind

Positions after 8 of 9 races: 1 Biela and Werner, each 151 points; 3 Lehto, 137; 4 Herbert, 134;

5 Beretta, 105.

Next race: Petit Le Mans, Road Atlanta (USA), 18 October

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