



## Press Information

Ingolstadt / Le Mans, 13 June 2003

### **Fastest Audi third on the grid at Le Mans**

The three Audi customer have achieved good starting positions for the Le Mans 24 Hour race (start on Saturday 4 p.m. local time). During final qualifying on Thursday evening, Audi Sport UK, Audi Sport Japan Team Goh and Team ADT Champion Racing captured third, fifth and sixth positions on the starting grid. Fastest Audi driver was Frank Biela, who has won the Le Mans 24 Hour race three times in a row and could write Le Mans history: In the 80-year history of the French long distance classic, no driver has ever managed to win the race in four successive years.

"Third position on the grid does not mean much in a 24 hour race," explained Frank Biela after the qualifying. "Despite that, it is a nice feeling to start so near to the front of the grid." Biela was already the fastest Audi driver during Wednesday's first qualifying session. Thursday, Audi Sport UK's Audi R8 dropped to sixth position, before Biela improved to third on the grid behind the two works cars of the Bentley team in the darkness, with about one hour to go.

Biela's team-mates at Audi Sport UK are Britain's Perry McCarthy and former Finnish Formula One pilot Mika Salo, who competes at Le Mans for the first time. "It's a great track, the Audi R8 is fun to drive, and yesterday I drove for a full hour in darkness for the first time. This was a completely new experience for me," said Salo. "I'm really looking forward to the race."

The two other Audi customer teams will start on Saturday from the third row on the grid. Jan Magnussen secured Audi Sport Japan Team Goh the fifth position. "I'm sure I could have gone faster, but I did not get a clear lap," explained the Dane who drives his first race in an R8. His team mates are Japan's Seiji Ara and German Marco Werner. Stefan Johansson, JJ Lehto and Emanuele Pirro will start with Team ADT Champion Racing's Audi R8 from sixth position on the grid. "We have a good set-up for the race," said Pirro, who along with Biela, aims for his fourth consecutive Le Mans victory.

"I am very content with the performance of the Audi customer teams," was the positive qualifying resume of Dr Wolfgang Ullrich, Head of Audi Sport. "It seems that the teams found a very good setup and will be able to run at a very fast pace in the race." The Audi teams are counting on the well known reliability of the R8, the economic fuel consumption of the Audi FSI engine and the easy way to work on the car: while practicing, the Audi customer teams changed the complete rear section of the car including the gearbox in less than three and a half minutes.

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### The starting grid at Le Mans

- 1 Kristensen/Capello/Smith (Bentley) 3m 32.843s
- 2 Brabham/Herbert/Blundell (Bentley) 3m 35.098s
- 3 Biela/McCarthy/Salo (Audi) 3m 35.745s
- 4 Lammers/Bosch/Wallace (Dome-Judd) 3m 36.156s
- 5 Ara/Magnussen/Werner (Audi) 3m 36.418s
- 6 Lehto/Johansson/Pirro (Audi) 3m 36.857s
- 7 Goossens/Matthews/Tinseau (Riley & Scott) 3m 37.476s
- 8 Ortiz/Gabbiani/Gommendy (Dome-Judd) 3m 38.058s
- 9 Cochet/Gounon/Gregoire (Courage-Judd) 3m 40.400s
- 10 Beretta/Jeanette/Papis (Panoz) 3m 40.766s

Photos and further information can be found on the Internet:  
**[www.audi-sportpress.com](http://www.audi-sportpress.com)** (accreditation required)

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