



Press Information

Spa-Francorchamps (B), 12 September 2004

Jamie Davies and Johnny Herbert win inaugural LMES title

By winning the Spa 1000-km race in Spa-Francorchamps, Jamie Davies and Johnny Herbert crowned themselves with equal points the first ever champions of the new Le Mans Endurance Series (LMES). The British driver pairing of the Audi Sport UK Team Veloqx also scored the 50th victory out of 60 races of the Audi R8 in the LMES season final at the historic Belgian race track.

Seiji Ara and Rinaldo Capello fulfilled a perfect double victory for Audi. After nearly six hours they finished one lap behind their Audi colleagues Davies and Herbert. Ara and Capello are fifth in the final driver point standings. They are each one point down to their Audi colleagues Allan McNish and Pierre Kaffer, who are third with 28 points each.

This was not a reason for big joy for McNish and his German team-mate Kaffer because the double season winner went into the last LMES race in 2004 at Spa as championship leaders. But on the 23rd lap, Pierre Kaffer could not avoid a collision with a slow and unaware backmarker. Back in the pits the Audi R8 had to retire from the race. The race was – typical for the challenging track at Spa – filled with changing weather conditions and many safety car interruptions.

“Vorsprung durch Technik” proved all three Audi R8 with four victories in all four races of the maiden LMES season. In two races, they even managed a triple victory, the other two have been double victories.

Quotes after the race

Jamie Davies (Audi Sport UK Team Veloqx / Audi R8 #88): “The car never missed a beat which allowed me to push hard right to the end. The Audi R8 is a fantastic race car and Michelin gave us excellent tyres and I’m delighted Johnny and I have been able to reward Sam Li, and all of the Veloqx team, plus Audi UK with this success. To win this title – including two races - and to have finished second at Le Mans in a single year is a marvellous feeling. I’m happy.”

Johnny Herbert (Audi Sport UK Team Veloqx / Audi R8 #88): “The opening lap was hectic but my biggest problem was losing almost a lap when the Safety Car came out in front of me putting me almost a lap down. My engineer [Chris Gorne] then perfectly ‘called’ the weather and sent me out on intermediates rather than full wet weather tyres. This is my first championship success since winning the 1987 British Formula Three title so I’m delighted – I’d forgotten what it felt like!”

Seiji Ara (Audi Sport Japan Team Goh / Audi R8 #5): “I love this track and the race was a lot of fun. Our car was in a very good condition. I am sorry to miss third place in the driver’s point standings by just one point.”

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Rinaldo Capello (Audi Sport Japan Team Goh / Audi R8 #5): "At the beginning everything was perfect. But then we lost nearly two laps by unlucky manoeuvres of the safety car. I think we should go back to the old rule, so that the safety car goes in front of the leader and not somewhere in the middle of the field – otherwise the race outcome can be unfair. We tried for our first LMES victory here, but it did not work out, although we pushed to the very end. But the season was fantastic for us – the highlight of course winning at Le Mans."

Pierre Kaffer (Audi Sport UK Team Veloqx / Audi R8 #8): "I'm very disappointed – not just for me, but of course Allan and the #8 crew. Exiting Blanchimont at high-speed I was catching a slow car – there was enough space so I went to the left but he didn't see me and he changed his line and moved over. We touched and I hit the barrier, spun along and then collided with another car at the Bus Stop. My car was burning and I saw the pit-lane entry so instinctively drove the car back but the damage was too bad to continue."

Allan McNish (Audi Sport UK Team Veloqx / Audi R8 #8): "Having won two races and finishing second in the other, we started this race leading the championship so it's a massive disappointment to miss out in this way. But there are certain things you can control in motor racing - others you cannot. I suffered a problem in the Le Mans 24 Hours, today it was Pierre's turn for misfortune. He was an innocent victim but the important thing is that he is okay."

Sam Li (Team Director Audi Sport UK Team Veloqx): "I'm delighted that our team has finished first and second in the LM P1 standings and it's fantastic that Veloqx has scored Audi's 50th R8 race victory. Obviously, it is a shame for car #8 - the accident was very unfortunate. The entire team has worked extremely hard throughout the season and they deserve great credit."

Kazumichi Goh (Team Director Audi Sport Japan Team Goh): "I am satisfied with the result. Audi again managed a double victory. I am sorry for Allan and Pierre. It was a shock when I saw what happened. It could have been a good fight for victory between all three Audi. It has been a fantastic year for us: winning Le Mans made my lifelong dream come true. I congratulate Sam Li and the Audi Sport UK Team Veloqx."

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): "It was nice to make the 50th victory of the Audi R8 a double one. It was again a perfect team performance and an exciting race. All this on a race track, which is ideal for sportscars. It was a pleasure to see four nice races in the first LMES season. I think in this way we satisfied the expectations of all spectators and did something to raise the standing of sportscar racing."

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The result at Spa-Francorchamps

1. Davies/Herbert (Audi R8) 144 laps in 5hrs 58m 55.262s
2. Ara/Capello (Audi R8) - 1 lap
3. Minassian/Campbell-Walter (Zytek) - 5 laps
4. Frei/Hancock/Cochet (Courage) - 7 laps



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- 5. Stack/Hignett/Collini (Zytek) - 8 laps
- 6. Erdos/Ramos/Newton (Lola-AER) - 8 laps
- 7. Bouchut/Lamy/Zacchia (Ferrari) - 12 laps
- 8. Belmondo/Gosselin/Eyckmans (Courage) - 15 laps
- 9. Ortelli/Collard (Porsche) - 15 laps
- 10. Enge/Pergl/Goueslard (Ferrari) - 15 laps

Photographs and further information available on the Internet:

www.audi-sportpress.com (accreditation necessary)

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