

## Press Information

Sears Point, 21 July 2001

### Le Mans winner Audi dominates on return to the United States

The spectators at Sears Point (California) can expect a thrilling race on Sunday: Rinaldo Capello easily achieved pole position in the first race of the American Le Mans Series (ALMS) after the 24 Hour race at Le Mans. But behind the Italian and his partner Tom Kristensen some competitors lurk for their chance. The first one is the Infineon Audi R8 of their team mates Frank Biela and Emanuele Pirro, who set the second fastest time during the 20 minutes of qualifying.

They are followed by hunters of their own company: Andy Wallace and Johnny Herbert in the 2000-spec Audi R8 of the Champion team challenged the factory squad several times during the free practice sessions of the weekend in California's vineyards. Of course, they want to repeat this during the 2:45 hour race on Sunday. Only two tenths of a second behind the Audi comes the fastest Panoz.

Until midway through qualifying, the Audi drivers left the Sears Point Raceway, which resembles a roller coaster than a racetrack, to their competitors. Then Dindo Capello and Frank Biela went out and did their fastest times shortly one after another.

Besides the many narrow and almost blind corners, the up and downhill parts make the race in California a real challenge for drivers and engineers. The goal is to set up the 610 bhp R8 so that it 'rides' out the bumps but keeps the downforce in the faster parts of the track.

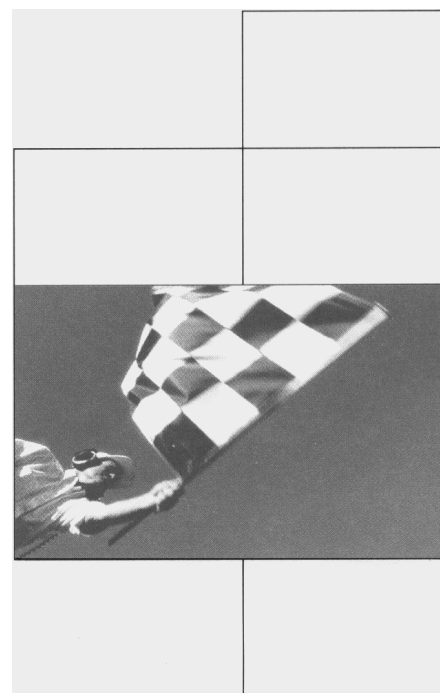
The round of the American Le Mans Series at Sears Point starts on Sunday, 12 noon local time and runs over a distance of 2:45 hours. Rinaldo Capello (#1) and Frank Biela (#2) will start the race in the two Infineon Audi R8s.

### Quotes after qualifying

Rinaldo Capello (#1): "I was surprised how slippery the track was. When I did my fastest lap I wasn't sure about my pole because I thought I could have gone faster. During the race, the traffic will play an important role. On this narrow circuit there is only one way: patience."

Tom Kristensen (#1): "The pole position is very important here at Sears Point because there are hardly any straights to overtake on. After the start, we accelerate into a left hand corner – you have to be at the front at that moment."

Frank Biela (#2): "I'm a little bit angry because on my fastest lap I didn't get the hairpin perfect. Of course I would have liked to stay on pole position but now I hope we can make up for it during the race."







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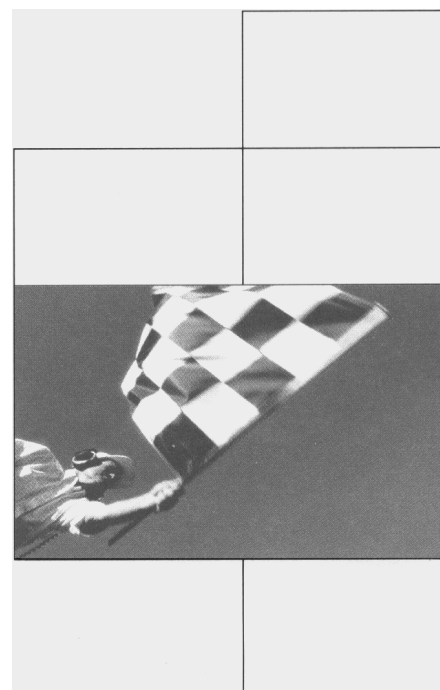
Emanuele Pirro (#2): "The most important thing is that we have a perfect set up for the race. But it is very hard to overtake, so we try to get in front right after the start."

Johnny Herbert (#38): "We have a better balance and I believe it will be an ideal set up for the race and will enable us to be consistent. I'm hoping that with the way that we set up our car, we'll be able to keep up the pressure."

Andy Wallace (#38): "We've chosen a tyre that should be good in the race. It was possibly too hard for qualifying as I was sliding around but there was no way I could have matched Dindo's time - that was a stunning lap."

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich, Head of Audi Sport: "Today it was not possible to come up to the times of last year. The track seems to be slower. I am very satisfied with the result of qualifying with the three Audis at the front. The performance of the Panoz is a little disappointing because they had previously set similar times to us but it seems they had problems in qualifying."

Reinhold Joest, Team Director Audi Sport North America: "The grip on the track is not as good as last year therefore the times were slower. Overall, I'm satisfied with our positions. If our two cars are in front of our opponents leading the race, it will become a thrilling duel between our two R8's because there will be no team orders."



### Starting grid at Sears Point

1. Capello/Kristensen (Infineon Audi R8)	1m 21.745s
2. Biela/Pirro (Infineon Audi R8)	1m 22.422s
3. Wallace/Herbert (Audi R8)	1m 22.962s
4. Magnussen/Brabham (Panoz)	1m 23.110s
5. Tinseau/Collard (Cadillac)	1m 23.768s
6. Taylor/Angelelli (Cadillac)	1m 23.801s
7. Field/Sutherland (Lola)	1m 25.232s
8. Graf/Lagorce (Panoz)	1m 28.645s
9. Konrad/Borcheller (Saleen)	1m 30.924s
10. Duno/Graham/de Radigues (Reynard)	1m 31.271s

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