

Ingolstadt, 13 July 2001

New Audi Technology now in the USA

Six weeks after the convincing double victory for Audi at the Le Mans 24 Hour race, the Team Audi Sport North America now faces its next challenge in America: With the "Grand Prix of Sonoma" in California's Sears Point on 22 July 2001, the American Le Mans Series (ALMS) enters a hot phase. Seven rounds in three months – all in North America – are left on the calendar before the 2001 ALMS champion can be confirmed at the end of October.

The Audi team sets off on the long trip to California with good memories. "It was exactly one year ago in Sears Point that our winning streak began with the R8," explains team director Reinhold Joest. Since then, Audi has secured 13 consecutive wins with the successful racing sportscar. "Of course we are keen to continue this impressive run of successes," says Head of Audi Sport Dr Wolfgang Ullrich. "But, Panoz will be putting the pressure on because they are again racing with their proven car. I am also curious how the modified Cadillac will perform on the short circuit."

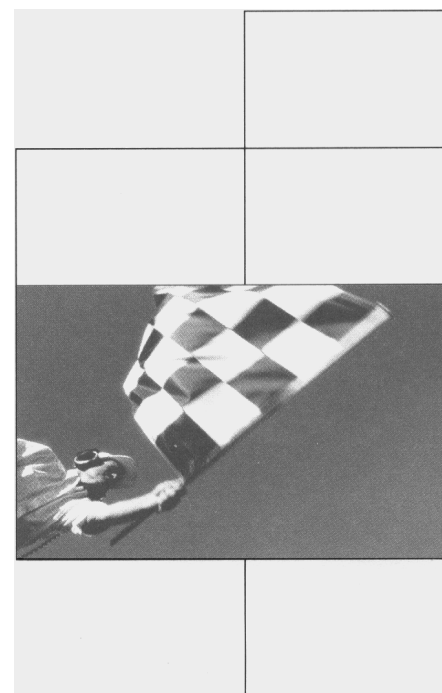
The Team Audi Sport North America starts in Sears Point with both the Infineon Audi R8 vehicles that contested the Le Mans race. Despite having covered a distance of more than 2,500 miles, both Le Mans engines will be used again. "Because of the rain the distance covered in Le Mans was significantly less than we had anticipated," explains Dr Ullrich. "We have checked the engines and everything is in top order."

The direct fuel injection (FSI), which proved its worth with the double win in Le Mans, will now also be used in the US races. For a race like in Sears Point with a duration of only 2:45 hours the reduction of fuel consumption through this new Audi technology is not as decisive as for a long distance race. Still, it allows the team a more flexible pit strategy.

From the Sears Point race on, both Infineon Audi R8 cars will also compete in the ALMS with the new aerodynamics that were first used successfully in Le Mans. "On the track at Sears Point you need mainly downforce," says Head of Audi Sport Dr Ullrich. "Above all, with our new aerodynamics we improved the drag coefficient without affecting the downforce."

The Audi drivers unanimously describe the 2.52 mile circuit situated near San Francisco as challenging and very interesting. ALMS points' leader Rinaldo Capello says: "Sears Point is without doubt one of the most difficult tracks of the season." The Italian has already won four rounds this year and in 2000 climbed to the top of the podium in Sears Point. "That was my first success with the R8 and the beginning of our winning streak last year. I hope it works again this time."

Capello shares the cockpit of the number one Infineon Audi R8 with Tom Kristensen, who competes for the first time in Sears Point. "Most of the





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circuits this year are new territory for me," says the Dane. "But by now that hasn't been a problem."

The number two Infineon Audi R8 is piloted by Frank Biela and Emanuele Pirro. "After our Le Mans win we now need a victory in the American Le Mans Series, otherwise the fight for the title is going to be really tough for Emanuele and me," declares Frank Biela. "We've had enough of second place..."

"Last year things didn't go at all well for us in Sears Point, because we hadn't found the right set-up," recalls Emanuele Pirro. "Still, I like the circuit, even though it's not without danger."

For the Audi Sport North America squad, tough competition comes not only from Panoz and Cadillac, but also from the own customer outfit, Champion Racing. Germany's Ralf Kelleners shares the cockpit of the 2000-spec Audi R8 with Andy Wallace. Kelleners earned himself a regular seat with the team after excellent drives in the endurance races in Sebring and Le Mans. "I'm over the moon," says Kelleners. "The Audi R8 is simply a dream car."

Sears Point schedule

Friday, 20 July	
12:40 – 14:10 hrs	Test session
Saturday, 21 July	
09:00 – 10:00 hrs	1st free practice
13:45 – 14:45 hrs	2nd free practice
17:25 – 17:45 hrs	Qualifying
Sunday, 22 July	
08:30 – 09:00 hrs	Warm-up
12:00 – 14:45 hrs	Race

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

