

04 Le Mans, 16 June 2000, 16:00 hrs

## Quotes from the Audi Press Conference

Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich, Head of Audi Sport: "At Le Mans it is not important to be in front at the beginning. You have to make sure to be on top at the end of the race. Therefore we concentrated on preparing the cars properly for the race during the practice and to find a good race set-up. We know that Panoz is very strong. We know that Cadillac improves all of the time and is capable of running close to the front. What we see with Cadillac reminds me of the process Audi went through last year. After qualifying, we had an even bigger gap to the front and still finished on the podium after 24 hours. All this you have to have in mind. However, if nothing unexpected happens, I do not want to issue any team orders. I'm convinced that our nine drivers are so professional and reasonable that we need not be concerned. They know that the aim is a success for Audi. However, we have decided a strategy of how to avoid that all three cars will come in to the pits at the same time during their first stops without giving any of the cars a disadvantage."

Michele Alboreto (#7): "We have worked hard to prepare the best possible car for Le Mans. Last year we were mainly here to collect data. The car was strong, reliable and quick, but may be not quick enough to win the race in the first year. This year's car is close to the limit in all areas. It is faster and much easier to drive. But it is a very long race and even if you have a competitive car you must finish the race first. We should never forget what Le Mans is: a very tough race."

Rinaldo Capello (#7): "We decided the driver teams dependant of the height of the drivers, because we have the chance to use one seat for all three of us. We can gain time during the driver changes. Last year, we had always to change the seat. The driving style is also very important as we need one set-up for all the drivers. Michele, Christian and I have more or less the same driving style. This helps a lot."

Christian Abt (#7): "I was driving the 'closed' car at Le Mans last year. This concept may be the better one for a single lap. But for long distances, the 'open' concept is better. There are different advantages: The temperatures in the cockpit are lower, the driver changes are quicker. We are working very well together in our team with a good understanding between us."

Tom Kristensen (#8): "I'm new at Audi this year but the team makes it really easy to feel at home immediately. All technicians and mechanics did a great job since last year's Le Mans debut. To win long distance races you need very experienced people in the pits who know exactly what to do. That we have those people makes us drivers very confident."

Emanuele Pirro (#8): "I had the honour to do the first test with the new car and I immediately felt that it was good. The Audi R8 was fantastic out of the box and we were able to win its first race at Sebring. Since then we have done more work on the car. Tom, Frank and I are working together very well. There is no weak driver in our team. This makes us very confident for the race."

Frank Biela (#8): "You have to find the best compromise between top speed for the long straights and downforce for the corners at Le Mans. I think, that we have reached a good level after eight hours of practice. We will see who has got the best race set-up and which driver pairings work best together. After my third place last year I would love to climb to higher steps on the podium on Sunday afternoon. But, of course, others like to do this as well ... "

Allan McNish (#9): "I said during the presentation of the car in Miami that the R8 was the fastest convertible on Miami Beach. I hope we can say on Sunday at 4 pm it's the fastest convertible in France too! We have already proved that the car is capable of going fast by taking pole-position. But we all know that Le Mans is not only about going fast and being on the front row of the grid. It's all about keeping the car out of the pits. We as drivers must show that we don't do any stupid things. We have to bring the car safely to the finish."

Stéphane Ortelli (#9): "I'm driving an open car for the first time for seven years - I had got used to a roof above my head and the feeling now is a little bit strange. But the car is very comfortable because you get fresh air into the cockpit. The team has worked very hard over the past days. I can only say thanks to Audi that I got the opportunity to drive this great car."

Laurent Aiello (#9): "I've already won the race together with my teammates two years ago. I hope we can produce a similar result. We were working through a lot of tyres during practice to make the best compound choice. The collaboration with Michelin is very important as the tyres play a big role at Le Mans."

Reinhold Joest, Team Director Audi Sport Team Joest: "Le Mans is always a special challenge but my team has already won it four times. As a team, we are at Le Mans for the 28<sup>th</sup> time. I have calculated that we spent 210 days working here so far. So we have a lot of experience. There has been a big step forward from last year to this year. The Audi R8 is beautiful, fast and reliable. Of course our drivers are already dreaming of a victory. But it's still a long way to go. It would be nice if we could deliver the victory to Audi this year. But many things can happen which are unpredictable."

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