

Le Mans, 16 June 2000

## Three Audis at the front of Le Mans grid

Audi Sport Team Joest has made another successful step in its preparations for this weekend's Le Mans 24 Hour race. In the second and final qualifying session this evening, the three Audi R8s maintained their hold on the top of the timesheets to head the 48-car field and in doing so, earned Audi its maiden pole-position for the gruelling French marathon at only its second attempt.

From the best possible starting position on Saturday afternoon (1600hrs), the no.9 Audi (Aiello/McNish/Ortelli) will begin the 68<sup>th</sup> Le Mans 24 Hours. McNish was able to improve his opening qualifying session time from Wednesday by 1.5 seconds, the Scotsman achieving a best time of 3mins 36.124secs, an average speed 226.62kph (140.75mph).

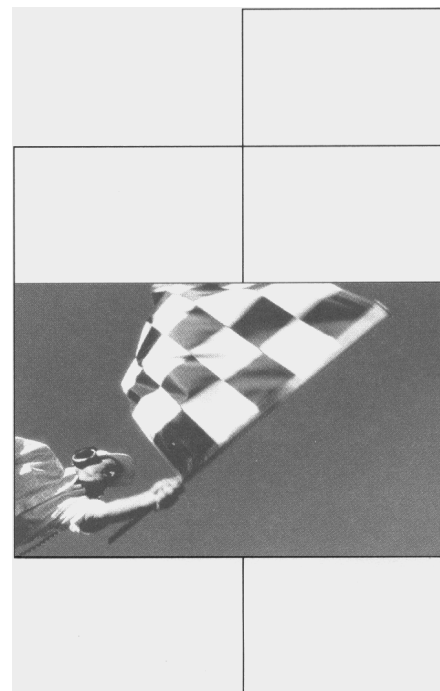
The no. 8 Audi (Biela/Kristensen/Pirro) will complete the front row for what is arguably the world's toughest motor race. Tom Kristensen, from Denmark, was just 0.526secs slower than McNish. For some time during the session, Kristensen and McNish traded fastest times and at one point had exactly the same.

Third place on the capacity grid is the third Audi R8. The no.7 Audi (Abt/Alboreto/Capello) held provisional pole-position after the opening time trials but despite improving its time, starts in third place.

Reinhold Joest, Team Director Audi Sport Team Joest, said: "Of course we are content with our qualifying result but more importantly than claiming pole-position, the fact that we were able to work on a good set-up for the race makes be even happier. All three cars were able to consistently set fast times during qualifying." But despite that, Audi Sport Team Joest will try not to take anything for granted in terms of race preparation.

Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich, Head of Audi Sport, remarked: "We have 24 tough hours of racing ahead of us. We will be concentrating on this element and taking all the necessary precautions: We'll not bounce over kerbs, our cars will not baulk each other and each will be especially careful when overtaking slower cars."

For the past two days, the weather has been fine and clear, resulting in very high temperatures but Dr. Ullrich is not unduly concerned. "The temperature has been quite high in qualifying but this should only be a problem when driving in a slipstream of another car and we'll try to avoid this in the race," he added.



## Press Information

### Quotes after 2nd qualifying

Laurent Aiello (no.9): "The lights were not perfect because they were adjusted too low and therefore it was really difficult to see some corners. With the speed we're doing at Le Mans, good lights are very important."

Allan McNish (no.9): "Overnight we changed the suspension settings and that made a big difference enabling me to go faster. I'm very proud to have claimed Audi's first Le Mans pole-position but the only important element is for the success of the team."

Stéphane Ortelli (no.9): "I like to drive in darkness because there are not so many things that interrupt your thoughts around the track. We've worked on the lights and changed the front bodywork to allow these modifications."

Frank Biela (no.8): "I put some more miles on the tyres I already used yesterday in order to see how far we could go with them. That worked out fine although they were very dirty with oil and sand."

Tom Kristensen (no.8): "I was driving at the beginning and tried new tyres which went very well. I even had pole for a while. Then we decided to work on the race rather than looking to go faster."

Emanuele Pirro (no.8): "I'm quite happy with the way the car goes. We have been trying the race set up and race tyres and I'm quite confident. I think we have a good car for the race."

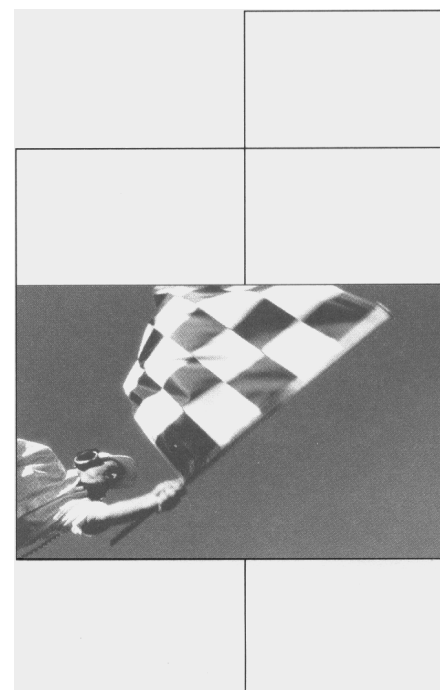
Christian Abt (no.7): "We checked some details for the race, using softer tyres for the night and on full tanks. Everything is okay."

Michele Alboreto (no.7): "I just did a few laps with hard tyres to compare data. The first laps during the night went very well so I stopped immediately. Of course it is a little bit sad that our car has lost the pole. But there are three Audis at the front and that is the most important thing."

Rinaldo Capello (no.7): "Compared to yesterday's qualifying we had some problems in the first session because the car was understeering in right hand corners. So I could only do a single fast lap with new rubbers."

Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich, Head of Audi Sport: "We are very happy with the qualifying result. I would have been even happier if the equal times had stayed. It's especially important all three cars have a good race set up. Concerning the strategy for the race, every driver will do exactly the speed which is comfortable for the car and which the driver feels safe at doing."

Reinhold Joest, Team Director Audi Sport Team Joest: "All three cars are in front and this is a perfect team effort. We are happy with pole-position but it's only the Le Mans race that really counts. We have done our homework and now I hope we have the necessary slice of luck."



### Qualifying results / Grid

## Press Information



1. Aiello/McNish/Ortelli (Audi R8)	3m36.124s
2. Biela/Kristensen/Pirro (Audi R8)	3m36.650s
3. Abt/Alboreto/Capello (Audi R8)	3m37.086s
4. Brabham/Magnussen/Andretti (Panoz)	3m39.156s
5. Schiattarella/de Radigues/Naspetti (Lola)	3m39.651s
6. Gache/Formato/Cottaz (Courage)	3m39.917s
7. Johansson/Matthews/Smith (Reynard)	3m40.124s
8. Katoh/O'Connell/Raphanel (Panoz)	3m41.359s
9. Bernard/Collard/Montagny (Cadillac)	3m42.616s
10. Lammers/Kox/Coronel (Lola)	3m43.188s

Updated photos on the internet:

[www.audi-press.com](http://www.audi-press.com) (password required)

Audi motorsport on the internet: [www.audi.com/motorsport](http://www.audi.com/motorsport)

