



# Presse-Information

## Press Information

Motorsport

Le Mans, 16 June 2002, 19:00

### Audi achieves Le Mans hat-trick with FSI Power

With a superb 1-2-3 in front of 220,000 spectators, AUDI AG has secured a special place in the history of the Le Mans 24 Hour race. Audi is only the fifth manufacturer to win the toughest car race in the world with the same team three times in a row – and the first who achieved this proper hat-trick in the past nearly 20 years. The Audi works drivers Frank Biela, Tom Kristensen and Emanuele Pirro also wrote motorsport history: They are the first-ever driver squad that won Le Mans three times in a row.

The latest Audi triumph in the endurance classic which has been held since 1923 was another demonstration of “Vorsprung durch Technik” and an impressive combination of speed and reliability. Over the entire 3,180 mile (5,120 kms) distance, the three Infineon Audi R8 sportscars, fitted with 610 hp strong FSI engines, were the fastest cars in the field. From the start, Audi led the race, never giving the lead away during the entire 24 hours. From hour six onwards, all three “works” Audis were at the head of the field. And Tom Kristensen shattered the lap record by almost four seconds. In total, the winning car covered 375 laps – seven more compared to the record drive in 2000.

Despite the stunning 1-2-3, the 70th running of the Le Mans 24 Hour race was anything but easy for the Audi squad. Warm and humid summer weather made it an enormous challenge for man and machine. The race also turned into a “tyre battle” with unusually many punctures which cost time and scarred the bodywork on the Infineon Audi R8 sportscars. That the punctures caused no further serious consequences was also prevented by a system developed by Audi and tyre partner Michelin, which warns the driver of a loss of tyre pressure.

The punctures also had an influence on the final outcome of the three Infineon Audi R8 sportscars. But as in the previous two years, Frank Biela, Tom Kristensen and Emanuele Pirro had the necessary slice of luck on their side again. They took the lead on Saturday evening, did not make a single mistake and so secured their historical third win at Le Mans. Rinaldo Capello, Johnny Herbert and Christian Pescatori achieved second position just in front of the newcomers Michael Krumm, Philipp Peter and Marco Werner who made it to the podium in their very first race with the R8.

With the triple victory, Audi Sport Team Joest continues its amazing winning streak in the Le Mans 24 Hour race: Since the debut in 1999, the team always brought home every car. For the third time in a row, the cars of the Audi Sport Team Joest left all other competitors behind. In 2000 and 2002, Audi celebrated triple victories. During the “rain battle” in last year’s season, both entered R8 sportscars conquered the first two race positions.

The customer team Audi Sport Japan Team Goh scored a creditable achievement with seventh position despite an accident in qualifying and a radiator change during the race.

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The roadcar customer already benefits from the FSI Power in the rear of the successful Infineon Audi R8 sportscars: The Le Mans proved direct petrol injection is also available for production cars. "The technology transfer between the racetrack and production cars is very intensive at Audi. The FSI technology is a very good example for that", says Dr Martin Winterkorn, Chairman of the Board at AUDI AG.

### Quotes after the race

Frank Biela (Infineon Audi R8 #1): "Of course we knew that we could do it with such a perfect car and a team that works superbly. But I always had my doubts and feared that something could go wrong. The feeling that we did it is now even greater. History and statistics never played a big role for me. But Le Mans is really something special – to win this race three times and this even in a row and with the same team-mates is simply fantastic."

Tom Kristensen (Infineon Audi R8 #1): "It was a very tough battle for victory, the pace was really high and we had a lot of pressure. Everyone said to us we wanted to make history. Now we did it – so for sure today is a dream came true for me. The Audi R8 is amazing. You can drive hard all of the time and it still lasts. It is a unique piece of equipment, a fantastic racing car. And the guys are great. I have won all my four Le Mans races with Joest."

Emanuele Pirro (Infineon Audi R8 #1): "We had a huge responsibility because so many people have given so much of their time to prepare this race at its best for us. This result does not come by coincidence. It is thanks to an incredible effort of so many people, and this gives you an enormous pressure. As a driver you just have to do it. Audi gave us the best car and we did our part."

Rinaldo Capello (Infineon Audi R8 #2): "Audi has done it once again – they've produced a great team job to win the historic trophy for good with an amazing 1-2-3. For me though it was a strange race – I pushed like hell but the gap just wouldn't come down. To win this race is not easy – speed and reliability alone is not enough – you also need luck. I would love to come back to try to win Le Mans but only with Audi."

Johnny Herbert (Infineon Audi R8 #2): "It was a fantastic, close but clean race between the three Audis. The four punctures perhaps cost us the win but that's just bad luck. I feel very proud to have been one of the nine drivers to stand on the 2002 Le Mans winners' rostrum. But the plaudits should also go to the entire team - the designers, engineers, technicians, mechanics – everyone from Audi Sport and the Joest crew."

Christian Pescatori (Infineon Audi R8 #2): "With an Audi you have to win, that's why I am of course a little disappointed. It was a difficult race. We had some problems at the beginning and were already one lap down after six hours. Now I can only hope that Audi will give me another chance next year to take the victory."

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Michael Krumm (Infineon Audi R8 #3): "I'm happy that we made it to the podium despite the bad luck we had at the beginning of the race. Big compliments to my team-mates Marco and Philipp, who drove fantastic lap times under pressure. I know exactly how hard this is: When I came to Le Mans as a rookie, I ended up in the gravel trap..."

Philipp Peter (Infineon Audi R8 #3): "Today there are so many emotions coming together: It's the first time for me at Le Mans, I haven't even been here before as a spectator. And then I get the chance to drive the best sportscar in the world. Our goal was quite clear: We didn't want to make any mistakes but take a close look at the podium. It's a unique experience that we have achieved all this together with Audi."

Marco Werner (Infineon Audi R8 #3): "For me as a rookie it's a little dream to finish on the podium here at Le Mans. But it was not as easy as it may have looked: Besides our team-mates, who are all very experienced at Le Mans, we had some great battles with other cars, especially at the beginning of the race. That we resisted this pressure and did our race in a very cool way, makes me really happy."

Seiji Ara (Audi R8 #5): "It was a fantastic feeling to finish the Le Mans 24 Hours. Additionally, I finished alongside the three winning Audi cars - a historic moment. It was another dream of mine to be the finishing driver. Our objective at the start was to finish the race and so to finish seventh is tremendous - it is such a good feeling."

Yannick Dalmas (Audi R8 #5): "Finishing the race was good for the team and very important for all our partners but I am disappointed at losing a long time in the pits on Saturday evening with the radiator problem. But the mechanics did an excellent job - they were great. Our goal was to finish this race and this we achieved."

Hiroki Katoh (Audi R8 #5): "Having to replace the radiator was our only real problem in the race but that cost us a lot of time. But we should be proud of what we achieved - we drivers worked well together as did the mechanics and of course the fantastic Audi. The Audi R8 is a great car - amazing speed and so solid, and we showed that by moving in to third place in the early stages of the race."

Reinhold Joest (Team Director Audi Sport Team Joest): "That was the greatest race of my career. First of all, because I got the chance to win the third consecutive year with Audi. And then, because it was the seventh victory at Le Mans for us - and the number seven has always been our lucky number. This weekend proved again, that Le Mans has its very own rules and that you can't predict a victory - no matter how perfectly you are prepared. But we had the luck on our side as we always got our cars back in the pits after suffering from a puncture."

Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Sport): "With this victory, a dream came true. We won because the entire team and our nine drivers did a great job. Our cars worked like clockwork for 24 hours despite the high temperatures. The little technical hick-ups we had were solved within the shortest possible time. The winning car spent not even 20 minutes in the pits. This is a big achievement."

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### Results

1. Biela/Kristensen/Pirro (Infineon Audi R8)	375 laps
2. Capello/Herbert/Pescatori (Infineon Audi R8)	- 1 lap
3. Krumm/Peter/Werner (Infineon Audi R8)	- 3 laps
4. Wallace/Leitzinger/van de Poele (Bentley)	- 13 laps
5. Beretta/Lamy/Comas (Oreca-Judd)	- 16 laps
6. Sarrazin/Montagny/Minassian (Oreca-Judd)	- 16 laps
7. Ara/Dalmas/Katoh (Audi R8)	- 17 laps
8. Lammers/Hillebrand/Coronel (Dome-Judd)	- 24 laps
9. Taylor/Angelelli/Tinseau (Cadillac)	- 30 laps
10. Boullion/Lagorce/Bourdais (Courage-Peugeot)	- 32 laps

Find updated photos and information on the internet:  
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