

Road Atlanta, 2 October 2005

Motorsport

Audi claims sports car “Grand Slam”

- **Sixth consecutive “Petit Le Mans” victory**
- **Biela/Pirro “crowned” ALMS champions early**
- **Audi R8 still unbeaten in “Petit Le Mans”**

Audi factory drivers Frank Biela and Emanuele Pirro scored a comfortable “Petit Le Mans” victory to earn the German-Italian driver combination the American Le Mans Series LM P1 title. Audi won the annual 1,000-mile race at Road Atlanta (USA) for a sixth consecutive year. The Audi R8 remains unbeaten in “Petit Le Mans” since its debut in 2000. Audi again claimed the sports car “Grand Slam” by winning the 12 Hours of Sebring, the 24 Hours of Le Mans and “Petit Le Mans”.

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Team ADT Champion Racing’s #1 JJ Lehto/Marco Werner Audi lined-up second on the 30-car grid with the “sister” #2 R8 of Frank Biela/Emanuele Pirro third, but drama occurred moments after the start of the race. James Weaver (Lola), starting from alongside Pirro on the second row, the pole-starting Zytek of Hayanri Shimoda and Lehto entered the first corner three abreast. Shimoda made contact with Lehto’s Audi incurring extensive front bodywork and right-hand suspension damage when both cars went off the circuit. Following a 40-minute pit-stop for repairs, Lehto resumed in 29th overall – 30 laps down. At mid-distance, Lehto/Werner were up to 13th overall when they touched a slower car with 5 1/2 hours run causing a pit-stop for rear suspension repairs. They eventually came home seventh, third in the LM P1 class.

Ran in daytime temperatures approaching 90 degrees Fahrenheit and in front of a record 77,000 crowd, the Biela/Pirro Audi dominated the race and took the chequered flag victorious after 9hrs 16mins. Biela and Pirro thus prematurely added this year’s ALMS title to the ones achieved in 2003 and 2001 respectively with their fourth ALMS victory of the season. The Manufacturers’ and Teams’ titles will be decided at the final race at Laguna Seca (California) on 15 October.

Quotes after Petit Le Mans

Frank Biela (Team ADT Champion Racing Audi R8 #2): “The track was very dirty and slippery making it tough. By mid-distance we already had a very comfortable lead but it was vital to concentrate 100% – it could have been easy to make a stupid mistake. I’m very happy, I honestly did not expect to clinch the title here with one race remaining. Team ADT Champion Racing thoroughly deserves the success it has achieved this year.”

Emanuele Pirro (Team ADT Champion Racing Audi R8 #2): “The race may have appeared boring but after the first corner accident, Frank and I needed to make sure we won today. Apart from a small brake problem at one stage, our car was perfect throughout the race. Meanwhile our pit crew, who at the start of the season had not much R8 experience, have been fantastic all season. Now Frank and I can enjoy ourselves at Laguna.”

JJ Lehto (Team ADT Champion Racing Audi R8 #1): “Shimoda was slow into the first corner and braked early. I took the outside line with James (Weaver) on the inside but Shimoda moved over on me. I would do the same manoeuvre again – I have taken the outside line there many times. Despite this and the later setback, we continued to push throughout as our aim must now be to finish runners-up in the championship.”

Marco Werner (Team ADT Champion Racing Audi R8 #1): “JJ’s first lap accident was obviously a great shame because it cost us any chance we had of victory. But the team did a great job in repairing our Audi on both occasions and it ran fast and reliably after each problem. Although we have said goodbye to the ALMS title JJ and I have had a very successful year.”

Dave Maraj (Team owner Team ADT Champion Racing): “To win the three major sportscar endurance races, the 12 Hours of Sebring, 24 Hours of Le Mans and the 1,000-mile ‘Petit’ all in one season is a magnificent achievement for everyone involved in my team.”

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “Congratulations to Frank (Biela) and Emanuele (Pirro) on winning the ALMS title prematurely! Both

showed a strong performance this season and have deserved the title. JJ (Lehto) and Marco (Werner) had some bad luck this year. But they have won Sebring and Le Mans. Even after six years, the Audi R8 is still the prototype to beat – we are proud of that.”

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