

## Press Information

Le Mans, 14 June 2001, 02.00hr

### Audi claims top-three positions

Good start for Audi at Le Mans: After first qualifying, three Audi sportscars finished in the top-three positions on the provisional starting grid. On Wednesday night, Tom Kristensen set the quickest lap in the Infineon Audi R8 with start number 1. With a 3m32.458s, the Danish driver topped last year's pole position time by 3.6 seconds.

Rinaldo Capello finished second in the other Infineon Audi R8 of Audi Sport Team Joest, completing a total silver line-up on the front row of the grid. Setting third best time in the Champion Audi R8, Ralf Kelleners confirmed that last year's two Audi customer cars are serious contenders for overall victory as well. The Audi R8 of Johansson Racing qualified for a preliminary eighth position.

The grid for the 2001 Le Mans 24 Hour race will be decided during the final qualifying on Thursday night when changeable weather is expected. The Le Mans race will start on Saturday at 16.00 hours.

### Quotes after 1st qualifying

Frank Biela (#1): "When I was driving with a full fuel load and used tyres during the night, the car oversteered. But I think the track was very dirty and slippery at the time although this will be the case during the race, so we have to work to make the car more comfortable to drive. We also lost a little time because of an electrical problem."

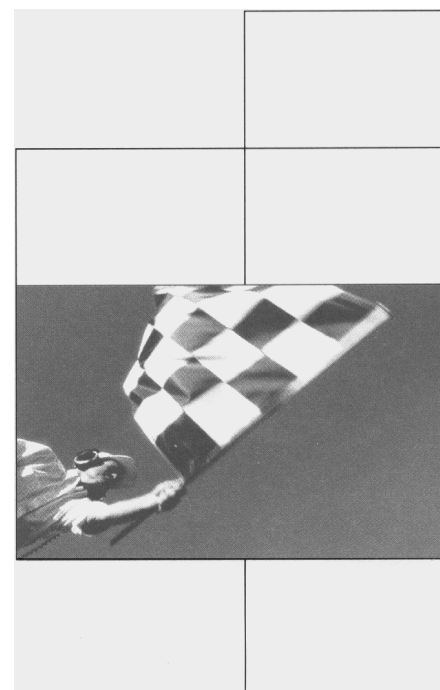
Tom Kristensen (#1): "Frank and Emanuele dialled the car in very quickly. I had a few runs on new tyres. The best one was the one just after 10pm. It was my first flying lap and it was almost clear. That does not happen often at Le Mans so I am very pleased."

Emanuele Pirro (#1): "I am very happy with the time Tom set because we concentrated on the set-up for the race. We can still improve the car but the time was already very good."

Laurent Aiello (#2): "We had a steering problem in the first part of qualifying but this was solved for the second. In the night the car was a little difficult to drive with the qualifying set-up. We will learn from that and try something different tomorrow."

Rinaldo Capello (#2): "The potential of the car is very high. I set my own fastest time on race tyres and I'm hoping that I'll be in a position to fight for pole position tomorrow night."

Christian Pescatori (#2): "I am beginning to know the car better and already feel very comfortable. I ran with a lot of fuel and race tyres because for me it is important to get into the right rhythm for the race."



Johnny Herbert (#3): "Ralf did a fine job setting up the car. I was only driving during the night time this evening but it was very good and I'm confident that tomorrow, in the daylight, it will be even better."

Ralf Kelleners (#3): "We had gear box problems at the beginning and so we focused on setting a time at the start of the second part of tonight's session."

Didier Theys (#3): "Getting into the car for the first time at night is not easy. I wasn't going to take any risks."

Tom Coronel (#4): "It's only my second run in the car and it leaves a good feeling – I'm very optimistic. I was getting used to driving in the dark again and gradually improving my pace."

Stefan Johansson (#4): "The car is not as quick as it was at the pre-test last month and so we'll check the data so that we can improve on Thursday."

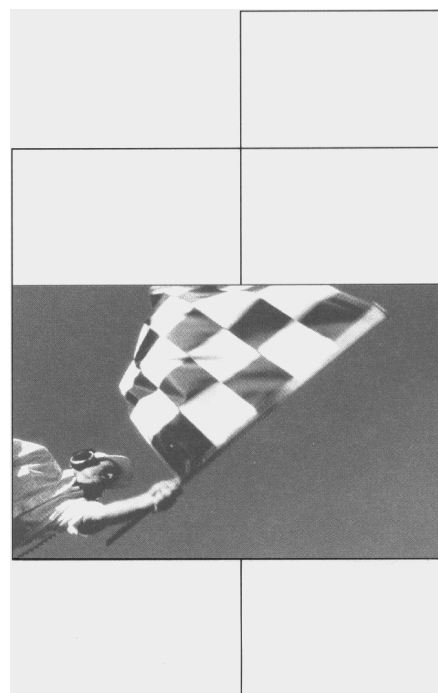
Patrick Lemarie (#4): "I am not comfortable in my seat while two slow punctures disrupted my own runs in the second part."

Reinhold Joest (Team Director Audi Sport Team Joest): "We are even faster than in the pre-test despite the grip level being quite low today. I think it could even be possible to go under 3m 32s on Thursday. The little problems we had today do not make us nervous. We will sort them out by Saturday."

Thierry Boutsen (Project Manager Champion Racing): "We are pleased with the balance of the car. We were trying some things and made good progress. I have a lot of confidence in the team, the drivers and the car."

Mike Earle (Team Director Johansson Racing): "An interesting but also a disappointing night. We had a brake balance problem initially. We will be aiming for a top-four place on the grid tomorrow."

Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Sport): "If you see the weather forecast, it was important to be fast today. We were setting our fastest times exactly at the right moment, tried different things and went through our programme."



## Results 1st qualifying

1. Biela/Kristensen/Pirro (Infineon Audi R8)	3m 32.458s
2. Aiello/Capello/Pescatori (Infineon Audi R8)	3m 33.514s
3. Herbert/Kelleners/Theys (Audi R8)	3m 34.349s
4. Lammers/Hillebrand/Crevels (Dome-Judd)	3m 36.031s
5. Beretta/Wendlinger/Lamy (Chrysler)	3m 36.155s
6. Brundle/Ortelli/Smith (Bentley)	3m 36.535s
7. Wallace/Leitzinger/van de Poele (Bentley)	3m 37.408s
8. Coronel/Johansson/Lemarie (Audi R8)	3m 37.451s

## Press Information



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| 9. Gache/Beltoise/Policand (Courage-Judd) | 3m 38.746s |
| 10. Dalmas/Montagny/Sarrazin (Chrysler)   | 3m 38.814s |

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