



Press Information

Laguna Seca, 15 October 2000

Audi clinches manufacturer's title with 1-2 at Laguna Seca

Audi clinched the manufacturer's title of the American Le Mans Series (ALMS) two races before the end of the season with a spectacular 1-2 victory at Laguna Seca. Allan McNish and Rinaldo Capello took the chequered flag first after exciting 119 laps, Emanuele Pirro and Frank Biela in the other Audi R8 finished second just 0.352s behind their team mates. It was the fifth 1-2 victory for the Team Audi Sport North America in the tenth event of the season.

At the beginning of the exciting race, however, it did not look like another success for Audi. Starting from 1st and 3rd on the grid, the two Audi R8s dropped to 4th and 5th at the start when pole sitter Rinaldo Capello had troubles shifting from second to third gear, and Frank Biela in the sister car got trapped behind his team mate. Despite strong competition from Panoz and BMW, the Audi drivers were able to fight back and take the lead by the half way mark.

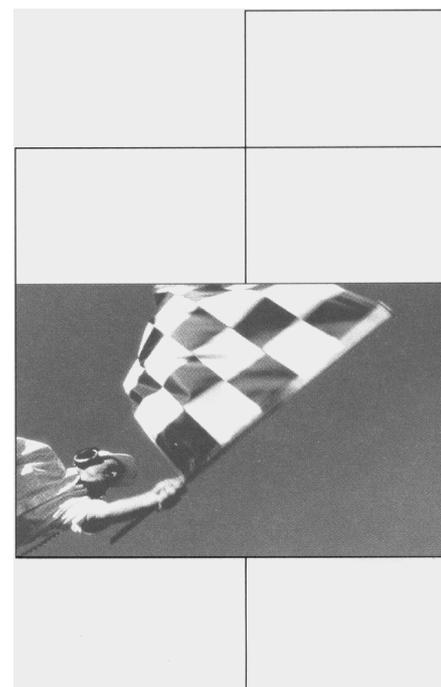
The race of eventual winners Allan McNish and Rinaldo Capello was especially eventful, Capello having two incidents with other cars in the early stages of the race, the second one causing a broken wheel and a flat tyre. After the driver change, Allan McNish's hunt for the lead seemed to be over early, when the Scotsman was hit by Jean-Marc Gounon's BMW on lap 45 spinning him into a wall. Despite the Audi R8 being damaged in this incident and McNish dropping to fifth position, in the end Capello/McNish were still able to take the victory.

The two Audi R8s had even opened a lead of more than one minute over the rest of the field, when a late caution period allowed the third placed BMW to close the gap. After the restart, however, the Audi drivers easily pulled away again bringing home the 1-2 and the manufacturer's title. With their fifth victory of the season Allan McNish and Rinaldo Capello were able to extend their lead in the driver's championship.

Quotes after the race

Rinaldo Capello (#77): "The big problem today was the start. I could not change from second to third. When I finally managed to get third gear, the others had already passed me. After a collision in the first corner I damaged the nose of my car. Despite the aerodynamics being not perfect, the car was still fast. When I later had contact with a GT car, a wheel broke and a tire punctured. The Michelin people told me, that I could go to Rome and thank the Pope that I was able to come back to the pits."

Allan McNish (#77): "I was catching quite quickly the leader, when I came to lap Jean-Marc Gounon. We crashed, I hit the wall and the car after that was never as good as before. I dropped down to fourth, but came back to



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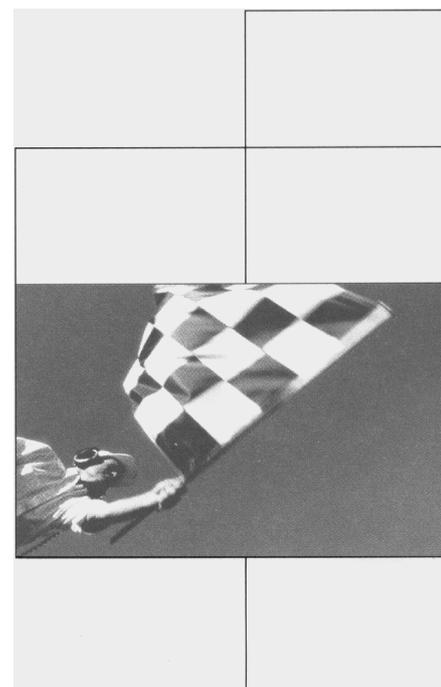
second. Prior to the last stop I was pushing very hard and was able to come out ahead of Emanuele Pirro in the other Audi."

Frank Biela (#78): "After two hard practice days we can be very content with the second place. We had troubles during qualifying, because we did not find the right setup. Today, however, the car was very good and we were able to keep pace with our team mates."

Emanuele Pirro (#78): "It has been really a positive race. Our weekend has been very difficult with the setup. We changed the car completely over night, so we started the race with a lot of question marks. When I got the car, it was going well. I was really motivated and I did a good race. We made a 1-2, which is good for Audi."

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich, Head of Audi Sport: "This was a real 'up-and-down race' today. After the first lap we were a little bit disappointed, because we knew, how difficult it is to overtake on this track. That's why the following laps were a big fight to gain one place after the other. Despite three incidents, the car of Dindo and Allan was able to come back to the front, and the race was decided during the final pit stops. Both cars spent similar times in the pits, but on the in and out laps the conditions must have been different. Allan took the lead from Emanuele and stayed in front until the chequered flag. In the closing stages of the race we had to be careful because a caution period allowed the BMW to close the gap, but our R8s continued to do consistent fast lap times which allowed them to keep their advantage until the finish."

Reinhold Joest, Team Director Audi Sport North America: "This is a dream result for us. After the start it did not seem that we would be able to go to the front. Dindo was lucky that he caught his puncture in the moment when his tire change was scheduled. Today we had some luck. Which was not the case with Panoz: It is a shame, because they were really fast here. Our R8s were fantastic, both reliable and fast. And our drivers became better with every lap."





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Results

1. Capello/McNish (Audi R8)	119 laps
2. Biela/Pirro (Audi R8)	+ 0.352s
3. Lehto/Müller (BMW)	+ 11.331s
4. Gounon/Auberlen (BMW)	- 3 laps
5. Smith/Johansson (Reynard)	- 3 laps
6. Field/Sutherland (Lola)	- 7 laps
7. Angelelli/Taylor (Cadillac)	- 8 laps
8. Beretta/Wendlinger (Chrysler)	- 10 laps
9. Fellows/Pilgrim (Chevrolet)	- 10 laps
10. Archer/Donohue (Chrysler)	- 10 laps

Find updated photos on the internet:
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