

Press Information



Road Atlanta, 5 October 2001

Audi conquers front row for Petit Le Mans

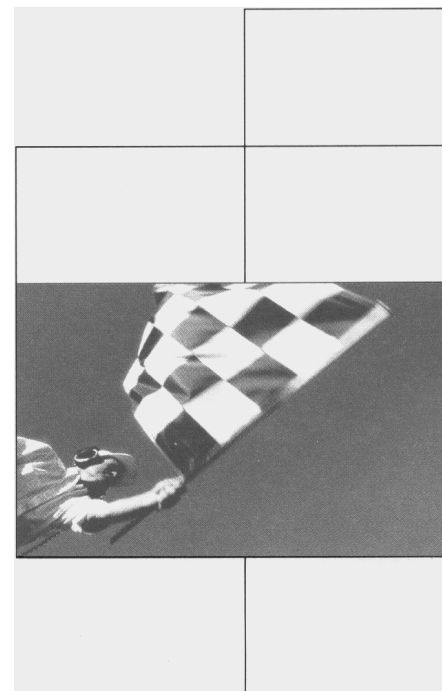
Team Audi Sport North America has secured an optimal foundation for the final round of the American Le Mans Series (ALMS) at Road Atlanta. Both Infineon Audi R8 sportscars will start the 1000-mile or 10-hour long "Petit Le Mans" in the US state Georgia from the front row.

For the ninth time in the season's ten races an Audi works driver secured pole position. Tom Kristensen was fastest in the final qualifying session after having caused some extra work to his team after going off the track on Wednesday. The Dane put his ALMS leading team mate Emanuele Pirro to the second spot on the grid by just 94 thousandths of a second.

The Audi customer teams Johansson and Champion qualified 4th and 5th with their 2000-spec R8 sportscars.

The race starts at 12 local time and will finish by 10 p.m. Audi has already secured the ALMS titles for teams and manufacturers. The drivers title, however, will be decided at the "Petit Le Mans". Only the four Audi works drivers have chances to win the title.

Tom Kristensen (#1) and Emanuele Pirro (#2) are scheduled as start drivers in the two Infineon Audi R8 sportscars.



Quotes after qualifying

Rinaldo Capello (#1): "I am very happy, because we are in front of Panoz. They were very quick yesterday. But we beat them on their home track last year, and I hope tomorrow we will do the same. Tom and Emanuele were very close together in qualifying. This means we have to push a lot in the race, because we still hope for the championship."

Tom Kristensen (#1): "The team worked hard after my accident on Wednesday. It is nice to put a smile on their face going quick. I am very pleased with the pole position. The car worked well. It was tough to predict the weather. But in the end the organisers helped us a little bit because they declared a wet session. So we could use as many tyres as we wanted. It took a little pressure off, because you normally have only one set of tyres."

Frank Biela (#2): "We worked mainly for the race. 10 hours is a long time, you need a car which is comfortable to drive and has a good balance for the whole distance. Emanuele showed in qualifying that our car is good. We are on the front row and have a good starting position for the race."

Emanuele Pirro (#2): "I am pleased with my time and totally happy with the position on the grid. I am here trying to win the championship. To start from first row, is fantastic. The gap is close. Less than a tenth of a second you can win or lose anywhere. So I am optimistic for the race."

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Stefan Johansson (#18): "We concentrated on getting the car set up for the race and not only for one qualifying lap and it should pay dividends. I made a mistake in this morning's session causing front bodywork damage - that has been our only problem since we began testing last Sunday. Right at the very end of qualifying I managed to get on the second row which was satisfying."

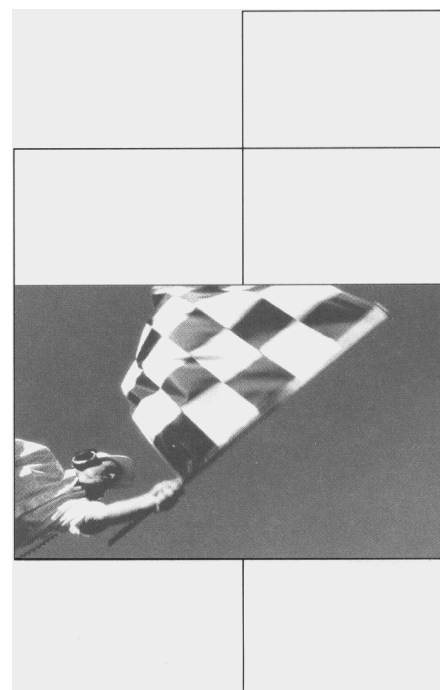
Patrick Lemarié (#18): "This is my first time at Road Atlanta and it's one of the most beautiful tracks I've ever driven on. The layout is challenging and is very fast. It will be decisive keeping out of trouble when lapping back markers. Our Audi is excellent."

Johnny Herbert (#38): "We knew that we would not be especially strong in qualifying but had hoped for more. I went out halfway through the session only for it to be black flagged on my first lap out. Then a slower car pulled across me in a corner causing me to spin on my next lap out. Then Stefan took fourth place away from me on the very last lap by nine thousandths of a second! But we've a good set-up for the race which is the most important - it's the race winner people remember, not the pole-sitter."

Andy Wallace (#38): "We tested here last weekend which represents the first-ever test session this year. That mileage plus the practice has given us a very good car for the race, one that is consistent and easy to drive which will be decisive in a 1,000-mile race."

Reinhold Joest, Team Director Audi Sport North America: "This is a dream result and very important for tomorrow. We all know that the start is very dangerous here. As we have both cars on the front of the field we are able to set the pace at the start. This brings us into a good position for the race, however, 10 hours of course is a very long distance."

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich, Head of Audi Sport: "It is especially important here to start from the front. Our two cars, which are within a tenth of a second, worked well and also have a good setup for the race. I just hope, it will not rain tomorrow. Already on a dry track the risk is quite high because of the heavy traffic. We will give everything to finish the season with a victory."



Starting grid at Road Atlanta

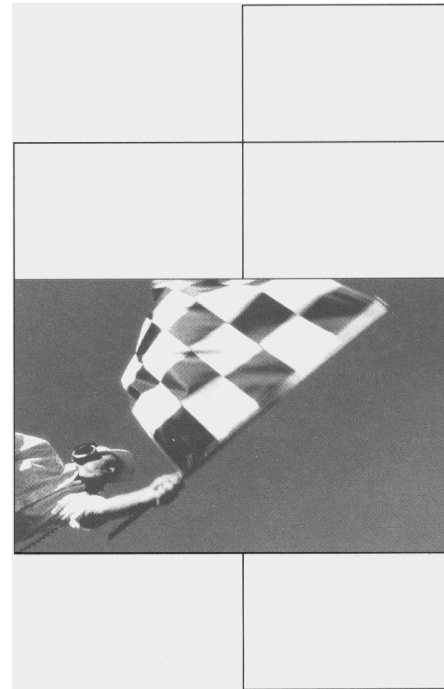
1. Capello/Kristensen (Infineon Audi R8)	1m 10.917s
2. Biela/Pirro (Infineon Audi R8)	1m 11.011s
3. Magnussen/Brabham (Panoz)	1m 11.061s
3. Johansson/Lemarié (Audi R8)	1m 11.939s
5. Herbert/Wallace (Audi R8)	1m 11.948s
6. Graf/Lagorce (Panoz)	1m 12.372s
7. Bernard/Collard/Goossens (Cadillac)	1m 13.043s
8. Weaver/Leitzinger/Forbes-R. (Riley&Scott)	1m 13.313s
9. Taylor/Angelelli/Tinseau (Cadillac)	1m 13.592s

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10. Field/Sutherland/Neuhaus (Lola-Judd) 1m 14.244s

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