



## Press Information

Ingolstadt, 28 September 2001

### Audi keen to close the season with a hat-trick

Just one week after the Formula 1 Grand Prix in Indianapolis, the USA is the centre stage for another motorsport highlight: On Saturday the 6<sup>th</sup> of October, Road Atlanta hosts the "Petit Le Mans" race – the season final of the American Le Mans Series (ALMS).

Covering a distance of 1000 miles or a maximum of ten hours, the "Petit Le Mans" counts as one of the three long distance races for Le Mans sportscars. Two of them – Sebring and Le Mans – have already been won by Audi this year. After having already secured the ALMS manufacturers' and teams' championships, Audi's objective for Road Atlanta is clear: "We want to finish up the season with a hat-trick," explains Head of Audi Sport Dr Wolfgang Ullrich.

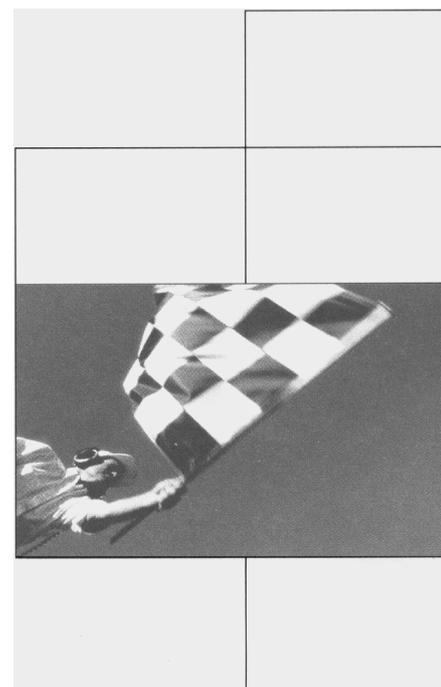
This is easier said than done. "We already know that our Infineon Audi R8 is reliable, but we also know that anything can happen in an endurance race," admits team boss Reinhold Joest. Almost 50 sportscars will tackle the Road Atlanta race, which is somewhat worrying for the Audi drivers: "It means there'll be a huge amount of traffic," declares Emanuele Pirro.

The Italian travels to the final race leading the series, and of the four Audi works drivers, Pirro has the best chance of securing the ALMS drivers' title. If Rinaldo Capello and Tom Kristensen were to win, with Pirro in second, it would still be enough for him to take the championship. Nevertheless, on the eve of the season final, the Italian remains relaxed: "Of course I'd love to win the ALMS title, especially after winning Le Mans. But I'm totally happy with my season to now, so it wouldn't be a catastrophe if things didn't work out."

Whereas three drivers shared the cockpit of each R8 in "Petit Le Mans" last year, this year Audi Sport North America has put two drivers per car. "Okay, ten hours is hard work, but it's still good to stick with the usual driver pairings," believes Frank Biela, who as usual shares the cockpit of the number 2 Infineon Audi R8 with Emanuele Pirro. Due to the complex ALMS points system, that grants extra points and allows the exclusion of the worst result, the German's chances at the title are purely theoretical.

Whatever the case, in order to have a shot at the title, Rinaldo Capello and Tom Kristensen in their Infineon Audi R8 with starting number 1 must finish in the top three. "We've not given up yet. We're still going for the championship," says Rinaldo Capello, who won the Road Atlanta round last year. "Ten hours is very long, anything can happen – even in the fight for the drivers' title," adds Tom Kristensen. "After experiencing bad luck in the last races it's now our turn to win."

Aside from Panoz and Cadillac, the Audi works drivers also face strong opposition from both Audi customer teams Champion and Johansson. Unlike the works team, the Champion outfit tested in Road Atlanta last weekend and in this way possibly gained a slight advantage over its rivals. "We could have won in Mosport and Laguna Seca," believes Andy Wallace,



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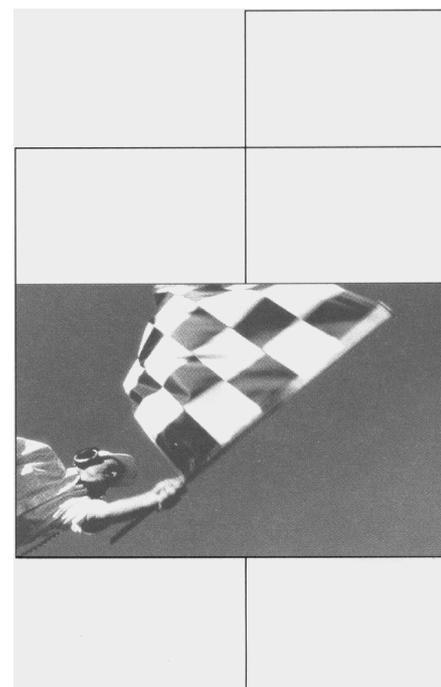
with his team mate Johnny Herbert adding: "I reckon we can manage a place on the podium. But the works team will be difficult to beat particularly because their direct injection system gives them an advantage over the longer distance."

Whilst Audi's customer squads contest the ALMS with a 2000-spec engine, the Audi Sport North America team brought a V8 twin-turbo power unit with the new FSI technology to the series mid-season. Not only does the new technology provide a better throttle response, but most importantly it lowers fuel consumption.

Stefan Johansson and Patrick Lemarié are also aware of the advantage held by both Infineon Audi R8 cars, but are nevertheless optimistic: "I've never had much luck in Road Atlanta, but that won't stop us from trying to beat the works team," says Johansson. "We've shown that we can match the pace of the works team and the Panoz more than once," declares Lemarié. "I'm expecting a good result."

"Petit Le Mans" gets underway on Saturday, October 6<sup>th</sup>, at 12.00 hours local time and finishes around 22.00 hours. Sport, however, is not the only important activity in Road Atlanta. After the terrorist attack in the USA, the organisers will have a charity campaign for the families of the New York Fire Fighters, to which Audi of America is contributing US\$ 100,000. Additionally, during the event in Road Atlanta donations will be collected for the families of the victims. The takings from an auction on Friday before the race will also be added to the fund. Amongst other offers, the Audi Sport North America team will give fans the chance to bid for the racing overalls of the new ALMS driver champion – regardless of whether his name is Pirro, Biela, Capello or Kristensen.

For more information on the Audi donation, see [www.audiusa.com](http://www.audiusa.com)





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### Points standings\*

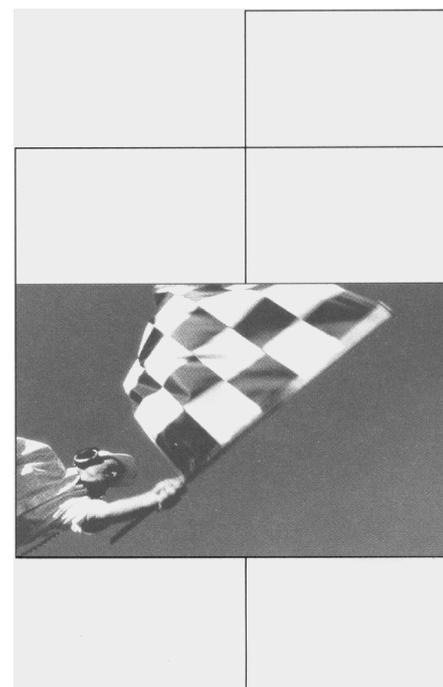
#### Drivers

1. Emanuele Pirro (Infineon Audi R8)	170	
2. Frank Biela (Infineon Audi R8)	166	
3. Rinaldo Capello (Infineon Audi R8)	162	
4. Tom Kristensen (Infineon Audi R8)	161	
5. Jan Magnussen (Panoz)	140	
6. Andy Wallace (Audi R8)	129	
7. David Brabham (Panoz)	125	
8. Johnny Herbert (Audi R8)	88	
9. Klaus Graf (Panoz)		79
10. Christophe Tinseau (Cadillac)	61	
Emmanuel Collard (Cadillac)	61	

#### Manufacturers

1. Audi	176	
2. Panoz	143	
3. Cadillac		64
4. Lola		58
5. Riley & Scott	53	
6. Courage		35

\* taking into account the exclusion of the worst results



### Schedule in Road Atlanta

Wednesday, 3 October

13:15 – 14:30 hrs      Test

Thursday, 4 October

10:15 – 11:15 hrs      1st free practice  
14:00 – 15:00 hrs      2nd free practice  
19:00 – 21:00 hrs      Night practice

Friday, 5 October

08:00 – 09:00 hrs      3rd free practice  
17:00 – 17:30 hrs      Qualifying

Saturday, 6 October

08:25 – 08:55 hrs      Warm-up  
12:00 – 22:00 hrs      Race

Find updated photos and information on the internet:  
[www.audi-sportpress.com](http://www.audi-sportpress.com) (password required)