



Press Information

Le Mans / Ingolstadt, 9 November 2003

Audi wins at Le Mans again

The Audi R8 celebrated a further great victory to round off the 2003 motorsport season: The Japanese driver Seiji Ara and the Dane Tom Kristensen won the 1000 kilometre race at Le Mans (France), held in tricky conditions, in the Audi Sport Japan Team Goh Audi R8. With their victory, the Japanese Audi customer team secured themselves a grid slot for next year's 24 Hours of Le Mans.

In cold and wet conditions, the "Japanese" Audi R8 was in a class of its own in the 35 car strong field on the Circuit Bugatti. Starting from pole position on the rain soaked circuit, Tom Kristensen immediately took the lead, which he and Ara never surrendered during the entire race. Their lead increased as the track became drier. Team Goh were not only helped by the almost legendary reliability of the Audi R8 and the correct tyre choice each time, but also the low fuel consumption of the Audi FSI engine: While the second placed Courage-Peugeot had to stop for fuel after only 34 laps, Tom Kristensen pitted for fuel for the first time after 48 laps and more than 200 kilometres. The Audi R8 only had to pit a total of four times for fuel. Ara/Kristensen finally triumphed after six hours with a comfortable advantage of three laps.

After the Audi factory team's three successive victories at the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 2000, 2001 and 2002 the Audi R8 celebrated a further success at Le Mans. It was the second win in a row for Audi Sport Japan Team Goh in an important long distance race following their victory at the 1000 kilometre race at Spa-Francorchamps at the end of August. The Audi R8 is, and remains the most successful sports prototype of the modern era: Audi customer teams celebrated 10 victories from twelve races in the American Le Mans Series (ALMS) and in Europe during the 2003 season.

Quotes after the race

Tom Kristensen (Audi Sport Japan Team Goh Audi R8 #5): "The Audi R8 is an outstanding car. The rain and the cold temperatures made it very difficult to get grip, but Michelin gave us the right tyres. The low fuel consumption of the Audi engine allowed us to be conservative with the tyre choice. We could stay out longer and watch what the others did. This was the key to success."

Seiji Ara (Audi Sport Japan Team Goh Audi R8 #5): "I am very happy about this victory because winning at Le Mans means a lot to me. It was a very difficult race due to the weather conditions, but we had a great car. Tom (Kristensen) was a fantastic team mate. Now my next aim is to win the Le Mans 24 Hours."

Kazumichi Goh (Team Owner Audi Sport Japan Team Goh): "Everything went perfectly. We had the right strategy although the weather made the track conditions very difficult. Both drivers did a superb job, as did the whole team. It was very difficult to choose the right tyres. We had a great car, great drivers and great mechanics which allowed us to win this race."

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Results

- 1 Ara/Kristensen (Audi R8) 208 laps in 5hrs 59m 53.245s
- 2 Sarrazin/Lagorce/Bourdais (Courage-Peugeot) - 3 laps
- 3 Lammers/Wallace (Dome-Judd) - 4 laps
- 4 Rusinov/Eyckmans/Muscioni (Courage-JPX) - 11 laps
- 5 Davies/Turner (Ferrari) - 13 laps
- 6 Kox/Sugden (Ferrari) - 14 laps
- 7 Field/Dayton/Connor (Lola-Judd) - 17 laps
- 8 Bouchut/Vosse/Dumez (Chrysler) - 18 laps
- 9 Andrews/Keen/Lavaggi (Lola-Judd) - 18 laps
- 10 Montermini/Engelhorn/Peter (Ferrari) - 19 laps

Photographs and further information can be found in the Internet:
www.audi-sportpress.com (accreditation necessary)

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