



Press Information

Ingolstadt, 27 July 2001

ALMS entered hot phase

With a double victory in Sears Point, Audi made a dream start into the hot phase of the American Le Mans Series (ALMS). But the round in California last weekend gave the Audi works drivers Frank Biela, Rinaldo Capello, Tom Kristensen and Emanuele Pirro just a small taste of what awaits them at the next race in Portland on 5 August. The driver squads of both Infineon Audi R8s also face strong outside opposition.

"I'm convinced we'll experience another fight within the team in Portland," explains Head of Audi Sport Dr Wolfgang Ullrich. "I think Frank and Emanuele bring a great deal of extra motivation from the Sears Point race. But we have to watch out for both Panoz cars and the Champion outfit."

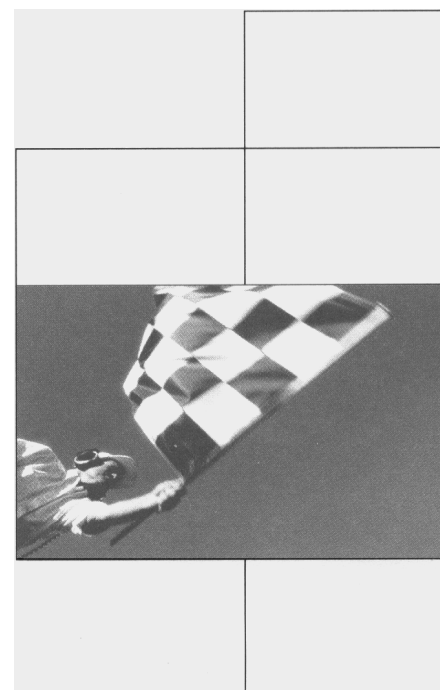
Panoz contested the Sears Point race with their proven cars from last year and had no trouble keeping pace with the front pack. And the privately-entered Audi R8 of the Champion team could drive to victory at any time. After competing at Le Mans, Johnny Herbert gave his ALMS debut in Sears Point and will contest the rest of the season alongside his partner Andy Wallace. "I'm very much looking forward to racing the Audi – it's about time someone beat the works cars and it would be good to start in Portland," declares Herbert, who brings experience from 162 Formula 1 races to the ALMS.

The Audi Sport North America team are of course determined to prevent this. Above all, the Le Mans winners Frank Biela and Emanuele Pirro are keen to clinch their first winner's trophy of the 2001 ALMS season in Portland. "We know we've got the speed to win – now we just have to do it," said the longest standing member of the Audi squad. "After our narrow miss in Sears Point our motto is: the time is now!" agrees Pirro.

Still, victory for Biela and Pirro means overcoming the Italian/Danish duo in the sister car. "Portland is another new track for me. But in Sears Point I proved that I'm able to learn quickly," said Tom Kristensen. "This time it's my turn to qualify, so I hope to set pole so that Dindo and I have the best starting position."

All Audi pilots agree that the 3.128 kilometre circuit in the US state of Oregon is comparatively easy. "Apart from the ovals, Portland is the least challenging track of the season for a driver," explains points leader Rinaldo Capello, who last year posted pole and went on to win the race. "But as always there is not a lot of time in free practice to familiarise ourselves with the circuit, so we must work concentratedly."

For this reason, Reinhold Joest is applying the experience gained from last year. "We collected a lot of data from our last race in Portland – like for instance the gear ratios. It's not possible to transfer all this information one-to-one to the new Infineon Audi R8, however the test day helps



AUDI AG
Sport Press
D-85045 Ingolstadt
Phone + 49 841 89-34200
Fax + 49 841 89-38617
sportpresse@audi.de



Press Information

tremendously and that's half of the way," says the director of the Audi Sport North America team.

"Still, it won't be an easy race," believes Frank Biela. "The good thing is, in contrast to Sears Point, we have a long straight to catch our breath, but we also have to drive more laps than in Sears Point. There's only one place to overtake at the end of the finish straight, therefore it's important to find a good compromise in setting up the car. We need enough downforce in the tight corners but plenty of speed on the straight to make the most of this one overtaking chance."

The race in Portland takes off on Sunday 5 August at 13.00 hours local time (22 hrs CET) and lasts 2:45 hours.

Schedule in Portland

Friday, 3 August	
14:00 – 15:30 hrs	Testing
Saturday, 4 August	
11:00 – 12:00 hrs	1st free practice
15:15 – 16:15 hrs	2nd free practice
18:10 – 18:30 hrs	Qualifying
Sunday, 5 August	
11:30 – 12:00 hrs	Warm-up
13:00 – 15:45 hrs	Race

Current photos and information are available in internet:
www.audi-sportpress.com (password required)

