



Press Information

Dallas/Fort Worth, 4 March 2001

Audi catches dream start to new season

For title defender Audi, the start into the new season of the American Le Mans Series (ALMS) could not have been better: At the first round in Dallas/Fort Worth, Rinaldo Capello and his new teammate Tom Kristensen celebrated their first victory together. Frank Biela and Emanuele Pirro in the companion Infineon Audi R8 completed the Audi triumph with second place. It was the ninth consecutive victory in the ALMS for the team Audi Sport North America. The squad has now been undefeated for more than seven months.

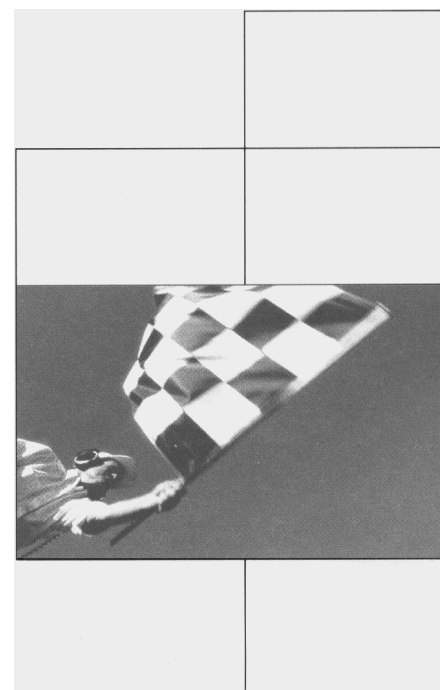
The race in Dallas guaranteed 2:45 hours of pure excitement. First it was Frank Biela's job, who had to start the race from the back of the grid. The Audi driver was fastest in qualifying but the officials nullified his time because the diffuser was two millimetre too high according to the rules. So Biela fought his way through the field, conquered eighth position after just one lap and shortly afterwards started battling for the podium.

For a while it even looked like a victory for the German-Italian double. But Emanuele Pirro lost precious time after a collision while lapping a slower back marker. Even when Tom Kristensen took over the lead again the tension of the crew of Audi Sport North America didn't disappear for a single second. Different pit stop strategies of the team and a few yellows kept the race close until the very end. So Rinaldo Capello and Tom Kristensen had to press for their victory until a few minutes before the end of the race. Meanwhile the leading Panoz had to pit to get some urgently needed fuel.

There was nearly an all Audi podium at the season opener: The Champion squad showed a great performance with a 2000 spec Audi R8 and missed third place only by a narrow margin.

Quotes after the race

Rinaldo Capello (#1): "This was a crazy weekend which finally finished great for us. It started with my late arrival to Dallas because of so much snow in Italy that my flight was cancelled. Then in free practise we could only drive a few laps due to some problems with the car.





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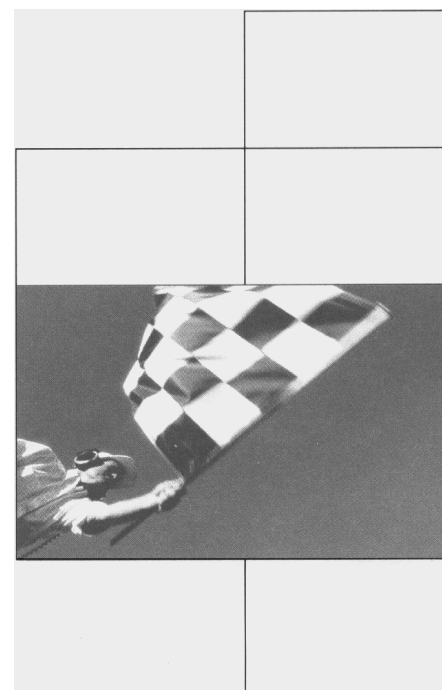
In qualifying it was raining most of the time and so we could drive the first time under good conditions during the warm up this morning. After all this, I'm even more happy about winning this race."

Tom Kristensen (#1): "I am very happy and proud to have won this race. But I have to admit that we did not have the quickest car over the weekend. During the race I couldn't follow Emanuele without pushing the tires too much. After the mishap of Emanuele I took the lead and I went for it. To save the tires I put the break balance as much as I could to the rear. In the end that was the key to win the race."

Frank Biela (#2): "Fighting through the field was fun. The first cars were easy to overtake, but then I really had to concentrate every moment on what the other drivers were doing. I always had Dindo and the Panoz in sight which helped a lot. It's a pity we didn't win this race because I think our car was good for a victory today."

Emanuele Pirro (#2): "This is a good team result, but we should have won this race because we were quickest in qualifying and quickest in the race. But I had a stupid accident because the driver of a slower car made a mistake, braked too late and hit me. After that incident the car was not that perfect anymore."

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich, Head of Audi Sport: "We didn't expect this race to be easy and we were right. It was a great effort from Frank to fight his way to the front of the field. Unfortunately then the car was involved in an accident. Dindo and Tom drove consistent times to earn their victory. Nevertheless it was thrilling until the very last minute because the new Panoz was in good shape and had a little bit more luck with the yellows. I'm also very happy with the result of the Champion car which showed a great performance over the whole weekend here at Dallas."





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Reinhold Joest, Team Director Audi Sport North America: "This was really exciting today. It went up and down, at one time we were leading and a few laps later we fell back to fourth position. But you have to count everything together at the very end, this old saying was proved to be true again today. Of course everybody in our team is happy now – we couldn't have hoped for a better start to the season."

Race results

1. Capello/Kristensen (Infineon Audi R8)	117 laps
2. Biela/Pirro (Infineon Audi R8)	- 7.511s
3. Brabham/Magnussen (Panoz)	- 25.632s
4. Wallace/Schroeder (Audi R8)	- 46.956s
5. Graf/Salles (Panoz)	- 1 lap
6. Cochran/Dean (Panoz)	- 4 laps
7. Fellows/O'Connell (Chevrolet)	- 9 laps
8. Luhr/Maassen (Porsche)	- 9 laps
9. Pobst/Menzel (Porsche)	- 10 laps
10. Said/Stuck (BMW)	- 10 laps

Find updated photos on the internet:
www.audi-sportpress.com (password required)

