



Press Information

Sears Point, 23 July 2000

Audi triumphs in California

Audi recovers in the point battle of the American Le Mans Series (ALMS) with a solid one and two finish at Sears Point. Allan McNish and Rinaldo Capello won the 2:45 hour race in California with a start to finish victory over Le Mans winners Frank Biela and Emanuele Pirro in the companion Audi R8. Audi now assumes second position in the manufacturers championship.

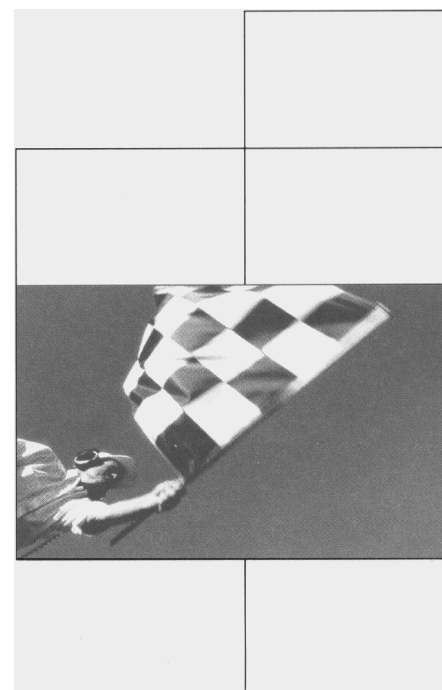
Almost two hours Allan McNish fought through the field on the narrow track before handing over to Rinaldo Capello with one lap on the field. At half time of the race only the two Audi R8's built at Audi Sport in Ingolstadt (Germany) were running within one lap. At the beginning of the race Emanuele Pirro and the fastest Panoz had struggled hard for second position.

For fans and drivers Sears Point Raceway is a very unusual and exciting track. Situated in the Californian wine country the spectators have a great view all over the 2.52 miles circuit. For the drivers the narrow track offers a great challenge. "Sears Point is the Californian Nordschleife", says Frank Biela, referring to the famous part of Germany's Nurburgring. „It is very difficult to find the right line. Having very little run off areas you must not make any mistakes."

There is not much time to recover in sunny California for Audi Sport North America: After further tests in the USA, Audi starts at the sixth round of the ALMS at Mosport on 6 August. The goal during the only appearance in Canada is to make up further points in the very close championship.

Quotes after the race

Rinaldo Capello (#77): "To be honest: My stint was not very exciting because Allan already worked out a big gap. But I tried to keep my concentration to finish the race without mistake, although in between I sometimes pushed a little bit."





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Allan McNish (#77): "I am very happy that Audi finished first and second. From the very beginning I gave everything I could – also to make up for my mishap from the Nurburgring. To come away with pole position, fastest lap and the race victory is an excellent result for Rinaldo and myself."

Frank Biela (#78): "The second place for us is okay. All weekend Allan was extremely strong. After only one stint he was so much in front that we couldn't attack anymore. But I expected in my drive to have a closer fight with David Brabham in the Panoz."

Emanuele Pirro (#78): "At the beginning the race was quite difficult. When I lapped a slower car I touched it and damaged the front body work of my R8 a little bit. All over I am happy about the second place which also is important for the championship."

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich, Head of Audi Sport: "That was a great start of our chase here in the USA. We lapped everybody else during the race which I think hasn't happened for a very long time. But the BMW team also collected points so the rest of the season will be thrilling and very difficult for us."

Reinhold Joest, Team Director Audi Sport North America: "I was very optimistic before the race. We have a fantastic car, a great pit crew and we got very good tires from Michelin. Furthermore our four drivers performed without any mistakes. I think we represented Audi in an excellent way here in California."

Results

1. Capello/McNish (Audi R8)	114 laps
2. Biela/Pirro (Audi R8)	- 1 lap
3. Lehto/Müller (BMW)	- 2 laps
4. Auberlen/Gounon (BMW)	- 2 laps
5. Brabham/Magnussen (Panoz)	- 8 laps
6. Field/Sutherland (Lola)	- 12 laps
7. Johansson/Smith (Reynard)	- 13 laps
8. Donohue/Archer (Chrysler)	- 13 laps
9. Wendlinger/Beretta (Chrysler)	- 13 laps
10. Said/Stuck (BMW)	- 14 laps

Updated photos on the internet:
www.audi-press.com (password required)

