



Press Information

16 March 2000

Both Audi R8s on the front row of the grid

When this year's American Le Mans Series season starts on Saturday, two Audis will sit on the front row of the grid: Frank Biela takes pole-position with the R8 while Rinaldo Capello set the second fastest time in final qualifying for the 12 Hour race at Sebring (Florida). Audi had also dominated the free practice sessions the previous days at the former U.S. airbase.

„It was simply perfect, now I'm really relieved“, said Frank Biela who set his pole time early on. Now the German is optimistic for the race: „Of course 12 hours is a long time and anything can happen. But now our chances are very good.“ Frank Biela will share R8 number 78 with Tom Kristensen (DK) and Emanuele Pirro (I).

Rinaldo Capello improved his previous best time, putting his silver-black number 77 Audi R8 in second place on the grid. The Italian partners Michele Alboreto (I) and Allan McNish (GB).

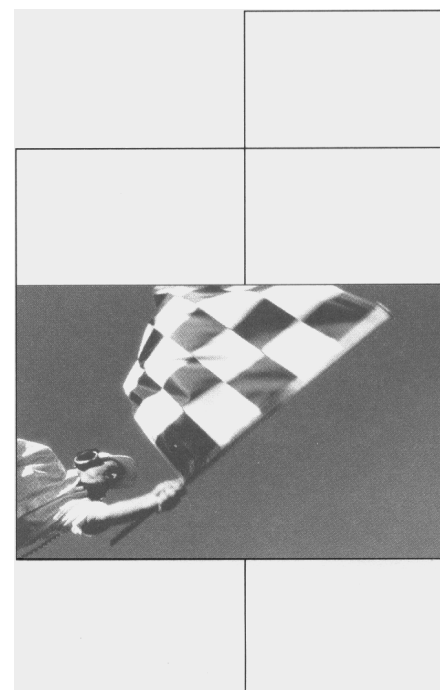
Head of Audi Sport Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich praised his drivers but also the entire team. „The team did a great job.“ After Tom Kristensen's mishap during first qualifying the Audi Sport North America mechanics had to rebuild the front section of the 610-bhp sportscar.

Team Director Reinhold Joest is now also hoping for a good race. „This is a real dream start for us. Now I have a very good feeling concerning the race on Saturday. So long as we do not have problems, both cars should be in front at the finish.“

Quotes after final qualifying

Frank Biela (#78): „It worked out perfectly on my first lap. I was rather nervous because of Tom's mishap yesterday. That could happen to anyone. But I had to push very hard and now I'm really relieved.“

Rinaldo Capello (#77): „The first lap was okay. But during the second one a car spun right in front of me which produced a large dust cloud. I did not know where the car was after that so I had to brake. After that I could not go any faster.“





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Reinhold Joest, Director of Audi Sport North America: „That is really a dream start for us. One year ago I would have never dreamt of the times we are achieving today. But during the tests we sorted out many things. That was very important for this success because you cannot find a real good setup just within one week.“

Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich, Head of Audi Sport: „The team did a fantastic job overnight by rebuilding the front section of the car after Tom’s problem. The R8 is well-balanced on the track, which is one secret of our success. We improved our time by six seconds compared to last year – even with a smaller air-restrictor.“

Results of qualifying

1. Biela/Kristensen/Pirro (Audi R8)	1min48.825s
2. Alboreto/Capello/McNish (Audi R8)	1min49.591s
3. Brabham/Magnussen/Raphanel (Panoz)	1min49.725s
4. O’Connell/Katoh/Graf (Panoz)	1min50.147s
5. Lehto/Müller (BMW)	1min50.491s
6. Auberlen/Gounon/Soper (BMW)	1min50.940s
7. Schiattarella/Martini/de Radigues (Lola-Judd)	1min51.542s
8. Bleininger/Simon/Simo (R&S-Judd)	1min51.884s
9. Lienhard/Theys/Baldi (Ferrari)	1min52.632s
10. Lagorce/Leitzinger/Wallace (Cadillac)	1min52.754s

You will find updated pictures taken at this year’s Sebring event, portraits of the works drivers and many other photographs of the Audi R8 on the Internet:

www.audi-press.com (User: Audi, password: MotoR8)

This password lasts for the next eight days. You have the opportunity to accredit under this address.

