



## Press Information

Adelaide, 31 December 2000

### Crocodile Audi wins the race of a thousand years

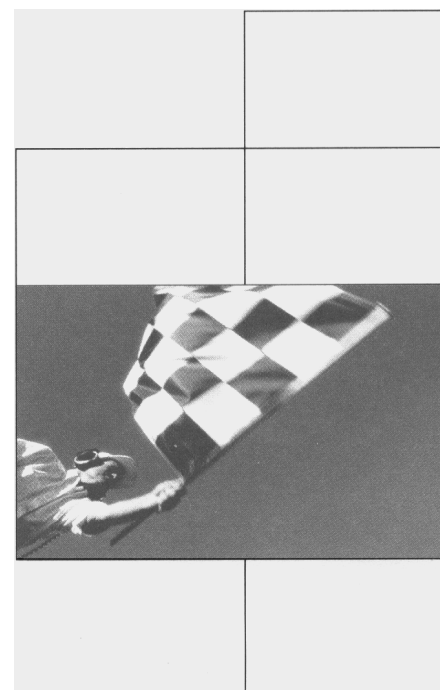
The "race of a thousand years" really deserves its name: Spectacular action on the difficult street circuit in Adelaide and ultimately a dominant victory for the Audi R8 sporting a crocodile design turned the final of the American Le Mans Series (ALMS) in front of about 150.000 spectators into a real highlight of the season. After a turbulent 5:45 hours, Rinaldo Capello and Allan McNish won with a margin of 21 laps. The "sister" Audi R8 of Frank Biela and Emanuele Pirro achieved sixth place in the prototype category after a crash and the following recovery.

The path to the sixth win of the season for the Scottish-Italian duo was harder than ever before and started off with the first moment of panic on Friday afternoon. Right after the first practice, Allan McNish suffering from back-ache, had to undergo medical treatment and had to take a rest on Saturday. As the Scotsman's race participation was uncertain, Audi Sport North America nominated Australian Brad Jones as an additional driver and support for the no. 77 Audi R8.

The next incident, a crash during the last lap of the warm-up on Sunday morning even endangered the start of the "crocodile". But the Team Audi Sport North America repaired the badly damaged car in record time making it possible to get on the grid just in time.

Furthermore Allan McNish surprised the fans with a great comeback in the afternoon. The Scotsman gritted his teeth, started the race, drove the fastest lap time and after 77 laps handed the Audi R8 over to team mate Rinaldo Capello with a comfortable lead. Together Capello and McNish extended the lead and crowned their successful season with another victory. At the same time Allan McNish secured the drivers championship in the American Le Mans Series. After Allan McNish recovered Brad Jones only absolved one free practice in the best sportscar this year.

The drivers of the "sister" Audi R8 will never forget this race "Down Under" which finished only two hours before New Year's Eve. After Emanuele Pirro touched a wall after three hours when lapping slower cars the race seemed to be over for Le Mans winners Biela and Pirro. But the crew of Team Director Reinhold Joest didn't give up again: Pirro drove the damaged car back to the pits where the team changed rear end, front diffusor, and front suspension of the 610 bhp sportscar. Accompanied by cheers from the crowd Frank Biela went back on the track and with sixth position in the prototype category secured further championship points.



### Quotes after the race

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Rinaldo Capello (#77): "This morning things didn't look very good. We didn't know whether Allan would be able to drive and after the crash during the warm-up I was really afraid the car could not be repaired in time. But luckily the monocoque was not damaged so we were able to race. This race in front of all the fans was great. You can only compare it with Le Mans."

Allan McNish (#77): "This is definitely not what I expected before I arrived in Adelaide. The problem with my back ruled me out of the weekend. But Dindo set up the car perfectly and even put it on pole position. And with the help of our doctor and the whole team we were able to come away with a victory. This shows that our team keeps fighting and coming back even when things look black."

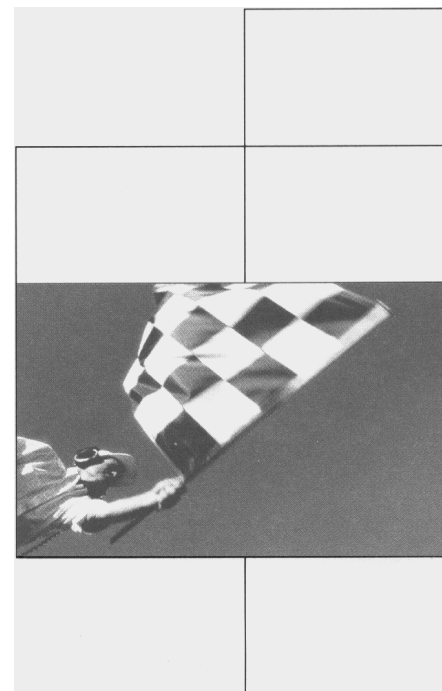
Brad Jones (#77): "It was a great opportunity to drive the car this morning and yesterday afternoon and I am very happy about that. Allan and Dindo did a fantastic job to win. It would have been nice to drive the car in the race, but it was clear that I was here just in case Allan was too bad."

Frank Biela (#78): "From the start of the race my car suffered from strong understeer. Later I had contact with a Porsche which damaged the front suspension. This, however, was no real problem compared to the understeer and, of course, the fact that after the accident we parked for about one hour. In the end I tried to get the point for the fastest lap in the darkness, but I did not get a clear lap."

Emanuele Pirro (#78): "I expected a lot from this race and I am quite disappointed. It was a difficult end of the year for me with some bad luck and a few mistakes. The accident happened when I was lapping another car. I was forced on to the outside where the track was very dirty and I just crashed. Fortunately, the other Audi R8 won the race which is good for the team."

Reinhold Joest, Team Director Audi Sport North America: "It was a very exciting weekend. I am happy that it ended so well for us and the crocodile has won here in Australia. I think people will remember this design for a very long time. And the race in Adelaide is an enrichment for sportscar racing."

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich, Head of Audi Sport: "Before the race there were a lot of bad omens. But with a strong will and good work, the team made up for everything, no matter where it came from. I'm very happy that we managed to do so. For sure I will never forget this New Year's Eve."



### Race results

1. Capello/McNish (Audi R8)	225 laps
2. Konrad/Slater/Heath (Lola-Ford)	- 21 laps
3. Beretta/Wendlinger/Dupuy (Chrylser)	- 23 laps
4. Belloc/Amorim (Chrysler)	- 23 laps
5. Müller/Luhr (Porsche)	- 26 laps

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6. Wars/Graham/Menzel (Porsche)	- 34 laps
7. Borcheller/Lazzaro (BMW)	- 34 laps
8. Duno/Watson/Lintott (Chrysler)	- 35 laps
9. Brabham/Murphy/Bright (Panoz)	- 35 laps
10. Cunning./Auberlen/Jonsson (BMW)	- 35 laps
...	
16. Biela/Pirro (Audi R8)	- 55 laps

Current photos and information are available on the internet: [www.audi-sportpress.com](http://www.audi-sportpress.com) (password required)

