

SPEED GT – Motorsport debut for the Audi RS6

With a brand new car, American outfit Champion Racing is aiming at a third GT title win on a trot in the North American SPEED World Challenge. Having competed three years successfully with the Audi S4 Competition, Champion Racing, based in Florida, want to defend their title in the Audi RS6.

The 4.2 litre V8 twin turbo engine of the RS6 produces an output of 450 hp in the standard version. The 475 hp racing engine of the RS6 has been developed in cooperation with Cosworth Technologies in the UK. The cars have been prepared by Champion Racing in Pompano Beach in a record time of just 15 weeks.

For Champion Racing, which has so far solely concentrated on running racing cars, this was a new task and a big challenge, as it was that Champion Racing was in charge of the entire development.

“Both AUDI AG and quattro GmbH were very supportive to help carrying out the project in such a short period,” says team owner Dave Maraj. “We are looking forward to the new challenge and we have a good chance to win the championship again.” Two Audi RS6s will be entered for all races, with a third RS6 possibly being run in selected rounds.

“Champion Racing has been a partner of Audi Sport for a long time”, states Head of Audi Sport Dr Wolfgang Ullrich. “The team was very successful with the S4 and will certainly take up this tradition with the RS6.”

Thanks to handicap regulations, the SPEED World Challenge enjoys many entries from a variety of manufacturers and a growing popularity in the USA. In 2003, four of the total of nine rounds will be held as support races to the American Le Mans Series. American motorsports broadcasters SPEED, the brand after which the series has been named, will televise every round, some of them live.

Michael Galati contests the series as title holder in one of Champion Racing’s two Audi RS6 racers. Galati won eight races in the past three years in the Audi S4 Competition, clinching the most recent titles twice in a row in spite of additional weight imposed by the series organisers (SCCA) to compensate the opposition for the advantage of the Audi fourwheel drive system.

Michael Galati’s new team-mate will be Randy Pobst who gathered a wealth of experience in both the ALMS and SPEED World Challenge series. Last season, he finished third in the GT class of the SPEED World Challenge. “Michael and Randy are the two best and most experienced drivers of the series,” says a convinced Rod Bymaster, Motorsport Manager of Audi North America.

Both drivers were enthusiastic about the new Audi RS6 right from the beginning. “Champion did a tremendous job,” beams Randy Pobst. “The quattro drive system was particularly impressive. This is an entirely new feeling behind the wheel.” A feeling, by the way, that most Audi works drivers enjoy every day: they have all chosen road cars with quattro drive.

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Audi Team in the 2003 SPEED World Challenge

Champion Audi Racing
#1 Michael Galati
#2 Randy Pobst

SPEED World Challenge GT Champions

2002 Michael Galati (Audi)
2001 Michael Galati (Audi)
2000 Jeff McMillin (BMW)
1999 Bobby Archer (Chrysler)

SPEED World Challenge GT Manufacturer Champions

2002 Porsche
2001 Audi
2000 Porsche
1999 Porsche