

Le Mans, 19 June 2005

Motorsport

Quotes after the Le Mans 24 Hours

Tom Kristensen (Team ADT Champion Racing Audi R8 #3): “This is a fantastic day – simply unbelievable. It was an honour to drive the Audi R8 and achieve most of my victories with this car. Like always, I had a great team, great team mates and tough, but fair competitors. Although I now may have more wins than Jacky Ickx: It is absolutely unique, a great personality and the ‘Mr Le Mans’. He called me before the race to wish me good luck and now I can’t wait to see him again. Every race at Le Mans is unique and tough. But this was for sure one of the toughest ones also for me.”

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JJ Lehto (Team ADT Champion Racing Audi R8 #3): “In this configuration with reduced power and more weight the Audi R8 is not enjoyable to drive. The car was always good and strong but I was never 100% happy and it was so easy to lose five seconds with traffic. It was impossible to get that time back – it was a struggle. My only small drama was when I found oil at the end of Mulsanne this morning which caused me to ‘lock-up’, when I found grip, and flat-spotted my tyres – but it could have been much worse. It’s been a long wait since my 1995 Le Mans victory – and I’m still the only Finn to do so.”

Marco Werner (Team ADT Champion Racing Audi R8 #3): “I’m simply happy. Three times I made it to the podium and today I finally made it to the top. For me this is the biggest success of my career and tops everything I’ve ever experienced so far. This year I had the right car, the best team and the best team mates. I will never forget this week at Le Mans with the team and the unique fans.”

Frank Biela (Team ADT Champion Racing Audi R8 #2): “First of all congratulation to Tom, JJ, Marco, Audi and the Champion crew. Although I always want to win, this time third place is all right with us. Once again we have seen how quick the race can change for you at Le Mans. I’m especially happy for the Champion guys – they’ve tried hard several times and are now standing on the top of the podium.”

Allan McNish (Team ADT Champion Racing Audi R8 #2): “The car immediately felt very good for my first stint on Saturday which allowed me to set our car’s fastest race lap almost straight away. I had been pushing very hard on Sunday morning and ‘locked-up’ at the chicane. The tyre carcass came off and I went straight on at Indianapolis and in to the barrier – it’s even more upsetting because I was making a scheduled stop at the end of that lap. The Audi R8 has been an amazing sports car.”

Emanuele Pirro (Team ADT Champion Racing Audi R8 #2): “It has been a great race and I’m very happy for Audi and Champion Racing. I’m less happy for our car of course because we had a car which was strong and capable of winning but things did not work out. Sometimes small mistakes can be very expensive and a little luck is also required. I made a mistake when the track went green after a Safety Car period. The tyres and brakes had cooled and the car went straight on at Arnage. It was a mistake that I should normally avoid.”

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Jean-Marc Gounon (Audi PlayStation Team ORECA Audi R8 #4): “The team prepared the car and the pit-stops very well. We were fast and improved our speed during the race. But then we suffered wishbone problems, and that was very disappointing. We were the only R8 to have this problem twice and it cost us the podium. For the team it is very disappointing. I think we could have achieved more than fourth place.”

Franck Montagny (Audi PlayStation Team ORECA Audi R8 #4): “What happened with the suspension is very strange. It never happened before. At the beginning we thought it was our fault. But following the two other Audi drivers, they were touching the kerbs 50 percent more than me. That’s definitely not where we took too much risk. It is a shame, because normally the R8 is indistructable. I don’t know why it happened, but I am very sad.”

Stéphane Ortelli (Audi PlayStation Team ORECA Audi R8 #4): “Even if we had less experience than Champion with the R8 we were competitive. We don’t understand why we had mechanical problems on the car. We finished very strongly, but one place down from the podium – c’est la vie... But I am happy for Audi. I started the history with the Audi R8 in 1999 and I am glad that the R8 has won on its last appearance at Le Mans.”

Dave Maraj (Team Director Team ADT Champion Racing): “By winning Le Mans has fulfilled a lifetime’s achievement for me. I have ran the Audi R8 since 2001 and having already won the American Le Mans Series, I’m now proud to be a part of Audi’s Le Mans winning ‘family’ after finishing third here for the past two years. The #3 Audi ran like clockwork throughout the race. The #2 Audi suffered some problems but nevertheless achieved a podium. To be the Team Owner of the first victorious American team since 1967 is certainly a humbling occasion for me and I am very proud of all my team.”

Hugues de Chaunac (Team Director Audi PlayStation Team ORECA): “We put so much effort to this project and we were really expecting to finish on the podium. We were so happy to have an Audi R8 for this race and we did not expect to have problems like this. It is really difficult for the whole team who have worked so hard. At least we were able to show how good we are as a team because all our pit-stops were fast, and we did the repairs very rapidly.”

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “For me, this was the most exciting race I’ve ever experienced here at Le Mans. Our competitors were very strong this weekend and didn’t release the pressure one single moment for 24 hours. It was a great race in front of a dream crowd here at Le Mans. And is was a worthy final for our R8 which can now enjoy its race-retirement by looking back at great memories.”

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