

American Le Mans Series Mid-Ohio Race Reports Compilation
Reports Supplied By The Teams
Photos courtesy ALMS, Audi, ashautophotos



Audi Sport North America Report

Audi Sport North America's two Audi R10 TDI prototypes were in a class of their own in round six of the American Le Mans series at Mid-Ohio (U.S. state of Ohio). Lucas Luhr/Marco Werner and Dindo Capello/Emanuele Pirro achieved a commanding 1-2 victory for Audi – on a track which in the past favoured the lighter LM P2 cars and on which Audi last scored an overall victory in 2004.

Particularly impressive was the victory of the two Germans Lucas Luhr and Marco Werner. They led 107 of the 111 laps. After the start, Werner needed just five laps to pass the four Acura/Honda and Porsche cars which had started in front of him. The German set a new race lap record on lap seven and handed over the R10 TDI to team-mate Lucas Luhr in first position after 50 laps. Luhr defended the lead until the finish.

Four caution periods wiped out the advantage of the #2 Audi, but each time Luhr was able to pull away from the rest of the field after the re-start – and this despite the fact he completed almost two hours on just one set of tyres.

Dindo Capello and Emanuele Pirro also showed a strong performance: Capello worked his way

from seventh on the grid to second position in just 18 minutes giving Audi a early 1-2 lead. Despite contact with a GT2 car, which he was not responsible for, and which resulted in a spin dropping him temporarily to third place, Capello handed the Audi R10 TDI over to Emanuele Pirro in second position.

The decision to change tyres a second time cost the #1 R10 TDI the second place. After the last caution period, however, Pirro had no problems to overtake Romain Dumas in the Porsche RS Spyder thus giving Audi a perfect double victory.

For the Audi R10 TDI it was the sixth 1-2 victory and the 17th overall success since its debut in March 2006. Lucas Luhr and Marco Werner extended their lead in the LM P1 Drivers' Championship with their fifth victory in six races. With three overall victories, Audi is the most successful brand in the first half of the season. The second half of the American Le Mans Series begins on 9 August at Road America (the U.S. state of Wisconsin).

Quotes after the race at Mid-Ohio:

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): "It was a perfect performance today, everything went so well. The key factor was that both cars had a good and consistent speed. We also had a good strategy regarding the fuel consumption – even if this was somewhat eased by the caution periods. I'm glad that my first visit to a race in the U.S. since quite a while was rewarded with a 1-2 victory. I promise, I'll come also to the next race ..."

Lucas Luhr (Audi R10 TDI #2): "It was a perfect day for Audi! It looks like then, if the boss is there, everything goes well. He should come over to some more races ... Seriously: I'm super-happy. Our car engineer and the whole team did a great job. The strategy was perfect. First, I had a bit of doubt. But when I did not see any car behind me two laps after the first caution period I knew that nobody would catch us today. Marco (Werner) drove a fantastic first stint. My thanks go to Audi Sport North America, Team Champion and everybody at home in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm."

Marco Werner (Audi R10 TDI #2): "A fantastic Audi day and a fine double victory! I started to believe in it after yesterday's qualifying, when the gap to the front was quite small, which usually means we are well sorted for the race. This was really the case today. Lucas (Luhr) completed his stint on one set of tyres which is not easy. This means that the set-up of our R10 TDI was perfect. The timing of the pit stops was also good. Today, everything fitted together. We are happy – thanks to the whole Audi team."

Dindo Capello (Audi R10 TDI #1): "I think I did a very good stint recovering the gap we had. I was very confident. Unfortunately I was touched by a GT car and sent into a spin. This was really bad luck. The yellow flags helped quite a lot to recover again. Anyway: 1-2 is a great result for Audi, we deserved this already at Lime Rock, but fortunately we got it here."

Emanuele Pirro (Audi R10 TDI #1): "This was a good race for us. As always when the gap in qualifying is not so big we have a very good car for the race. We had a great 1-2 for Audi and played a good team strategy together over the radio. Of course sometimes it would be nice to have a 2-1 instead of a 1-2 ... But after the bad luck we had in the last races we can go home with a big smile."

Dave Maraj (Team Director Audi Sport North America): "After yesterday's qualifying I did expect a podium finish, but not such a dominant performance. I want to congratulate the whole team and the drivers for a fantastic job. It was a great team effort!"

The results at Mid-Ohio

- 1 Luhr/Werner (Audi R10 TDI) 111 laps in 2h 45m 19.458s (1st in LM P1)
- 2 Capello/Pirro (Audi R10 TDI) + 7.717s (2nd in LM P1)
- 3 Dumas/Brabham (Porsche) + 11.272s
- 4 Brabham/Sharp (Acura/Honda) + 11.881s
- 5 Fernandez/Diaz (Acura/Honda) + 18.519s
- 6 Maassen/Long (Porsche) + 32.798s
- 7 Smith/Dyson (Porsche) + 52.516s
- 8 Franchitti/Leitzinger (Porsche) + 56.665s
- 9 Müller/Farnbacher (Ferrari) - 7 laps
- 10 van Overbeek/Pilet (Porsche) - 7 laps



Porsche Motorsports Report

**DUMAS/BERNHARD RETURN FAVOR AS PORSCHE EDGES ACURA
FOR FOURTH ALMS LMP2 VICTORY**

**PACE CAR POSITION SINKS PORSCHE GT2 TEAMS AS THEY LOSE A LAP
TO THE WINNING FERRARI**

Number seven Penske Porsche RS Spyder wins with new direct-injection 3.4-liter V-8

Last week, it was the Brabham/Sharp Acura that ran down the #7 Penske Porsche RS Spyder with 90 seconds left to score a victory at Lime Rock Park, but the roles were reversed today in the Acura Sports Car Challenge at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course as Romain Dumas (France) held off Brabham to score the Porsche tandem's fourth win in six American Le Mans Series races and extend their LMP2 driver points lead to 28.

Dumas, who felt constant pressure from Brabham for the last 30 minutes of the race, could pull away from the Acura when he had an open track, but was slowed traffic around the course, cutting his lead to less than a second several times before the end. The final margin of the LMP2 victory for the Porsche was six-tenths of a second. The two Audi R-10 TDI diesels finished first and second overall and won the LMP1 class.

"These races with the Acura have been very tight since the beginning of the year," said Dumas, who, with Timo Bernhard (Germany), has won the LMP2 class for the third year in a row. The pair also won the LMP2 championship with their Penske Porsche RS Spyderys in 2007, including eight overall wins in 11 races and class podium finishes in every event.

"We started the race several positions back from the leaders, but never gave, and worked our way to the front. The Penske crew pulled off a great pit stop near the end to give us the lead, and we ran well to the end," said Dumas.

The exciting event will be telecast on a delayed basis on NBC-TV at noon EDT on Sunday, July 20. This is a recent change announced earlier in the week by NBC, which will also extend its usual two-hour broadcast to two hours, 30 minutes.

This was also the first event that both the Dumas/Bernhard RS Spyder, along with the Sascha Maassen (Germany) and Patrick Long (USA) number six Penske Porsche RS Spyder, used the newly-developed direct-injection 3.4 liter, V-8 race motor.

The main feature of direct injection is that the power has gone up, and the fuel consumption has gone down – an important element of endurance racing. This technology, already introduced on Porsche street vehicles including the Porsche 911 and the Porsche Cayenne, is the first direct injection motor ever developed that can rev to more than 10,000 rpms. Horsepower goes from 476 to 503 (370 kw) at more than 10,000 rpm. Torque improves from 370 nm (273 ft. lbs) @ 7500 rpm to 385 (284 ft. lbs) nm @8500 rpm. The engine was developed in conjunction with the Porsche 911 and Porsche Cayenne direct injection technology

The other three Porsche RS Spydres finished fourth, fifth, and sixth in class, with the #6 Penske Porsche of Maassen/Long running as high as second in class late in the race, but traffic entanglements allowed two Acuras to get by them and they had to settle for fourth place.

The #16 Dyson Racing Porsche of Guy Smith (England) and Chris Dyson (USA) was fifth in LMP2, while #20 Dyson Porsche of Marino Franchitti (Scotland) and Butch Leitzinger (USA), which had lost a lap to the field earlier in the event, stormed back to regain its lap and finish sixth. The six top LMP2 finishers were on the overall lead lap.

Porsche leads Acura by 17 points in the LMP2 manufacturer's contest.

In the GT2 class for production-based sports cars, Dirk Werner (Germany), sharing the #87 Farnbacher Loles Racing Porsche 911 GT3 RSR with Richard Westbrook (England), held the early lead after passing the Melo/Salo Ferrari, but a long pit stop caused them to lose a lap to the GT2 field, and they ended up fourth.

The Flying Lizard Porsches also lost a lap to the winning Mueller/Farnbacher Ferrari when the pace car passed them while they were in the pits during a yellow flag. The #46 Lizard Porsche, driven by Patrick Pilet (France) and Johannes van Overbeek (USA), finished second – their third time they have scored a second-place finish, while the #45 Flying Lizard Porsche, driven by Wolf Henzler (Germany) and Joerg Bergmeister (Germany) was third. Henzler and Bergmeister still lead the GT2 class driver points, but their lead was cut to four.

The #18 VICI Racing Porsche driven by Nicky and Francesco Pastorelli (both The Netherlands) finished ninth in class, while the Flying Lizard Porsche of Seth Neiman and Lonnie Pechnik (both USA) did not finish due to transmission woes.

Porsche leads Ferrari by nine points in the GT2 manufacturers chase.



Acura Teams Report

BRABHAM'S COME-FROM-BEHIND CHARGE FALLS JUST SHORT IN EXCITING AMERICAN LE MANS SERIES FINISH AT MID-OHIO

Patrón Highcroft And Lowe's Fernandez Acura ARX-01b Cars Make The Podium

Saturday's Acura Sports Car Challenge at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course was setting up to be another David Brabham highlight reel, just like last week's wild Lime Rock Park overall victory, when he grabbed the lead with 90 seconds left in the race.

The popular Aussie racer diced his way through heavy late-race traffic with his bright green, blue and black No. 9 Patrón Highcroft Acura ARX-01b prototype sports car and pressured Romain Dumas for the last 15 minutes of the two-hour, 45-minute feature event at the picturesque 2.25-mile road course near Mansfield, Ohio.

With late-race passes on Dumas at Long Beach and Timo Bernhard, Dumas' teammate, at Lime Rock, Brabham was poised to score his third LMP2 class win in hot and humid conditions Saturday. Brabham, the only ALMS driver to ever win in all four racing divisions, dodged his Acura machine inside and outside, for a way past Dumas' Penske Porsche.

But Brabham, who co-drove with veteran Scott Sharp, had to settle for second this time around, losing at the checkered flag by just .609 seconds. The win for the Penske was its third consecutive class title at Mid-Ohio.

The Patrón Highcroft team wasn't the only Acura squad on the podium Saturday in the 111-lap endurance event as the duo of Adrian Fernandez and Luis Diaz finally shook off some tough racing luck to bring the No. 15 Lowe's Fernandez Acura ARX-01b to third in the LMP2 division. The Lowe's car experienced early handling troubles before Fernandez, a two-time Mid-Ohio winner in open-wheel and sports car competition, clocked some sizzling lap times to close in on Bernhard and Brabham at the finish. The Lowe's team repeated their third-place finish of a year ago at Mid-Ohio.

Early contact with a lapped car hurt the No. 26 XM Satellite Radio Acura ARX-01b machine's chance for the Andretti Green team to score a podium finish Saturday. Newcomer Rafael Matos ran well early before his car hit one of Aston Martin GT-2 cars. Matos was forced to pit and the team had to replace front suspension pieces. Le Mans veteran Franck Montagny drove hard to the finish, despite an eight-lap deficit to bring the XM Acura to seventh in the LMP2 category.

The No. 66 Panasonic ELS Sound de Ferran Motorsports Acura ARX-01b car, which started from the pole position with team owner and former Indy 500 champion Gil de Ferran at the wheel, led the LMP2 class from the start to Lap 40. De Ferran then jumped from the cockpit and handed the driving chores to young Frenchman Simon Pagenaud. The 24-year-old star drove brilliantly in the stint before pitting on Lap 68.

While the de Ferran team changed four Michelin tires and refueled the car, a fire broke out in the team's pit area. Pagenaud stopped immediately and jumped from the cockpit. The ALMS safety team was on site quickly to extinguish the flames. However, some crew members sustained injuries in the incident. The team's race was concluded immediately due to the fire.

One crew member was transported to Ohio State University Hospital in Columbus for treatment.

ACURA QUOTES:

DAVID BRABHAM (#9 Patrón Highcroft Racing Acura ARX-01b): "I just had to keep pushing and wait for an opportunity to pass the Penske Porsche. It was a little like last week in Lime Rock. There were a couple of close calls and I was driving the wheels off of the Patrón Highcroft Acura today. The car was really hooked up at the end of the race and could close on the Penskes. It is tougher to pass here than at Lime Rock, actually. So I was just trying to peek my car's nose inside for any way to pass [Romain] Dumas at the end. We had a little grip problem early in my stint, but then we fixed the grip level for my final pit stop. After that, I had the fastest car on the track. I think we showed the Penskes that we can race right with them."

SCOTT SHARP (#9 Patrón Highcroft Racing Acura ARX-01b): "That was great racing today. It is what the American Le Mans Series is all about. We came back from a little problem to lose by a few feet. I was able to race with Gil [de Ferran] early in the race and then David [Brabham] just charged towards the lead. We just missed out on another win. But it was exciting, and the Patrón Highcroft team is a contender at any track now. It was a great job by the crew and David drove the wheels off the No. 9 again. He almost pulled it off."

LUIS DIAZ (#15 Lowe's Fernandez Acura ARX-01b): "At the beginning of the race, the Lowe's Acura wasn't as good as we would have liked. We were able to come back and finally got back on the podium. We have had many little problems in the first part of the year. This finish feels good. We still want to win, but now we feel we were moving forward with our Lowe's team. We are looking forward to Road America in a few weeks."

ADRIAN FERNANDEZ (#15 Lowe's Fernandez Acura ARX-01b): "I was having a little trouble early in my run, like Luis was having. The Lowe's Acura was sliding and pushing in the corners. But at the end of the race, the car felt very good and I was able to close in on the leaders. I got past David [Brabham] and he got me back and then I got by the No. 6 Penske Porsche for third. Actually, we were closing on the leaders late, too, but ran out of laps. This is a good result for us after the tough luck we have experienced in the first half of the season."

FRANCK MONTAGNY (#26 XM Satellite Radio Acura ARX-01b): "I am 100 percent certain we had the car to win today. I am absolutely sure. But, the car was a mess after the crash, so I treated the rest of the race like it was a test. I still pushed like I do when I'm racing and tried to do my best. But, it was quite difficult. Two hours in the car and it was hot. So, it's not easy. You don't have the same motivation because you're not fighting for places. It is difficult to drive around for many laps when you want to race to win."

RAFAEL MATOS (#26 XM Satellite Radio Acura ARX-01b): "I came up to lap one of the Aston Martins, which was the first car I was going to lap. I wasn't pushing at all. I was side-by-side with

him and he just turned into me. I don't know if he didn't see me or what. It's just very frustrating for the XM Acura guys and everybody at Andretti Green. We were hoping for a good result and I think we had a good shot at a podium finish or better."

GIL De FERRAN (#66 Panasonic ELS Surround Acura ARX-01b, after the pit fire involving his de Ferran Motorsports crew): "It was an unfortunate situation with a pit fire. We had a problem with the unplugging of the fuel hose and the car caught on fire. It is tough day for our team since we were running very strong. Simon [Pagenaud] was doing a great job and pressuring for the lead. But that is not important right now. We are concerned for our team people. We are a close-knit organization but very young as a group. So something like this [incident] is very difficult for everyone at de Ferran Motorsports."



Tafel Racing Report

No. 71 Tafel/Bell Micro Wins Mid-Ohio GT2; No. 73 Brings Home 8th

Tafel Racing collected its third American Le Mans Series GT2 class victory today in the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Challenge. The No. 71 Tafel/Bell Micro Racing Ferrari F430 GTC of Dirk Müller (a native of Germany living in Monaco) and Dominik Farnbacher (Ansbach, Germany) were rewarded with their third victory of the season - joining wins at St. Petersburg, Fla. and Long Beach, Calif. - after a brilliant pit strategy call jumped the car from fourth into a one lap lead with the team's first of two pit stops. The No. 73 Tafel Racing Ferrari F430 GTC co-driven by Alex Figge (Denver, Col.) and Jim Tafel (Alpharetta, Ga.) made a sizeable leap through the field gaining four positions from their starting spot to finish eighth on the 2.25-mile, 13-turn Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course

No. 71 Tafel/Bell Micro Racing Ferrari F430 GTC

Drivers: Dominik Farnbacher (Ansbach, Germany), Dirk Müller (a native of Germany now living in Monaco)

The Bell Micro Ferrari brought home a victory after being at or near the top of the GT2 time sheets all weekend. Dominik Farnbacher, who qualified the car fourth, went on to set the fastest GT2 race time. Dirk Müller set the quickest GT2 time in the final morning warm-up before the race. From fourth on the grid, Farnbacher set to work in his typical quiet but quick fashion keeping on the tail of the three leading GT2 cars. Technical Director Tony Dowe (Cumming, Ga.) intuitively watched the calls from other teams on pit lane and played the strategy perfectly at the race's first of four caution periods. Farnbacher entered pit lane in fourth-place handing the Bell Micro Ferrari over to Müller approximately one hour into the two hour and 45-minute race. The pit crew returned the No. 71 back on track quickly with Müller taking advantage of Dowe's race strategy to springboard from fourth into the race lead. A misstep in the strategy of competitors, compounded by pit lane troubles, would further benefit Tafel/Bell Micro giving Müller a one lap lead he would never relinquish. The No. 71 finished ninth overall in the four-class event. It was the 11th career American Le Mans Series victory for Müller, the 2000 GT2 Champion, and the third for Farnbacher. It was the first Mid-Ohio win for either driver. With victories in 50 percent of the events this season, Farnbacher and Müller have moved to within four points of the lead in the GT2 Driver Championship chase with five races remaining.

No. 73 Tafel Racing Ferrari F430 GTC

Drivers: Alex Figge (Denver, Col.), Jim Tafel (Alpharetta, Ga.)

The No. 73 Tafel Ferrari F430 GTC started 12th in today's race - the car's fourth race of the season and the third with the Jim Tafel-Alex Figge combination. Tafel took the green flag and started his attack moving up to tenth before the first caution. Strategist David Fullerton called the No. 73 into the pits at the same time as the No. 71 sister car one hour into the event. Figge returned to the track in tenth and would be holding eighth-place 20 minutes later. An extended caution and unfortunate timing of another yellow flag - which dropped the car a second lap behind - kept Figge from gaining more spots in his third race since returning to the American Le Mans Series at Salt Lake City in May. The No. 73 Tafel Racing Ferrari would eventually have to settle for eighth-place in class, 18th overall, two laps behind their race winning teammates of Farnbacher and Müller.

Quotes

Jim Tafel, Driver, No. 73: "I didn't go out there and force it. I knew my position and every car in front of me that I saw I just reeled in. I just tried to bring back an awesome car for Alex. I am really happy with my stint. I wish I was a little quicker but that will come with time. I am glad that I made no mistakes and I was out there consistently hitting every lap. Alex did a great job for the rest of the race. I am thrilled for the [number] 71. What a great feeling. Dominik and Dirk both had great runs. The team was awesome. I'm really proud of the guys."

Tony Dowe, Technical Director: "It was a really good race. We knew from qualifying and warm-up this morning that we could win. When you have that mental edge it makes a big difference. We were very unfortunate at Lime Rock and we really dug-in after that. We had to go back to Atlanta [to the team shop to make repairs] with the 71 car and everyone, from the truckies that drove all night to the guys working on the car, did an awesome job. The people from Michelotto that were here helped and did a super job. Everyone did. You say that but this was special."

Dominik Farnbacher, Driver, No. 71: "My stint was good. I think I could have improved a position but I didn't want to risk anything. We are in the middle of the season and I was right behind Wolf [Henzler, No. 45]. I had a few chances to go by him but I didn't want to risk anything. I had problems with traffic at the beginning but I was able to catch back up to the pack every time. I think we have a pretty good strategy with our guys here on this team. It is incredible."

Dirk Müller, Driver, No. 71: "I want to congratulate Dominik and the whole Tafel team. The strategy was great. There were two teams that were making mistakes with their strategy and we

were right on with our strategy. At the end I just controlled it. I had a lap lead and I never pushed the car towards the end. We knew that we could double stint the Michelin tires, so we didn't change them on the last stop. I am really, really happy. It makes me really proud to be with a team like Tafel. It was a different challenge than Long Beach. You don't need to have a Long Beach every time. There will be more races like that coming in the future but for now I am really happy with this result."

Alex Figge, Driver, No. 73: "It was hot, hot, hot. Two hours in the car seemed a bit long today. We got caught-out by the yellow in the beginning but we still got back in the top-10. I think if we hadn't gotten caught in the wrong spot and gone down that lap we would have had a pretty darn good finish. The team was awesome and the stops were awesome. Obviously, the Ferrari is good. I'm really looking forward to Road America."

The Mid-Ohio Sports Car Challenge marks NBC Sports' first American Le Mans Series broadcast of the season. A tape-delayed airing of today's event can be seen on your local NBC affiliate on Sunday, July 20 from Noon until 2:30 pm (ET).

Tafel Racing will attempt to retake the GT2 Driver, Team and IMSA Cup point lead at Road America's four hour Generac 500 on August 9.

To visit the official web site of Tafel Racing, please go to www.TafelRacing.com.

Information on Bell Micro as well as to shop its products and services, visit www.BellMicro.com.

For more on Bell Micro Racing, please follow the link to www.BellMicroRacing.com.

To learn more about Ferrari road cars and motorsports history, please visit www.FerrariWorld.com.

For more on the American Le Mans Series, please visit www.AmericanLeMans.com.



Farnbacher Loles Racing

Farnbacher Loles Racing led the GT2 class during the American Le Mans Series race at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course on Saturday, but had to settle for a fourth-place finish. The team was fastest in class in the first test and practice sessions, qualified second and led the first part of the race, but a strategy error foiled the team's victory charge.

Richard Westbrook of London, England, drove the first race stint, starting second on the 14-car GT2 grid. He took the class lead after 21 minutes of the two-hour 45-minute race and held it until a miscue sent him to pit lane for a driver change just before the one-hour mark. The stop was one lap too early, costing the team a lap to the class leader. Dirk Werner of Kissenbrück, Germany, took the wheel, but was slowed leaving pit lane by a malfunctioning car airjack.

Werner returned to the track fourth in class. He moved up to second, then lost two positions as he stopped for fuel just past two hours. He briefly regained third place, but finished fourth.

race report

car time driver action

87 start Westbrook

21m Westbrook GT2 lead

53m change pit – Werner in, four tires, fuel

2h2 Werner pit – fuel

Gregory Loles, team owner: "We can't sugar-coat it: It was Christmas in Mid-Ohio today and we gave it away; we gave a present to the [winning] Ferrari team. It was our race, we passed for the lead and then a strategy blunder put us in a position where we were unable to deliver the potential that the car and the drivers had. Unfortunately, there was some confusion and some miscommunication."

Dirk Werner: "I'm very disappointed, because there was a lot more in the car today. We still have to work on some special things, but the car was fast."

Richard Westbrook: "We had a great car. There was some confusion on the pitstop. We got lucky with the safety car, so we were about to get a full lap over everyone else in the field, but unfortunately, there was a bit of confusion in the pits and we were brought in on the wrong lap. Again, Farnbacher Loles gave Dirk and me a great car. Once again, we showed that we have the pace to fight against the top Ferraris and the top Porsches, and we can go away with our heads held high."