



ALMS At Mosport Race Reports

Source: Race Reports Supplied By The Teams
Photos courtesy ALMS



AUDI Motorsport Race Report

Third consecutive 1-2 victory for Audi

ALMS: Audi have prematurely clinched the LM P1 Manufacturers' Championship in the American Le Mans Series with their third consecutive 1-2 victory. Before the last three races, the brand with the four rings is out of reach in the classifications for engine and chassis manufacturers. Team Audi Sport North America's two Audi R10 TDI prototypes were running with different strategies in the closing stages of the Grand Prix of Mosport (Canada). Lucas Luhr and Marco Werner won the race. Dindo Capello and Emanuele Pirro crossed the finish line in second position with the last drop of Shell V-Power Diesel.

Team Audi Sport North America Race Report

Team Audi Sport North America's two Audi R10 TDI prototypes were running with different strategies in the closing stages of the Grand Prix of Mosport (Canada). Dindo Capello and Emanuele Pirro used one of the two caution periods for an early and final refuelling stop. If another "yellow" had occurred, the strategy might have worked out for the two Italians, but it stayed "green" until the end forcing Pirro to reduce the engine power and save fuel in the final hour. While other cars, opting for a similar strategy, ran out of fuel before the end, the Audi driver was able to take advantage of the low fuel consumption of the TDI engine and crossed the finish line in second position with the last drop of Shell V-Power Diesel.

Lucas Luhr and Marco Werner applied a different strategy in the exciting race. They stayed on track during the second caution period and came to the pits later for their third scheduled refuelling stop. This dropped them to eighth position, but Lucas Luhr was able to make up half a minute in the closing stages with enough fuel and fresh tyres, gradually moving up the race order. Nine laps from the finish he overtook the leading Acura/Honda.

Marco Werner had passed his pole sitting team-mate Dindo Capello on lap seven when the Italian got stuck behind a slower car. He held a 24-second lead when the Safety Car entered the track for the first time. After the driver-change, Lucas Luhr was also able to open a gap before his lead was negated by another caution period.

The only incident for the winning Audi crew occurred during the first pit-stop when Marco Werner touched the pit-wall while exiting the pits and damaging the front section of his R10 TDI. The German was nevertheless able to set a new lap-record in 1m 05.823s.

Luhr and Werner celebrated their fifth overall victory in the 2008 American Le Mans Series and their seventh consecutive class win. This means the two Germans have the LM P1 Drivers' title almost in their hands. The next race takes place next Saturday (August 30) in Detroit (U.S. state of Michigan).

Quotes after the race at Mosport

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): "It was a fantastic race with a difficult strategic decision in the final phase. All the more beautiful it is that we have now clinched a double victory in the American Le Mans Series for the third time in succession proving 'Vorsprung durch Technik' – and this being achieved against very strong competition. Congratulations to the whole team, also on prematurely clinching the Manufacturers' Championships."

Lucas Luhr (Audi R10 TDI #2): "That was a real challenge for me when I had to overtake almost all prototypes again at the end of the race. It worked out well. Our car was not in a perfect shape after our little mishap in the pits, and I really had to fight. Our engineer told me on the radio that I had to push like hell. I did, and fortunately it worked out."

Marco Werner (Audi R10 TDI #2): "I've not seen such a great race for quite a while. It was really exciting. It was nail-biting because we were not sure if we could bring the victory home. There were two different strategies for our two cars. It's great that this gave us a 1-2 victory. It was really close in the end for Emanuele (Pirro) who opted for the 'save fuel' method. We went flat-out but had to pit under 'green'. I dedicate this victory to our boys who worked a lot this week and put a great car on the wheels for us."

Dindo Capello (Audi R10 TDI #1): "It was a difficult race because we gambled a little bit with the fuel. From one side it was good because we really used the last drop of Diesel that was in our tank. This allowed us to finish second on the very last lap. On the other side we lost the chance to fight for the victory as soon we had to back off and save fuel. This was a little bit frustrating, but it is a great result for Audi and we enjoy it."

Emanuele Pirro (Audi R10 TDI #1): "I really learned to save fuel during the stint. I was two steps of power down, but this was not enough and I had to roll the car into the corners. Despite that my lap times were good enough to keep the LMP 2 cars behind. I'm not happy about the race result because we had a fast car but we gambled and didn't make it. I'm happy on how we managed the situation and I'm happy about the way I drove. I literally ran out of fuel at start and finish. It was good to finish second in these conditions."

Dave Maraj (Team Director Audi Sport North America): "It was definitely a team effort after rebuilding one car on Friday all the way into the night because of a damaged monocoque. The team performed extremely well and our four drivers were great. The complete team did a great job. I'm very pleased."

Results and points

Mosport (CDN), 24 August, American Le Mans Series round 8

1 Luhr/Werner (Audi R10 TDI) 127 laps in 2h 46m 09.180s

2 Capello/Pirro (Audi R10 TDI) + 21.392s

3 Brabham/Sharp (Acura/Honda) + 22.156s

4 Fernandez/Diaz (Acura/Honda) + 31.233s

5 Maassen/Long (Porsche) + 44.132s

Positions after 8 of 11 rounds: 1 Luhr/Werner, 171 points; 2 Pirro, 105; 3 C. Field/J. Field, 83; 4 Berry, 73; 5 Capello, 72.

Next race: Detroit (USA), 30 August

Dyson Racing Team Report

The #16 Thetford/Norcold Porsche RS Spyder of Chris Dyson and Guy Smith finished seventh in Sunday's Grand Prix of Mosport, one position ahead of the sister #20 car of Marino Franchitti and Butch Leitzinger.

It was a clean start and an uneventful forty-five minutes of the two hour and fortyfive minute race. The team took advantage of the first full-course yellow on lap thirty-six to bring in Dyson for tires, fuel and a driver change over to Smith. Dyson's #16 car had suffered from a high-speed oversteer balance in the first session, and at the first stop a new nose with different dive planes was fitted along with adding a rear tail gurney. Franchitti came in two laps later for fuel and tires. Both cars pitted under the next yellow an hour later with Smith in first, followed a lap later by Franchitti, who handed over to Leitzinger along with fuel and a new battery. The cars rejoined seventh and eighth in class, and maintained those positions to the end.

"It is disappointing that we were not able to build on our podium finish at Road America two weeks ago," said Dyson. "Taking care of our mechanical issues lengthened our stops and the cars' handling slipped through the race. With the long duration and high speed corners at Mosport, you need a car in which you have complete confidence to attack, and we didn't have that today, unfortunately. But we will go Detroit next week looking to rebound and close out this season on a strong note."

Porsche Motorsports Race Report

THREE RACES TO GO AND TWO CLASS BATTLES FOR PORSCHE ALMS COMPETITORS AS CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS RACES FOR LMP2 AND GT2 TIGHTEN UP AT MOSPORT IN CANADA BOWMANVILLE

While Porsche teams in both the LMP2 class and the GT2 class retained their points lead going into next week's Detroit Grand Prix, no one was really satisfied with the results of today Grand Prix of Mosport presented by Mobil 1. In the LMP2 class, the Penske Racing Porsche RS Spyders finished third and sixth in class, with the Sascha Maassen (Germany)/Patrick Long (USA) car finished third – their fourth podium finish – and the Bernhard/Dumas car was sixth after running out of fuel on the last lap.

John Erickson, general manager of Penske Racing, was pleased that the number six Long/Maassen RS Spyder finished on the podium, helping both team and manufacturers points, but was disappointed that the right strategy for the number seven Bernhard/Dumas car did not work out. "We knew it would be close on fuel at the end, so we came in with two minutes to go for a quick splash, and thought we could make it to the end. We didn't put in more fuel because we did want to lose additional track position, but the overall leading Audi passed the start- finish line just after the two-hour, 45-minute time limit, so the whole field had to do another lap. Romain made it to within 100 yards of the finish with the extra lap, but he ran out of gas," said Erickson.

Bernhard ran a strong first stint, bringing the car in for his pit stop and driving change during a caution flag at the 44-minute mark, and quick work by the Penske crew got Dumas out of the pits ahead of all the Audis and Acuras and into the overall lead. Dumas lead the race overall during two separate stages of the event, and lead the class several times until the last shuffle of pits stops, when the car was pushed back to fifth in class. He worked his way back to challenge for second place before the splash-and-go and the fuel shortage at the end.

In the LMP2 driving championship point standings, Bernhard/Dumas now lead the Brabham/Sharp Acura drivers, who won the class at Mosport, by ten points, while Porsche leads Acura in the manufacturer points by six points. The other two Porsche RS Spyders in the LMP2 class, the Dyson Racing entries, ran the race without incident, but suffered a variety of nagging problems to keep them off the podium, including some under-steering issues. The Chris Dyson/Guy Smith RS Spyder finished seventh in class, while the Marino Franchitti/Butch Leitzinger RS Spyder was eighth.

The GT2 contest was a rough and tumble affair, with the Melo/Salo Ferrari outlasting the Farnbacher Loles Racing Porsche 911 GT3 RSR of Dirk Werner and Pierre Kaffer. Some of the best racing of the weekend was the battle between those two cars – the same two that battled at Road America two weeks ago when the Farnbacher Loles Porsche won the race. "I'm very happy that we got another podium in our first ALMS season. I think it shows how amazingly the team works together and how good a package we have. With a little bit more luck in finding the right race setup, we could have had a chance to win the race, but today the Ferrari was just a little bit stronger. I had to fight very hard to go the speed I went; I couldn't do it over the whole stint. But we can be happy with the result because everything went right for us," said Werner.

The two leading GT2 cars in the series – the Mueller/Farnbacher Ferrari and the Henzler/Bergmeister Flying Lizard Porsche – also had a healthy scrap, with Mueller muscling his way past Bergmeister by bumping him off the track late in the race. Joerg held on to his car, but had to settle for fourth place against his rival. But the IMSA officials, who had warned both drivers earlier in the race about bumping and blocking, ruled that the Ferrari was guilty of avoidable contact, and awarded the Lizard Porsche third.

Bergmeister, a multi-time IMSA champion, thought justice had been done. "That was one of the toughest fights that I ever had in a race car. I had to drive very defensively to make sure that the Ferrari would not get by. In doing that, I got more and more tire pickup so at the end I was struggling quite a bit. But we finished ahead of them in the points so that's all that counts. It's a little

step, but a step in the right direction,” he said. The Lonnie Pechnik/Seith Neiman Flying Lizard Porsche was seventh after suffering a broken shock, while the Patrick Pilet/Johannes van Overbeek Lizard Porsche was ninth after a starter problem in the pits cost them value time. The Francesco Pastorelli/Nicky Pastorelli/Marc Basseng VICI Racing Porsche did not finish after Basseng suffered a broken right rear suspension at speed and could not continue, finishing 12th.

Acura Motorsports Race Report

David Brabham and Scott Sharp stood in Victory Lane for the fourth time in the 2008 American Le Mans Series Sunday, but both drivers had to feel for fellow Acura pilots Gil de Ferran and Simon Pagenaud following the Grand Prix of Mosport, northeast of Toronto.

Brabham made another remarkable charge on the legendary 2.54-mile road circuit to capture the LMP2 class title with the No. 9 Patrón Highcroft Acura ARX-01b prototype sports car. The victory for Brabham and Sharp closed them to within 10 points of LMP2 point leaders Timo Bernhard and Romain Dumas with three races remaining in the season.

Brabham and Sharp’s win was coupled with a second-place finish by Adrian Fernandez and Luis Diaz in the No. 15 Lowe’s Fernandez Acura for the manufacturer’s first 1-2 American Le Mans Series finish since Acura joined the road-racing tour last year. It was Fernandez and Diaz’ top finishing position in 2008.

The two-hour, 45-minute contest saw some of the most sensational wheel-to-wheel action ever seen in the 10-year history of the American Le Mans Series. But it was the performance of former Indy 500 winner de Ferran that stunned the large Canadian crowd Sunday.

The personable Brazilian, who retired from the cockpit in 2003, drove a spectacular event to hold a 12-second advantage with just 10 minutes remaining. His No. 66 Panasonic ELS Surround Acura looked to be headed to a first ALMS win for the newly-formed de Ferran Motorsports squad. De Ferran played a fuel-strategy game against the likes of Brabham, Fernandez and the pair of Penske Porsches, and he drove brilliantly.

At the end, the overall-leading Audi of Lucas Luhr crossed the start/finish line just one second prior to the scheduled minimum race time of two hours, 45 minutes, necessitating the completion of another lap prior to the checkered flag. De Ferran’s car ran out of fuel on the back straightaway on that final circuit and was relegated to a fifth-place finish in the LMP2 division.

Brabham and Fernandez then battled to the finish line, completing Acura’s 1-2 placing.

Franck Montagny, co-driving with Englishman James Rossiter in the No. 26 XM Satellite Radio Andretti Green Acura ARX-01b, actually led the overall standings before a late-race pit stop consigned him to fourth in the LMP2 class. Early contact between Rossiter’s XM Acura and a GT car hurt the aerodynamics of the AGR machine, but the French star wheeled the injured machine to a strong finish.

The American Le Mans Series moves to the streets of Detroit for the ninth of 11 races, the Belle Isle Grand Prix, on Saturday, Aug. 30. The race will be seen live on Speed-TV.

ACURA QUOTES:

DAVID BRABHAM (#9 Patrón Highcroft Racing Acura ARX-01b): “What a phenomenal race today! The wheel-to-wheel action was as good as it gets. There was really world-class competition out there today. The racing with Romain [Dumas] was incredible as we passed back and forth. I guess they ran out of fuel like Gil. I feel bad for Gil’s team. They were so close to winning. But we’ll take this fourth win and close in on the point lead. Very exciting for us!”

SCOTT SHARP (#9 Patrón Highcroft Racing Acura ARX-01b): “The last two races have been about fuel, and our staff, led by Duncan [Dayton] and Rob Hill, did another great job of calling the right shot at the end. Our car was fast all weekend, but I got caught some bad traffic and that hurt

us. David did his usual great charge to get the Patrón Highcroft Acura to Victory Lane. This place is like a throwback to older racing with such fast turns. It's great for a driver."

LUIS DIAZ (#15 Lowe's Fernandez Acura ARX-01b): "We were very close to winning the race today. Our Lowe's Acura team had a great strategy and my car felt good. We had some great racing in the P2 class. Each race, we'll continue to learn about the Acura chassis on these fast tracks. We had the Lola last year, and the new chassis is very good. We think we can get better with each race."

ADRIAN FERNANDEZ (#15 Lowe's Fernandez Acura ARX-01b): "We had some problems with the battery and that hurt us a little. But the Lowe's Acura was fast today. We play a fuel game and I felt Luis had a good momentum. So he stayed in longer than some of the other Acura drivers, who switched [positions] after 45 minutes. I decided to save a little more fuel than Gil and David, or we might have had a shot for the win. Without the suspension problem at Road America, we should have three straight podium finishes. Second feels good."

FRANCK MONTAGNY (#26 XM Satellite Radio Acura ARX-01b): "The XM car was not as fast as I would have liked due to the contact James had in the beginning of the race. We lost the front wing. We were able to race with anyone in our class until we had to pit late for fuel and tires. Our strategy came close at the end, but the race was one lap shorter than we would have liked. Another bad break."

JAMES ROSSITER (#26 XM Satellite Radio Acura ARX-01b): "The XM car was good in my stint today. Unfortunately, I was racing with Sharp and we were passing a Ferrari in Turn Eight. I don't know if he didn't see me, but he ran into my car's left front. We lost a dive plane that hurt the aerodynamics a little bit. Overall, we just missed a bit on our fuel strategy and we had to settle for fourth."

SIMON PAGENAUD (#66 Panasonic ELS Surround Acura ARX-01b): "It shows how much racing can get you sometimes. We will take a lot from this weekend. We learned a lot the whole week. We had some problems, but team had a great strategy and the car was very good in the race. I thought Gil was outstanding today too."

GIL de FERRAN (#66 Panasonic ELS Surround Acura ARX-01b): "It was particularly cruel when you consider that we missed the checkered flag by just about a second. That made us take another lap and we ran out of fuel. It was always going to be tight for us on fuel. But the team did a very good job working the numbers. I tried to keep the proper fuel reading that they wanted. And we ran great laps and saved fuel. We thought the race would end one lap sooner. Unfortunately, that didn't happen today. Our guys did great in calling all the right moves, including getting us back on the lead lap in the early portion of the race. We have been struggling all weekend with the car, but, in the race, it felt good. And our lap times were very good. I was feeling very comfortable in the lead and I had a good rhythm in the cockpit. It felt good to run up front again. I think we can do more of that in the future. It is a tough way to lose."

Tafel Racing Team Report

Tafel Racing leaves the Grand Prix of Mosport with two top-sixth finishes in the American Le Mans Series GT2 class. The Cumming, Ga.-based operation will also leave Mosport International Raceway with a bitter taste in their mouth. Following a dramatic battle for third, which carried into the final lap, the No. 71 Tafel/Bell Micro Racing Ferrari F430 GTC of Dominik Farnbacher (Ansbach, Germany) and Dirk Müller (a native of Germany living in Monaco) crossed under the checkered flag in third position but was later given a 30-second penalty and dropped to fourth in the final standings. The No. 73 Tafel Racing Ferrari F430 GTC co-driven by Alex Figge (Denver, Col.) and Jim Tafel (Alpharetta, Ga.) earned its second-highest finish of the season taking sixth in a race that was equally strong on strategy and race performance. The Bell Micro Racing Ferrari now sits ten points behind in the GT2 Driver Championship with three events remaining in the 11-race American Le Mans Series season. There will be little rest for Tafel Racing as the team heads south to Michigan for the Sports Car Challenge of Detroit. The race, being run for its second season on the streets of Belle Isle, is scheduled for next Saturday, August 30. The final two endurance races of the season; Petit Le Mans (October 4) and Laguna Seca (October 18), follow the Detroit event.

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 No. 71 Tafel/Bell Micro Ferrari started today's race from third on the GT2 grid with Dominik Farnbacher behind the wheel. Farnbacher drove a strong stint for the first 55 minutes of the two hour and 45-minute event. The young German had a trouble-free drive running as high as second before handing the Bell Micro Ferrari over to Dirk Müller. Müller quickly became embroiled in a three-way, nose-to-tail battle being waged between positions second and fourth. The battle raged for the final two hours of the event eventually becoming an all-out war for the final step of the podium. Müller trailed the championship points leading No. 45 by as little as 0.096 seconds and was rarely more than half-a-second back even in traffic. Müller attempted multiple passes, drawing side-by-side on more than one occasion. The two cars rubbed twice with International Motor Sports Association (IMSA) officials warning both drivers about contact. On the final lap, Müller, seeing a gap opened by the No. 45, made his final move to get the sixth podium of the season for the No. 71 but the two cars came together as the No. 45 slide sideways. IMSA officials deemed the contact avoidable and, based on the previous warnings, sent-down a 30-second penalty to be added to the No. 71's total race time. The penalty, which cannot be protested, dropped the car from the podium to fourth and widened the point gap which now stands 135 to 125 points. In the process of the race, Müller set his second fastest race lap (one minute, 18.082 seconds) of the season matching Farnbacher's tally of two.

No. 73 Tafel Racing Ferrari F430 GTC

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

The No. 73 used the 2.459-mile, 10-turn circuit to earn their second-highest finish of the season, sixth - the season-opening result from the 12 Hours of Sebring was fourth. Jim Tafel opened the race eighth in class and ran consistently strong laps moving into seventh before handing the Ferrari over to Alex Figge. Figge, making his first Mosport start since an open wheel event in 1999, drove the final two hours of the race taking an additional position in a drama-less event. Figge took the checkered flag sixth in class, 20th overall. While being the No. 73's second-best finish of the year, it was the best result for the Figge-Tafel combination which is now in its fifth event. Tafel earned his second Founders Cup - given for the best 'drive' by a racer who does not make motorsports his fulltime profession - of the season in the process.

Quotes

Tony Dowe, Technical Director: "I am incredibly disappointed for the team, the drivers and the fans for such a fantastic race being ended by the stewards in such a manner. Clearly for many, many laps the 45 Porsche blocked us continuously. There were many incidents where we had been taken off the course and I was really proud of the patience that Dirk showed and the racecraft he used at the end to force the 45 into a mistake. The penalty is non-protestable. Clearly it leaves a very bad taste in everybody's mouth. We are racing those guys for a championship and it does seem that following the Elkhart Lake [Road America] incident nothing was done and now there is a decision made against us. Clearly, the obvious thing is to go home and fight again another day."

Dominik Farnbacher, Driver, No. 71: "My stint was good. I could overtake the Porsche in front of me and I took second position. But, by that time, the 62 was already gone so I took the pace of the leading car. My goal was to keep the 45 car behind me. I did that. I was very, very happy with my stint. I was quite happy to take the podium with Dirk but I am very frustrated in the decision of the officials."

Dirk Müller, Driver, No. 71: "From the second stop everything was under control. I was in the pack the whole time and I knew I could not pass like the No. 62 [race-winning Ferrari]. It was like 55 minutes of studying where I could pass the 45 car. I thought five times I was ahead but he just went wide. The last lap he made a mistake, he covered the inside of [turn] 5A and I positioned myself on the outside. He came sideways between 5A and 5B. I jumped inside nice and clean. We had contact but the contact was because he was closing the door. It was a nice and clear move. I had many chances to make a dirty move and I did not take them. The last contact was avoidable on his side. I am very disappointed in this decision by the officials."

Jim Tafel, Driver, No. 73: "I would have felt more comfortable and confident with one more second a lap but I had to play the hand I was dealt. I just tried to do the best job that I could to drive it into the window and give it to Alex to finish-up. He went out there and just peeled them off. I improved by one position and he improved by one position. I was really happy to finish with a great result. Alex did a phenomenal job bringing it home."

Alex Figge, Driver, No. 73: "It was a great result. The guys were great but I think I lost a little time on the pit stops. I need to get the rhythm right on cranking the ignition as the car is dropping. Jim did a great job. He made huge strides here. I just can't say enough about that. That was probably our biggest gain of the weekend. I knew he was a little bit heartbroken to go down that lap in the end but with all that prototype traffic there isn't much you can do about it. I am really looking forward to Detroit."

Farnbacher Loles Racing Report

Farnbacher Loles Racing earned its fourth American Le Mans Series GT2 podium on Sunday, after a strong class-leading performance on the challenging 2.459-mile Mosport International Raceway road course in Bowmanville, Ont. The rookie ALMS team's result was bolstered by fast work on track and in pit lane.

Pierre Kaffer of Salenstein, Switzerland, drove the first stint in the No. 87 Porsche 911 GT3 RSR, starting second on the 11-car GT2 grid. He slipped back to fourth behind three veteran cars, then stopped for a driver change after 55 minutes of the two-hour 45-minute race.

Dirk Werner of Kissenbrück, Germany, drove the rest of the race, stopping out of sequence for fuel during a mid-race caution period. The strategy and Werner's careful management gave him enough fuel to finish the race. He took the class lead with an hour remaining and held it until a stronger Ferrari passed for the class win just 20 minutes from the checkered flag. With no previous experience at Mosport, the team was elated with second place.

Gregory Loles, team owner: "Strategy, strategy, strategy. We were the only car that got it right today and we couldn't be happier. All the pieces of the puzzle are now in place and we're looking forward to a very good Petit Le Mans [the team's next ALMS race]."

Pierre Kaffer: "It was quite an exciting race day for me, especially this morning when there was a little accident in the warmup. I'm really proud of the team – they did a really good job between the warmup and the race. I could hold my position and at the end of my stint, the team was really fast in the pitstop. They called a brilliant strategy today and Dirk did an amazing job. We finished second; we're happy with this result. And I'm happy to be back in the ALMS and on the podium."

Dirk Werner: "I'm very happy that we got another podium in our first ALMS season. I think it shows how amazingly the team works together and how good a package we have. With a little bit more luck in finding the right race setup, we could have had a chance to win the race, but today the Ferrari was just a little bit stronger. I had to fight very hard to go the speed I went; I couldn't do it over the whole stint. But we can be happy with the result because everything went right for us. Thanks to the team for a great race!"