

CLASSIC DRIVER

Johnny Herbert drives for Audi 2002



In the 2002 season, AUDI AG faces one of the biggest challenges in motor racing: after two consecutive victories, Audi Sport Team Joest starts the legendary Le Mans 24 Hour race on 15 and 16 June 2002, trying to achieve a hat-trick.

The Audi works team will be strengthened by Johnny Herbert. The former Formula 1 driver and Le Mans winner will team up with Rinaldo Capello and Christian Pescatori at Le Mans and the 12 Hours at Sebring. The Briton got to know the undeniable advantages of the Audi R8 in the past season as driver of the Audi customer team Champion. Since then, he is convinced: "The R8 is simply a wonderful car. You can drive it on the limit from the first to the last lap - and this is exactly what I like." Herbert replaces Frenchman Laurent Aiello who will concentrate fully on the German Touring Car Masters (DTM).

According to the slogan "never change a winning team", the winning trio of the past two Le Mans races comprising of Frank Biela, Tom Kristensen and Emanuele Pirro will continue to form a line-up at Le Mans and in the Sebring 12 Hour classic. Should Biela/Kristensen/Pirro win Le Mans again, Audi would add a further chapter to the history of motorsport: never before has an unchanged driver combination won the French endurance classic three times in a row.

"Our aim is very ambitious: We want to win the Le Mans race for a third consecutive time in order to finally get the historic trophy to Ingolstadt", says Audi Head of Sport Dr Wolfgang Ullrich.

In the American Le Mans Series (ALMS), Audi will also defend its titles in the constructors', drivers' and teams' standings. After the season opener on 16 March at Sebring, Audi Sport North America contests the American Le Mans Series (ALMS) with their proven driver line-ups: Frank Biela and title holder Emanuele Pirro share the cockpit of the Infineon Audi R8 with start number 1 whilst Rinaldo Capello and Tom Kristensen will drive the sister car.

The Infineon Audi R8, which has already achieved 20 victories, is one of the most successful sports racing cars in the history of motor racing and will be improved in detail for the 2002 season. "The car and the new FSI engine still have potential that we want to exploit", declares Dr Ullrich.

Story and photos: *Audi Sport Presse*

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