



**SALEEN**

Motorsports Division

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## **SALEEN S7R SHOOTS FOR SECOND-STRAIGHT VICTORY WITH NEW CUSTOMER TEAM**

**Konrad/Team Saleen Gains Pole for 12 Hours of Sebring**

SEBRING, Fla., March 15, 2001 – When Steve Saleen earlier announced plans for a customer car program for the 2001 sports car racing season, some people cast doubts on the concept. Better to win races and championships before trying to sell customer cars. But then Saleen already has five-straight sports car championships to his credit and Steve is used to the challenge.

So, when the new #26 **Konrad/Team Saleen S7R** takes the green flag for Saturday's 49<sup>th</sup> **annual Superflo 12 Hours at Sebring**, Saleen Motorsports will be attempting to achieve its second-straight victory with a new customer car this season. Two weeks ago, Chris Bingham and Ron Johnson drove the **Fordahl/Team Saleen S7R**, Saleen's first customer car, to a flag-to-flag win in the GTS class at Homestead-Miami Speedway in its inaugural race.

Sports car veteran, Franz Konrad, heads a formidable GTS team at Sebring that includes two Saleen Motorsports' drivers, Terry Borcheller of Phoenix and Oliver Gavin of England. Konrad/Team Saleen plans to run the entire American Le Mans Series. Konrad has also purchased another Saleen S7R to campaign in the European Le Mans Series.

A high-performance vehicle manufacturer for 18 years, Saleen introduced the S7, the first true American supercar, at the famed Monterey Historic Races in August of last year. Less than three months later, the first S7R racecar performed admirably in its inaugural race at the same Laguna Seca circuit. The Saleen S7R's 7-liter racing V8 generates 600 horsepower and is capable of speeds in excess of 200 miles per hour. With its extreme ground effects engineering, the car could be driven upside down at 160 mph and still stay attached to the road.

Saleen was crowned the SCCA World Challenge Champions in 1996-1998, while an ex-Le Mans Saleen SR won the Spanish FIA GT in 1999. Last year, Saleen swept the Grand-Am GTO Championships winning the Team and Drivers' titles, as well as their fifth-straight Manufacturers' Championship.

**Austria's Franz Konrad** started racing sports cars in Germany in the mid-1970s. He moved to Formula 2 and 3 in the early 1980's, winning the German F3 Championship in 1983. Other highlights in Konrad's career include his second-place overall (to his Silk Cut Jaguar teammate) in the 1990 24 Hours of Le Mans; a first-in-class and eighth overall finish in the 1995 12 Hours of Sebring driving a Porsche 962 Spider; and back-to-back GT class victories at Sebring in 1997 and 1998. Konrad was also crowned the Porsche Cup Champion both years.

"I've been racing sports cars for over a quarter of a century and the Saleen S7R is one of the most impressive," commented Konrad. "The design, as well as the technical side, of the car is really outstanding, especially for the endurance races. I got in the car for the first time this Monday, but already I know the car is easy to drive, handles beautifully, good aerodynamics, great power, the engine is really, really good. Although the car is new, our expectations are to win the race Saturday and use the 12 Hours to prepare for the 24 (Hours of Le Mans, that is)!"

Saleen Motorsports' **Terry Borcheller** of Phoenix, the 2000 Grand-Am GTO Co-Champion and the 1998 SCCA World Challenge Drivers' Champion, will co-drive with Konrad at Sebring, as will **Oliver Gavin**. Gavin is the former McLaren Autosport "Young Driver of the Year", the 1995 British Formula 3 Champion and, more recently, a F1 test driver for McLaren and Benetton. Gavin set the pole in qualifying today with a 2:00.426 around the famous 17-turn, 3.7-mile airport circuit; second was Ron Fellows in the Corvette C5-R with 2:00.728.

Konrad/Team Saleen is sponsored by Giesse, BASF, Hidden Creek Industries, Hella and Goodyear. Speedvision will air flag-to-flag live coverage of the Superflo 12 Hours of Sebring beginning at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, March 17. All times are EST.

Saleen facilities include total research, engineering, design and assembly capability. Since the company's inception in 1984, Saleen has produced over 8,000 vehicles, more than any other specialty manufacturer. The company's line includes the Saleen S281, the Saleen S281SC, the Saleen XP8 SUV, the new Saleen S7 supercar and Saleen Performance Parts, the latter encompassing the complete line of performance and appearance products for Mustangs and Explorers. For more information about Saleen – its people and its products – visit the web site at [www.saleen.com](http://www.saleen.com).