

Communications Motorsport

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All Audi R8 LMS cars in top six

- **New GT3 sports car impresses on Nordschleife**
- **Grid positions three, four, five and six at 24-hour race**
- **First lap of second qualifying was crucial**

Ingolstadt/Nürburg – The new GT3 sports car from AUDI AG delivered an impressive performance in qualifying for the 24-hour race on the Nürburgring: All four Audi R8 LMS finished among the top six in the final qualifying session and thus secured grid positions on the first three rows of the 171-car field.

As is often the case at the 24-hour race, the first lap of the second qualifying session was crucial. As early as from the second lap there was heavy traffic on the 25.378-kilometer track consisting of a combination of the Grand Prix circuit and the Nordschleife which made it nearly impossible to improve lap times.

In the one-lap sprint for the best starting positions the fastest Audi driver was Marc Basseng (Audi R8 LMS #99/Phoenix Racing). With 8m 37.553s, the Nordschleife specialist was merely 1m 017s short of clinching the pole position. The reigning DTM Champion Timo Scheider (Audi R8 LMS #100/Team ABT Sportsline) was just six tenths of a second slower although he had to pass several vehicles on the Grand Prix circuit and lost additional time in the "Bergwerk" section.

Hans-Joachim Stuck (Audi R8 LMS #98/Phoenix Racing), as well, proved that at age 58 he is still one of the fastest contenders on the Nordschleife. With 8m 39.618s, the Austrian, who had won the first 24-hour race on the Nürburgring in 1970, posted the sixth-best time.



Pierre Kaffer (Audi R8 LMS #97/Team ABT Sportsline) was out of luck on the first lap. The German got caught behind slower cars and, at first, had to settle for tenth place. However, his teammate Lucas Luhr managed the leap onto position four of the grid at the last moment. Although the track was not clear, the German managed an impressive time of 8m 38.181s and was thus one of the very few drivers to improve his time.

“Prior to this qualifying, nobody knew where they really stood,” said Marc Basseng. “So, I’m all the happier that we’re at the very front of the field with the Audi R8 LMS. Our new car is still a young baby but I trust Audi to have built a reliable car too.”

The four Audi R8 LMS cars were running without problems in qualifying. In the first session in the rain on Thursday night merely the Audi R8 LMS car number 100 had a few bugs that were corrected overnight.

“I think that, considering that this is our Audi R8 LMS’s maiden run at the 24-hour race, we can be happy with its performance,” said Head of Audi Motorsport Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich after the qualifying sessions. “Obviously, we’re able to run at the front of the field. However, we’ve done – and will continue to do – a lot of work on our new car. We’re preparing ourselves for the race now which will be an extreme endurance test in the form of this very special 24-hour race for the Audi R8 LMS.”

The 37th edition of the endurance classic starts on Saturday at 4 pm. DSF will broadcast from the Nürburgring starting at 3 pm (local time), airing more than ten hours of live coverage. The entire race can be watched on the internet at www.audi.tv as a live stream. The organizer expects a turnout of some 200,000 spectators who can look forward to a thrilling race: the fastest six vehicles are separated by merely three seconds after qualifying.



The starting grid at the Nürburgring

- 1 Tilke/Adorf/Hennerici/Mutsch (Ford #40) 8m 36.536s
- 2 Bernhard/Lieb/Dumas/Tiemann (Porsche #1) + 0.191s
- 3 Basseng/Rockenfeller/Stippler/Fässler (Audi R8 LMS #99) + 1.017s
- 4 Abt/Hemroulle/Kaffer/Luhr (Audi R8 LMS #97) + 1.645s
- 5 Ekström/Scheider/Werner/Luhr (Audi R8 LMS #100) + 2.429s
- 6 Biela/Fässler/Pirro/Stuck (Audi R8 LMS #98) + 3.082s
- 7 Collard/Henzler/Lietz/Werner (Porsche #2) + 4.705s
- 8 Weiss/Pietsch/Jacobs/Ragginger (Porsche #5) + 7.763s
- 9 Alzen/Menzel/Schwager/Fricke (Porsche #6) + 7.855s
- 10 Stuck/Rebhan/Schall/Engels (BMW #25) + 9.251s

- Ends -

Photographs and information available at www.audi-motorsport.info

AUDI AG sold a total of 1,003,469 cars in 2008 and thus achieved its 13th consecutive record year. The Company posted new record figures with revenue of €34.2 billion and profit before tax of €3.2 billion. Audi produces vehicles in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Changchun (China) and Brussels (Belgium). Aurangabad in India saw the start of CKD production of the Audi A6 at the end of 2007 and of the Audi A4 in early October 2008. The Company is active in more than 100 markets worldwide. AUDI AG's wholly owned subsidiaries include Automobili Lamborghini Holding S.p.A. in Sant'Agata Bolognese (Italy) and quattro GmbH in Neckarsulm. Audi currently employs around 58,000 people worldwide, including 46,500 in Germany. The brand with the four rings invests around €2 billion each year in order to sustain the company's technological lead embodied in its "Vorsprung durch Technik" slogan. Audi plans to significantly increase the number of models in its portfolio by 2015 to 42. The AUDI brand celebrates its 100th birthday in 2009. The company was founded by August Horch in Zwickau on July 16, 1909; he named it AUDI after the Latin translation of his surname ("hark!").