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## **Audi achieves second Le Mans hat-trick**

- **Capello/Kristensen/McNish win thriller**
- **Audi R10 TDI remains unbeaten at 24 Hour classic**
- **Eighth Audi victory out of ten starts at the Sarthe**

**Ingolstadt/Le Mans – The Audi R10 TDI remains unbeaten in the Le Mans 24 Hour race: in its third attempt, the diesel sportscar won the French endurance classic yet again. After the incredible thrill of the 76<sup>th</sup> edition of the race, Dindo Capello (Italy), Tom Kristensen (Denmark) and Allan McNish (Scotland) triumphed at the wheel of the Audi R10 TDI number 2.**

The widely anticipated duel between Audi and Peugeot definitely kept its promise: in front of a record crowd of 258,500 spectators, the two car manufacturers entered into a thrilling battle with their diesel sportscars which Audi finally won by a margin of 4m 31s.

During the entire race distance, the winning Audi R10 TDI and the best Peugeot 908 was never separated by more than a lap. After Peugeot initially set the pace, both the reliability and efficiency of the Audi R10 TDI gained the upper hand at night. After rain set in at Le Mans, Dindo Capello, Tom Kristensen and Allan McNish took the lead at 05:17 and held it until the finish at 15:00 hours.

On a rain-soaked track, the Audi drivers fully profited from the superiority of Audi TDI Power and led the field by a margin of one lap. In addition, they took advantage of the fact that Audi Sport Team Joest had entered the race with a set-



up that was the best compromise for both dry and wet track surfaces. Whilst the opposition had to change their cars during the race to a rain set-up, Audi only needed to change tyres.

Changing tyres, however, was an exercise that was practiced frequently as the conditions changed throughout the second half of the race owing to the weather. Slicks, intermediates, and rain tyres – it was crucial to take the most suitable tyres at the correct time.

Audi Sport Team Joest and the Audi drivers fully exploited their experience and operated faultlessly. The only frightening moment occurred in the dramatic final phase when there was a collision between the leading car and a backmarker involving the innocent Tom Kristensen. In that situation, the sheer strength of the Audi R10 TDI became visible as well. The car ran faultlessly without the slightest technical lapse during the 24 hours.

Scotsman Allan McNish scored his second Le Mans victory after his inaugural 1998 triumph – 2008 being his first win with Audi. Tom Kristensen, from Denmark, extended his existing record to eight Le Mans victories now. Italian Dindo Capello won for the third time after 2003 and 2004.

For Audi Sport Team Joest, it was the third successive victory with the Audi R10 TDI. Thus, a hat-trick has been achieved for the second time after 2000, 2001 and 2002: three Le Mans victories achieved by one team. The Le Mans winners' trophy that normally needs to be returned 12 months after each single victory is therefore in the possession of AUDI AG for good.

The other two Audi R10 TDI cars finished fourth and sixth. Youngsters Lucas Luhr, Alexandre Prémat and Mike Rockenfeller were in contention for a podium finish until shortly before the end and had previously occupied third place. In the penultimate hour of the race, however, the oil filter of their V12 TDI engine had to be changed.

Frank Biela, Emanuele Pirro and Marco Werner also encountered bad luck: the winning trio of 2006 and 2007 lost all chances for a better result on Sunday



morning when a clutch had to be changed owing to a spin and the subsequent re-start in second gear.

In its tenth attempt, Audi has won the Le Mans 24 Hour race for the eighth time. Since 2000, Audi technology has been victorious at Le Mans. “This was a success of drivers, team and the efficiency of the Audi TDI technology – a triumph of reliability”, said Rupert Stadler, Head of the Board of Management of AUDI AG who followed the race at Le Mans personally in the Audi pit garage. “It was the most tense Le Mans race I remember. We had a very strong opponent who had an extremely fast car. But once more, it became obvious that Le Mans particularly rewards reliability and efficiency. I am proud of this team. And every Audi employee and customer can be proud, too.”

**Photographs and information available at [www.audi-motorsport.info](http://www.audi-motorsport.info)**

AUDI AG sold a total of 964,151 cars in 2007 and thus achieved its twelfth consecutive record year. With revenue of €33,617 million and profit before tax of €2,915 million, the company attained its best figures ever. Audi produces vehicles in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Changchun (China) and Brussels (Belgium). At the end of 2007, production of the Audi A6 started in Aurangabad, India. 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 employs about 54,000 people worldwide, including 45,000 in Germany. The brand with the four rings invests more than €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, from the 26 currently on offer to 40.