

Communications Motorsport

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Audi achieves second place at Spa

- Lucas di Grassi/Loïc Duval/Tom Kristensen best Audi team
- First WEC podium for the new Audi R18 e-tron quattro
- All three Audi driver squads among the six best teams

Ingolstadt/Spa, May 3, 2014 – Round two of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) at Spa marked the first event this year in which the relative strengths at the front of the field began to show, as this time the LMP1 hybrid sports cars of all three manufacturers finished the race. Audi, in front of 46,000 spectators, achieved second place with a gap of 1m 13.926s.

After Audi was unfortunate in the WEC season opener two weeks ago with two retirements, round two produced a clearer picture of the effects of the new efficiency regulations and its ratings. Lucas di Grassi (BR) and the two World Champions Loïc Duval (F) and Tom Kristensen (DK) battled and finished the Spa 6 Hours as the runners-up. As the R18 e-tron quattro diesel hybrid sports car did not quite achieve the lap times of the best race cars with gasoline engines, which have a different rating than the efficient TDI power-plant, Audi opted for a different strategy. To save time, Audi Sport Team Joest changed the tires of car #1 only at every second refueling stop.

Di Grassi/Duval/Kristensen advanced to third place at the race's midpoint, fighting a varied battle with the #7 Toyota for second place. The last pit stop produced a preliminary decision: 21 minutes before the end of the race, Loïc Duval had to refuel for the seventh time and went back out with a four-second advantage. He successfully defended second place to the finish, with a 6.935-second advantage over the third-placed car.

Car #2, which only achieved fifth place, experienced a race with setbacks. An electric receiver for the lap trigger had separated at an early stage of the race. As a result, the R18 e-tron quattro of Marcel Fässler/André Lotterer/Benoît Tréluyer (CH/D/F) was no longer receiving the organizer's lap signal at the beginning of the race. As this pulser serves various systems André Lotterer was not able to use the full hybrid

power of his race car either until the repair. A pressure loss in a tire on lap 101 cost car #2 additional time.

By contrast, Filipe Albuquerque (P) and Marco Bonanomi (I) achieved a good rhythm. Their #3 R18 e-tron quattro tested the aerodynamics variant for the Le Mans 24 Hours. At the same time, sports car rookie Albuquerque on his WEC debut familiarized himself with his new race car while Bonanomi, following a year as a test and reserve driver, contested his first race again. Further into the race, both Audi drivers kept improving their lap times and ultimately finished in sixth place.

After the round at Spa, the WEC teams will meet again at Le Mans for the test day on June 1. Two weeks later, the season's pinnacle event is on the agenda – the Le Mans 24 Hours on June 14 and 15 in which Audi has celebrated twelve victories to date.

Quotes after the race

Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “A second place was the best we could make out of the situation today. I’m happy that we managed to do that. We got all the cars to finish and none of the cars is damaged. After the Silverstone opener, that’s a positive outcome. There’s still a lot to do and we’re tackling these tasks.”

Chris Reinke (Head of LMP): “For us at Audi Sport, it was a huge effort to put all three cars on the grid in such a solid technical condition, to finish the race with a respectable result and to take a podium in the process. Obviously, we’d aimed for more but we did a good job of preparing for Le Mans, which had been our main goal. Car #3 gathered important findings too, so that we can leave Spa with a feeling of satisfaction.”

Ralf Jüttner (Team Director Audi Sport Team Joest): “We’ve got to be happy about second place. Congratulations to Toyota, they really built a good car. We drove our first real race this season and have scored points and gained experience. This race was a relief after the run at Silverstone. We finished with all three cars and drove an almost flawless race. Only in the case of car #2, things weren’t running smoothly in every respect. But under the given conditions, we weren’t able to keep the pace of the winning car. On a positive note, the tires still worked very well on the second stint. But we were running cars #1 and #2 with more downforce, which helps here. We learned a lot, also with car #3.”

Lucas di Grassi (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #1): “A big thank you to the mechanics and the team that prepared two new cars for us before the race. We gave our best

today and squeezed out every tiny bit. Today we drove with the WEC aerodynamics, which helped us change the tires only at every second pit stop. Everybody did an outstanding job, but we're going to have to improve some more in order to be in contention at Le Mans."

Loïc Duval (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #1): "This was the best we could achieve today. The start was good, just like the team performance and the strategy. The car felt fantastic but we weren't fast enough. We need to continue to work hard. The race at Le Mans has a unique character. The number of pit stops will play a role too."

Tom Kristensen (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #1): "With a very good team performance we achieved second place although we're not on a par in terms of acceleration and top speed. But we didn't give up. The mechanics, the engineers and all the other team members can be proud. Lucas di Grassi, Loïc Duval and I managed to drive a nice race. Fortune played a bit of a role in this second place, but so did plenty of ambition. I do not see us as the favorites at Le Mans this year."

Marcel Fässler (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #2): "It was a difficult race because we had a few technical issues. For us, it was a bit disappointing that we couldn't quite keep the pace. We battled and our squad gave everything. It was certainly not a lack of commitment. There's a lot to be analyzed. After Silverstone, it was important to finish the race. It's clear that now we've got to improve some more."

André Lotterer (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #2): "'Well done' to car #1 because second place is positive for Audi. Unfortunately, for us, it wasn't the optimal race. I had problems with the lap signal, which also impaired the hybrid performance. And then, to make things worse, there was the pressure loss in the tire. That's why we lost a lot of ground and tried to make the best of it. More than fifth place wasn't possible but our motivation remains very high."

Benoît Tréluyer (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #2): "It was a tough race for us. We had to cope with a few setbacks. The team did a very good job. I've never seen a repair being done so fast. We lost almost no time. I congratulate this squad that has already had so much hard work to do after Silverstone. It wasn't our weekend. We learned a lot and that's good for Le Mans."

Filipe Albuquerque (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #3): "It was a good debut for car #3 and for me. I made no mistakes and we initially followed our team-mates. We learned a lot here for Le Mans. That was our main goal. I'm pleased with the race. It was great fun. Marco and I squeezed the maximum out of the car."



Marco Bonanomi (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #3): “It’s a great feeling to be back in a racing situation, to be battling for positions and to give everything on every lap. I’m happy with that. But the result isn’t what we aimed for. We knew before the start that our package differs from those of the others. We learned a lot and improved since the qualifying session. We’re looking ahead to Le Mans with a positive spirit and are ready to battle on the same level as the others.”

Race results

- 1 Buemi/Davidson/Lapierre (Toyota) 171 laps in 6h 01m 31.675s
- 2 Di Grassi/Duval/Kristensen (Audi R18 e-tron quattro) + 1m 13.926s
- 3 Nakajima/Sarrazin/Wurz (Toyota) + 1m 20.861s
- 4 Dumas/Jani/Lieb (Porsche) – 1 lap
- 5 Fässler/Lotterer/Tréluyer (Audi R18 e-tron quattro) – 1 lap
- 6 Albuquerque/Bonanomi (Audi R18 e-tron quattro) – 2 laps
- 7 Beche/Heidfeld/Prost (Rebellion-Toyota) – 10 laps
- 8 Canal/Pla/Rusinov (Morgan-Nissan) – 11 laps
- 9 Dolan/Gené/Tincknell (Zytek-Nissan) – 11 laps
- 10 Bradley/Howson/Imperatori (Oreca-Nissan) – 12 laps

– End –

The Audi Group delivered approximately 1,575,500 cars of the Audi brand to customers in 2013. In 2013 the company reported revenue of €49.9 billion and an operating profit of €5.03 billion. The company is globally operating in more than 100 markets with production facilities in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Brussels (Belgium), Bratislava (Slovakia), Martorell (Spain), Kaluga (Russia), Aurangabad (India), Changchun (China) and Jakarta (Indonesia). Since December 2013, the brand with the Four Rings has been producing cars also in Foshan (China). In 2015, Audi will start production in São José dos Pinhais (Brazil), followed by San José Chiapa (Mexico) in 2016. Wholly owned subsidiaries of AUDI AG include quattro GmbH (Neckarsulm), Automobili Lamborghini S.p.A. (Sant’Agata Bolognese, Italy) and Ducati Motor Holding S.p.A. (Bologna, Italy), the sports motorcycle manufacturer. The company currently employs more than 73,500 people worldwide, thereof more than 52,500 in Germany. Total investment of around €22 billion is planned from 2014 to 2018 – primarily in new products and sustainable technologies. Audi is committed to its corporate responsibility and has anchored the principle of sustainability for its products and processes in its strategy. The long-term goal is CO₂-neutral mobility.