

## Communications Motorsport

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## **Audi at 24-hour race on the Nürburgring with impressive lineup of stars**

- **Biela, Stuck, Ekström, Scheider & company compete for Audi**
- **Nordschleife commitment honors brand's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary**
- **Ultimate endurance test for Audi's new GT3 sports car**

**Ingolstadt/Nürburg – Just a few days after the successful DTM season opener, the next major motorsport event is on the agenda for Audi: The 24-hour race on the Nürburgring next weekend will be the ultimate endurance test for the new Audi R8 LMS which has been developed for the customer sport before customer deliveries start this fall – and a gift to fans on the occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Audi brand.**

A total of four of the fascinating GT3 sports cars will start from the grid with factory support by Audi. The two race teams, ABT Sportsline and Phoenix Racing, managed putting together a high-caliber drivers' lineup. The 14 successful endurance race drivers sharing the cockpits have as many as 27 overall wins at 24-hour races around the world to their credit between them. Five of them (Lucas Luhr, Emanuele Pirro, Mike Rockenfeller, Timo Scheider and Hans-Joachim Stuck) have also won the 24-hour race on the Nürburgring at least once.

The two teams are familiar with the endurance classic on the notorious Nürburgring-Nordschleife as well. ABT Sportsline already clinched podium results with vehicles of the Audi brand. Team Phoenix Racing, which just celebrated its tenth anniversary, won its first race at the Nürburgring in 2000 right away and celebrated another triumph at the 24-hour race in 2003. For Ernst Moser's squad based in the industrial park of Meuspath, directly alongside the Nordschleife, the 24-hour race is really a home round.



Audi provides factory support for a fielding of cars at this extremely tough race for the first time again since 2004. Then, the ABT Sportsline team contested the event with two modified Abt-Audi TT-R cars from the DTM. This time, the race car is a thorough-bred sports car with a V10 engine delivering almost 500 hp that has successfully been used in initial races. On the first weekend in May, ABT Sportsline and Phoenix Racing clinched maiden victories of the Audi R8 LMS at Assen and Spa-Francorchamps. In test races on the Nordschleife, podium results were achieved.

The Nürburgring event serves to provide the R8 LMS with its definitive technical fine-tuning. But Audi also wants to present a gift to fans on the occasion of the brand's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and thrill the expected crowd of some 200,000 spectators with distinguished drivers from Audi's successful motorsport history. Frank Biela, Hans-Joachim Stuck and Emanuele Pirro are part of the lineup as well as the two DTM Champions Mattias Ekström and Timo Scheider, who – fitting the anniversary year – will take the wheel of an Audi R8 LMS marked as car number 100.

Most of the drivers and team members already traveled to the Nürburgring at the beginning of the week. A motorcade around the Nordschleife on Wednesday night will be the first highlight. Practice will start on Thursday. The race will start on Saturday at 4 pm. DSF will broadcast a total of about 14 hours of live coverage from the Nürburgring.

### **Quotes before the 24-hour race on the Nürburgring**

**Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport):** "The 24 hours on the Nürburgring are the ultimate endurance test for our new R8 LMS customer sport project. We know that this circuit is particularly demanding and that it's really one of the toughest races in existence. We'll go there with our partner teams to give the R8 LMS its definitive fine-tuning before delivering larger volumes of the car to our customers next year. For me, personally, this will be the first 24-hour race on the Nürburgring. I'm very excited about it."

**Christian Abt (Audi R8 LMS #97/Team ABT Sportsline):** "I still have some unfinished business with the 24 hours Nürburgring: In 1997, 2003 and 2006, I finished as the runner-up. We worked very hard together to prepare for the race. The Audi R8 LMS is an excellent car which, despite being close to the road-going

version, is at least at the level of a DTM car from 2002 or 2003. Our most recent win at the ADAC GT Masters at Assen was a nice feeling. The fans around the Nordschleife are enthralled with such a car.”

**Jean-François Hemroulle (Audi R8 LMS #97/Team ABT Sportsline):** “I’m contesting the Belgian GT Championship with the R8 LMS and have come to really appreciate the car on the Nordschleife as well. It’s easy to drive and very pleasant – better than any other car I’ve previously driven on the Nordschleife. In addition, I get along very well with my teammates. It’s a congenial atmosphere.”

**Pierre Kaffer (Audi R8 LMS #97/Team ABT Sportsline):** “I’m looking forward to my run in the Audi R8 LMS at the 24-hour race on the Nürburgring with extremely eager anticipation. As everyone knows, the Nordschleife is my home track as well as my most favorite one. In addition, I love endurance races. I won the GT2 class at the 12 hours of Sebring just in March. A top-caliber team and a super sports car provide the best prerequisites for a successful race at the Nürburgring.”

**Lucas Luhr (Audi R8 LMS #97/Team ABT Sportsline):** “I’ve got only the fondest – and also the funniest – memories of the 24 hours Nürburgring, at least since our victory in 2006. A fan once towed us over a country road at pretty high speed after we broke down at a remote area of the track. The Audi R8 LMS, in which we’re contesting the race this year, is a lot of fun, especially on the Nordschleife, where it feels even better than on the Grand Prix circuit of the Nürburgring. I’m really looking forward to the 24-hour races this season. Only three weeks later, Le Mans will be on my agenda.”

**Frank Biela (Audi R8 LMS #98/Phoenix Racing):** “Even after five Le Mans victories, the 24-hour race on the Nürburgring is something really special for me. The reason is the Nordschleife, which is simply always a challenge and real fun – no matter how often you’ve driven there. No matter how old you are. No matter what car you’re driving. For me, the race is also a sort of home round because I started racing at Zolder and on the Nürburgring, and I come from Neuss: I always meet a lot of people up there whom I’ve known for a long time.”

**Marcel Fässler (Audi R8 LMS #98/Phoenix Racing):** “I’m really happy to be competing for Phoenix Racing again – and also really look forward to the 24-hour race on the Nürburgring. Driving on this track is a very special challenge. I already won the 24-hour race at Spa. Spa-Francorchamps is a fascinating track

as well but the Nordschleife is even more intensive. In addition, there are many different vehicle categories. That makes this race unique. I think the 24-hour race on the Nürburgring is one of the toughest in the world – if not the toughest of all.”

**Emanuele Pirro (Audi R8 LMS #98/Phoenix Racing):** “I remember my victory in 1989 well, but don’t remember the track that well, so I had to learn it again. 20 years ago, the race seemed like traveling back in time. You really had to take big risks as a driver. Since then, a lot has changed, both in terms of safety on the track and for the cars. I really look forward to the race – particularly to being able to drive together with my old friends Frank (Biela) and Hans (Stuck).”

**Hans-Joachim Stuck (Audi R8 LMS #98/Phoenix Racing):** “In 1970, I won the first 24-hour race on the Nürburgring. While browsing through Audi’s media booklet, I noticed that eight of my current driver colleagues had not even been born then! Although I’ve contested as many as 60 single 24-hour races, there’s always something new: The start next weekend will be my first with Audi at a 24-hour race. I’m really looking forward to that.”

**Marc Basseng (Audi R8 LMS #99/Phoenix Racing):** “The Nordschleife has become near and dear to my heart because I’ve been contesting the endurance championship for many years and have celebrated a number of nice exploits there. On this track, it’s crucial to have a reliable car and to consistently drive at a good pace. Our race car recently proved its viability, from the first functional test through to the finish of the four-hour race – that wasn’t a bad start. I’m proud to be able to contest the 24-hour race with Phoenix and Audi.”

**Mike Rockenfeller (Audi R8 LMS #99/Phoenix Racing):** “I won the 24-hour race in 2006 and just recently contested an endurance race on the Nordschleife again. That was fun and we finished as the runners-up. But we’re in for 24 hours on the most demanding track of all. A lot can happen there. The car has only been in existence for a short time but already has a very good base. It’s difficult to make a prediction. In any event, all of us are highly motivated.”

**Frank Stippler (Audi R8 LMS #99/Phoenix Racing):** “This race will be my highlight of the season for which I worked for a whole year. I was involved in the testing and development program of the R8 LMS. And now I’m able to compete at my home round. For me, this is the toughest race in the world because no

other 24-hour race is staged on such an extreme circuit with bumps, hilltops, differences in elevations, and a track length of 24 kilometers.”

**Mattias Ekström (Audi R8 LMS #100/Team ABT Sportsline):** “I’ve contested the 24-hour race on the Nürburgring in completely different cars. In 2001, I drove a car that was actually a Group N rally car. We finished sixth. In 2003 and 2004, I started from the grid in an Abt-Audi TT-R. Now, I’m returning in an Audi R8 LMS, which is a thorough-bred sports car. The Nordschleife is a sensational natural track, which resembles a special stage of a rally.”

**Timo Scheider (Audi R8 LMS #100/Team ABT Sportsline):** “I’m happy to be able to – finally – contest the 24 hours in a top-caliber car again, after our 2003 overall win. The Audi R8 LMS is a very special car that was already a lot of fun during the preparation stage. I really look forward to competing in front of about 200,000 fans on the Nürburgring. I’m hoping for a nice week because I’ve already been on location since Monday night.”

**Marco Werner (Audi R8 LMS #100/Team ABT Sportsline):** “It would be nice to win another 24-hour race after Daytona and Le Mans. I’ve got special ties to the Nordschleife because I grew up on it and contested my first race there in the endurance cup, which I managed winning right away too. So, in that respect, the loop is now closing for me. After a long period of not racing in Germany, I’m happy to be competing again at the Nürburgring.”

**Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Director Team ABT Sportsline):** “We’ve participated in the 24-hour race on several occasions. So far, we’ve clinched second places in these events. Now, we may have the chance to claim victory. The prerequisites are good. We’ve got highly experienced, fast drivers, and are extremely well set. Of course it’s also clear that we’ve got a new car that we know is fast. But it will be equally crucial to drive throughout the race without any problems. You’ve got to be consistently fast and need a good strategy. Of course, there’s a sound competition between ABT and Phoenix. But the important thing will be for the R8 to deliver a positive performance. That’s why the project has factory backing. We’ll jointly try and clinch the best result for the Audi R8 product.”

**Ernst Moser (Team Director Phoenix Racing):** “The final tests showed that we’ve managed reducing the gap to the favored Porsches and improved our reliability. If we consistently drive without any problems, we’ve got chances of

being among the top finishers. We didn't have a lot of time to prepare but made the best possible use of it. To win one of my favorite races with Audi after ten years of Phoenix Racing would be a dream. But we've got strong rivals, in our own camp as well. ABT and we are both racers, and both of us want to win. But we worked together extremely well before the race and will continue to do so. In the race, the team that makes the fewest mistakes will be the front runner."

### Facts and figures

The **24-hour race Nürburgring** will be staged for the **37<sup>th</sup>** time this year ... Hans-Joachim **Stuck** was part of the **winning team** at the race's first edition in **1970** ... The **combination** of the **Grand Prix circuit** and the Nordschleife is **25.378** kilometers long; it has **33 left-** and **40 right-hand turns** ... Last year, **220,000** spectators witnessed the **24-hour race** ... Some **180 vehicles** have been nominated for the race ... **Audi** has been providing the **official vehicles** for the 24-hour race **since 2002** ... One of the four **Audi R8 LMS** cars promotes the 24 Hours of Le Mans, which take place on June 13/14. For the two 24-hour races, a combination ticket is available.

### The 24-hour race schedule

#### Wednesday, May 20

18:30 hrs                      Participants' motorcade around the Nordschleife

#### Thursday, May 21

10:00 – 11:00 hrs              Meet the Audi teams (Audi Team & Media Hospitality)  
13:30 – 15:00 hrs              Free practice  
16:00 hrs                        Preview press conference (Media Center)  
19:30 – 23:30 hrs              Qualifying 1

#### Friday, May 22

10:30 – 11:30 hrs              Meet the Audi teams (Audi Team & Media Hospitality)  
14:00 – 16:00 hrs              Qualifying 2  
16:30 hrs                        Pole position press conference (Media Center)

#### Saturday, May 23

09:30 – 10:00 hrs              Book presentation "10 Years of Phoenix Racing"  
(Audi Team & Media Hospitality)

14:30 – 15:20 hrs Starting grid formation  
16:00 hrs Start

**Sunday, May 24**

16:00 hrs Finish  
16:30 hrs Winners' press conference (Media Center)

**TV broadcasting schedule (DSF)**

**Thursday, May 21**

15:35 – 16:00 hrs Free practice live  
19:45 – 21:15 hrs 1st qualifying live  
22:15 – 23:30 hrs 1st qualifying live

**Friday, May 22**

14:00 – 16:30 hrs 2nd qualifying live  
22:00 – 22:45 hrs Preview reports

**Saturday, May 23**

15:00 – 17:30 hrs Start live  
20:30 – 22:00 hrs Race live

**Sunday, May 24**

00:00 – 00:30 hrs Race live  
07:00 – 09:15 hrs Race live  
13:30 – 16:30 hrs Race, finish and podium ceremony live

- Ends -

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