

Long Beach, 13 April 2007

Motorsport

Audi claim good grid positions in Long Beach

- **Dindo Capello quickest in the LM P1 class**
- **Audi drivers net positions four and six on the grid**
- **Tight qualifying on the Long Beach street# circuit**

The two Audi R10 TDI sportscars start the third round of the American Le Mans Series in Long Beach (US state of California) as fastest LM P1 prototypes from the second and the third rows of the grid. In qualifying on Friday, Dindo Capello drove his 650 hp Audi R10 TDI to the fourth fastest time behind three lighter LM P2 sports cars. In sunny and warm conditions, Emanuele Pirro in the “sister” Audi was second in the LM P1 category and sixth overall. He was only 0.067 seconds behind fifth place.

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After the double win of the Audi R10 TDI in the city race in St. Petersburg two weeks ago, the race on the former Formula One track in California is the second street race in succession. In the first appearance of the American Le Mans Series in Long Beach, the preparation for the drivers and technicians was very difficult. For all four Audi drivers, the challenging track in the harbour area of Long Beach was a new challenge with only a 45 minute practice session before qualifying. With a length of 1:40 hours, Saturday’s race is the shortest in the history of the ALMS.

The race in Long Beach starts on Saturday at 4:00 p.m. local time (01:00 p.m. in Germany).

Quotes after qualifying

Dindo Capello (Audi R10 TDI #1): “At the start of qualifying our Audi was really good but the tyre performance dropped off as the session progressed making it impossible to improve on my best time. As in the previous street race at St Petersburg, the LM P2 cars showed they are faster than an LM P1 car on this type of track. I believe we’ll struggle in the race to keep up with their pace.”

Allan McNish (Audi R10 TDI #1): “A big factor is that it’s a totally new circuit to everyone in the team and to only have 45 minutes practise before qualifying was tough but it was the same for the majority of our rivals. With the Audi R10 TDI we quickly found a good base set-up and then made minor adjustments. Dindo got the best out of the R10 TDI in qualifying.”

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Emanuele Pirro (Audi R10 TDI #2): “It has been a very competitive qualifying. With the tyres you could do more than one quick lap, so it was a case of staying out and trying to find the perfect lap. We are still missing a little speed compared to the top 3 cars. But I think we are looking good for the race. I am satisfied with my performance but not particularly my position. As we saw in St. Petersburg, we should improve in the race.”

Marco Werner (Audi R10 TDI #2): “I expect a tough race because the times in qualifying were close. Due to their lower weight, I think the LM P2 cars have a small advantage in the training but I hope that it will look different in the race. Emanuele drove a lot in the free practise so we decided to make a driver change in qualifying which is unusual. That allowed me to learn the track a little more.”

Dave Maraj (Team Director Audi Sport North America): “Qualifying confirmed that once again on a street circuit, the LM P2 cars are going to make it very tough for us in the race for outright honours. The drivers will have to work the traffic hard. The team must come up with a very good race strategy in this unusually short race. The tight hairpin is ‘hurting’ our lap times but we relish the challenge.”

The starting grid in Long Beach

- 1 Herta/Franchitti (Acura/Honda) 1m 11.838s
- 2 Maassen/Briscoe (Porsche) 1m 12.144s
- 3 Bernhard/Dumas (Porsche) 1m 12.247s
- 4 Capello/McNish (Audi R10 TDI) 1m 12.713s (1st LM P1)
- 5 Brabham/Johansson/Dayton (Acura/Honda) 1m 12.844s
- 6 Pirro/Werner (Audi R10 TDI) 1m 12.911s (2nd LM P1)
- 7 Fernandez/Diaz (Lola-Acura/Honda) 1m 13.148s
- 8 Wallace/Leitzinger (Porsche) 1m 13.417s
- 9 Dyson/Smith (Porsche) 1m 14.006s
- 10 Lewis/McMurry (Lola) 1m 17.158s

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