

Communications Motorsport

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Audi concentrates on race preparations

- **First Qualifying for Le Mans 24 Hours**
- **Audi R10 TDI provisionally 4th, 5th and 6th on the grid**
- **Tyre testing and good set-up more important than lap times**

Ingolstadt/Le Mans – Audi Sport Team Joest concentrated fully on race preparations during the first qualifying session for this weekend's Le Mans 24 Hours (start on Saturday at 3 p.m.). The three Audi R10 TDI prototypes are fourth, fifth and sixth on the provisional starting grid.

As it was raining during the official test day at Le Mans and similar weather is also predicted for Thursday's second qualifying session, last year's winners decided not to go out for the fastest lap times with a special qualifying set-up. Instead, the Audi team worked intensively on the set-up and the aerodynamics and tested various tyre specifications for the race. In addition, all nine Audi drivers completed their mandatory laps in darkness.

The fastest time (3m 24.105s) was set by Allan McNish in the Audi R10 TDI with start number 2 shortly after 10 p.m. Mike Rockenfeller was just 182 thousandths of a second slower in the number 3 R10 TDI. The fastest lap at the wheel of the number 1 R10 TDI was recorded by Marco Werner.

Technically, there were no significant problems on Wednesday. The sole incident was a slight contact by Mike Rockenfeller with a LM P2 car in the first chicane, which apart from a spin had no further consequences.



For the second qualifying session on Thursday evening, the three Audi R10 TDI prototypes will already be fitted with their race engines.

Quotes after first Qualifying

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): "Today we were certain it would stay dry, so we focused on working out a good set-up. Despite some red flags we completed a comprehensive programme with all three cars and found a good set-up for all three cars. If it is not dry tomorrow, at least we are sorted out from this side."

Dindo Capello (Audi R10 TDI #2): "It is impressive how fast the times have become at Le Mans. We are happy about the work we have done. We didn't go at all for a good lap time in qualifying because we knew anyway that it would have been not really possible for us to fight for pole position. We just concentrated on setting up our car for the race and make it as easy to drive as we could. We don't have to forget that this is the longest race in the world. One fast lap does not count but to be consistent in the race."

Tom Kristensen (Audi R10 TDI #2): "It was great to have a dry qualifying. The average speed was almost 250kph which is obviously very impressive. I know what we have to do and that's what we keep working at. We know what the car can do and obviously we are just making sure that we do the 24 hours without any issues. That is our target and we have seen before that we can beat faster competition. So that remains our target here."

Allan McNish (Audi R10 TDI #2): "Tonight was the same picture we've had in the LMS this season where Peugeot are faster over one lap – but I have to congratulate them with that mighty impressive lap time. It was clear we could not fight them in qualifying so we focussed very much on race set-up during the sessions. In race trim we'll be much closer to our qualifying pace. I was pleased with the balance of our car which improved as the circuit's grip level increased. We got a good feeling on full tanks too. The second row of the grid was the best we could have hoped for."



Lucas Luhr (Audi R10 TDI #3): "Now it's getting really exciting. The whole team has worked so hard during the last months and now the race is coming closer and closer. As we saw today we are facing very strong competitors, but this we already knew before. We focused on our set-up for the race and are looking good so far. Everything else we will see – latest on Sunday at 3 p.m."

Alexandre Prémat (Audi R10 TDI #3): "I am very happy about today. Unfortunately the gap to our competitors is quite big at the moment but this we will try to sort out during the race. I feel very confident in the Audi R10 TDI during daylight and also in the night. Everything with the team, the engineers, the mechanics as well as with Mike (Rockenfeller) and Lucas (Luhr) is going on very well which makes me optimistic for the challenges to come."

Mike Rockenfeller (Audi R10 TDI #3): "It's nice that we could finally get into the car since we are already here at Le Mans since Monday. It's always something special when you drive out of the pits in the night. I'm quite happy with the elements we worked out today. I think we are well sorted out for the race day – and that's what it was all about today."

Frank Biela (Audi R10 TDI #1): "We knew that Peugeot would be quicker. That's why we've focused on the race set-up right from the beginning which is what we did consequently. The car felt good. Marco (Werner) has made some more changes on the car. I hope it was a step in the right direction."

Emanuele Pirro (Audi R10 TDI #1): "We have done some work which we haven't been able to do in the pre-test owing to the bad weather. It was quite a good day. The car's set-up has been sorted out to 80 per cent already. We only need to look at a few details. I'm reasonably happy."

Marco Werner (Audi R10 TDI #1): "I didn't do that many laps. Actually, I only clocked up miles in the dark after having done my mandatory laps previously. However, red flags prevented me from doing consistent times although the sector times have been quite okay. At the end, we've tried something that was rather

negative. I flat-spotted one tyre. Therafter, we wanted to try something again, but then there had been another red flag. So we can't draw that many conclusions."

Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Team Joest): "We ran through our programme. The weather was good. We had no problems. So everything is fine. The competition is as fast as we expected and feared. They did exactly the times which we expected after the test day. The second part of qualifying showed how it might look like in the race: In race conditions the times were very close together. We did, as usual, not care about qualifying, did only very limited runs with new tyres and always ran with a lot of fuel. As usual we concentrated on the race set-up. And I think we are well sorted out."

Results Qualifying 1

- 1 Lamy/Sarrazin/Wurz (Peugeot 908) 3m 18.513s
- 2 Montagny/Zonta/Klien (Peugeot 908) 3m 18.682s
- 3 Gené/Minassian/Villeneuve (Peugeot 908) 3m 20.451s
- 4 Capello/Kristensen/McNish (Audi R10 TDI) 3m 24.105s
- 5 Luhr/Prémat/Rockenfeller (Audi R10 TDI) 3m 24.287s
- 6 Biela/Pirro/Werner (Audi R10 TDI) 3m 27.580s
- 7 Collard/Boullion/Dumas (Pescarolo-Judd) 3m 28.533s
- 8 Ito/Tachikawa/Kataoka (Dome-Judd) 3m 29.352s
- 9 Ayari/Duval/Groppi (Courage-Oreca-Judd) 3m 30.490s
- 10 Primat/Tinseau/Treluyer (Pescarolo-Judd) 3m 30.618s

Note for editors:

On Thursday (3:30 to 4:30 p.m.) all nine Audi "factory" drivers and key personnel from Audi Sport and the team will be available for interviews at the Audi Team and Media Hospitality in the paddock of Le Mans. The Audi press conference will begin on Friday at 2 p.m. in the Audi Racing Arena at the "Parc du Raccordement" and will be broadcast live on the Internet at www.audi.de/tv (German) and www.audi.com/tv (English).

Photographs and information can be obtained at 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.