

Ingolstadt, 06 August 2007

Motorsport

Audi driver Emanuele Pirro about Road America

- **Fastest track on American Le Mans Series calendar**
- **Audi unbeaten to date at Road America**
- **“Kink” is ultimate challenge for the drivers**

Road America (Wisconsin state) plays host to the American Le Mans Series on 11 August. Audi is unbeaten to date on the 6.515 kilometre (4.048 miles) circuit. Last year's winner Emanuele Pirro (Italy) talks about the fastest circuit of the season with its average lap speed of approximately 215 kph.

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The previous circuits were very difficult for the Audi R10 TDI. Are you looking forward to Road America?

“It's great knowing that we'll be driving on a fast circuit again, which suits our Audi R10 TDI a little more. We'll have less of a disadvantage compared to 150 kilogram lighter LM P2 cars at Road America. However, the fundamental problem remains until such time as the regulations change, which is expected to be in 2008.”

Do you like the Road America track?

“In my opinion, Road America is the most picturesque circuit in the United States and the best circuit on the American Le Mans Series calendar. It suits our car and is very pleasurable to drive. I can hardly wait to drive there.”

What are the key points at Road America?

“Road America is a driver's circuit. It is very long and one of the most varied circuits that I know: There are slow corners, very quick corners, long straights and it runs uphill and downhill. At Road America you also need a car with plenty of downforce and good engine performance. However, you also need an agile car in some sections, which is where we'll really notice the weight difference we have to the lighter LM P2 cars.”

For you as a driver, which section is the most spectacular?

“Unfortunately, it is the only point on the circuit where spectator access is prohibited because it would be too dangerous: the ‘Kink’ on the back straight. It’s one of the most exhilarating corners that I know. You can take it flat out when everything is right. It actually has very little influence on the lap time if you lift off a little. But it’s a unique feeling to stay on the gas. It’s a shame that the spectators see nothing of it. So, it’s merely a private thing for us drivers.”

What is your fondest memory of Road America?

“In 2002, I had a fantastic duel throughout a complete stint with Tom Kristensen. I was able to overtake him around the outside under-braking at the end of the back straight. We drove side-by-side through the following two corners. It was on the limit, but a fantastic experience.”

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