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Motorsport

Audi DTM stars ready for Le Mans debut in R10 TDI

- **Official test day prior to 24 Hours of Le Mans**
- **First Le Mans laps for Ekström & Co.**
- **All three Audi R10 TDIs in action on Sunday**

Audi DTM stars Mattias Ekström, Lucas Luhr, Alexandre Prémat and Mike Rockenfeller get the chance to complete their first laps in the Audi R10 TDI around the legendary Le Mans race track this coming Sunday. The official test day hosted by the Automobile Club de l'Ouest (ACO) is the only test opportunity of the year on the 13.650 kilometre "Circuit des 24 Heures" and is therefore a particularly important component of the preparations for the season highlight on 16/17 June.

Audi Sport Team Joest runs all three Audi R10 TDI cars, competing in this year's 24-hour race, which are, in part, equipped with additional data logging equipment, on Sunday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. "The lap times are not of primary importance," explains Head of Audi Motorsport Dr Wolfgang Ullrich. "It's all about making the most of the eight hours available to us, to collect as much data as possible and to find a good base set-up. Our new drivers also get the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the peculiarities of the circuit at the wheel of the R10 TDI."

Alexandre Prémat (25) and Mattias Ekström (28) drive at race pace for the first time around the famous circuit, which runs, in part, along roads usually reserved for public vehicles. "I borrowed some in-car video footage and studied the circuit last weekend," explains Mattias Ekström, DTM Champion from 2004 and winner of the Race of Champions in Paris last December. "I'm already very intrigued as to just how the circuit feels."

Alexandre Prémat fulfils a dream with his entry at Le Mans in the Audi R10 TDI. "Le Mans is the world's greatest race for me," says the Frenchman. "I

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was determined to be able to race there and I'm more than happy that I got this chance from Audi."

Lucas Luhr (27) and Mike Rockenfeller (23) also start for the first time in an LM P1 Sportscar at Le Mans. However, both already know the circuit from previous outings in GT cars. Luhr has celebrated two class wins to date, and "Rocky" won once. "We can fight for overall victory at Le Mans with Audi," say the two Germans. "This was one of the reasons why we came to Audi."

Audi Sport Team Joest practiced pit-stops with the "juniors" and their team mates for two days last week. Since the fuel tank capacity has been reduced from 90 to 81 litres this year, and the refuelling time is correspondingly shorter, the driver change must be completed even quicker. "Refuelling happens so quickly that it is now possible to lose valuable time during a slow driver change," explains Dr Wolfgang Ullrich. "That's why the pit-stop practice, which we traditionally hold before every Le Mans race, is so important this year."

After the pit-stop practice, "Team Building" was on the agenda for the Audi Le Mans drivers: They spent a long Whitsun-weekend in a mountain hut in Austria together with their boss and DTM team mates. "Team spirit is of particular importance at Le Mans," says Dr Ullrich. The goal is ambitious: Audi aims to add TDI Power for a second time to the 24 Hours of Le Mans winners list.

Note to editors:

A PDF version of the 2007 Audi Le Mans MediaInfo booklet is available for download at www.audi-motorsport.info

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