



Press Information

Le Mans / Nürburgring, 12 June 2004, 19:00 hrs

Audi leads Le Mans, weather chaos at Nürburgring

The two 24-hour races held simultaneously at Le Mans and at the Nürburgring, started turbulently for the Audi teams. At the beginning of the Le Mans race, all four Audi A4 were leading the race. Shortly before 6 p.m., however, two of the R8 cars hit oil on the track at the same time, sliding off the track and dropping to the back. At the Nürburgring, changing weather caused extremely difficult conditions from the first lap on. After four hours of racing, the best placed Abt-Audi TT-R was running fifth, staying in touch with the leaders.

At Le Mans, Jamie Davies, starting from pole position with Audi Sport UK Team Veloqx's Audi R8, took the lead at the start in sunny conditions, extending his lead during the first hours. The Briton was running 25 seconds ahead of Allan McNish in Audi Sport UK Team Veloqx's second Audi R8 and JJ Lehto (Team ADT Champion Racing), when those two hit oil almost simultaneously in the fast Porsche curves, sliding off the track and hitting the barriers. "There were no flags, we had no chance," reported Lehto. "It was like on ice, the impact was massive." Both Audi R8 sports cars were repaired and continued in the race.

The Le Mans 24 Hours did not start trouble-free for Audi Sport Japan Team Goh either: Rinaldo Capello spun into the gravel during the first hour, losing about two minutes. Having dropped to 24th position, at 7 p.m. the team had already fought their way back to second place.

The spectators at the Nürburgring witnessed one of the most dramatic early stages in the history of the 24-hour race: Almost every minute weather conditions changed in the Eifel region, making strategy and tyre choice a gamble. Despite that, Mattias Ekström had a great start: The "rain-fan" made up some places in the first corners and briefly moved to second place. "Such conditions I've never experienced before on the Nordschleife," reported Ekström after his one-and-a-half-hour turn.

Throughout the first four hours of the race, Infineon Team Abt Sportsline's two Abt-Audi TT-R remained in the top ten, finding their way through the 220-car strong field without problems. The weather forecast also promises an exciting night: After the rain now fog is predicted.

Editorial notes

We can be contacted on location at Le Mans and at the Nürburgring by E-mail at lemans@audi-motorsport.info and nuerburgring@audi-motorsport.info.

Photographs and further information are available in the Internet:
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