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Audi on “Petit Le Mans” front row

- **Allan McNish misses pole position by just 0.085 seconds**
- **Marco Werner takes third place on the grid for Audi**
- **Audi in with chance of ninth consecutive “Petit” victory**

Ingolstadt/Road Atlanta – Team Audi Sport North America’s two Audi R10 TDI prototypes will go into Saturday’s “Petit Le Mans” race at Road Atlanta (U.S. state of Georgia) from second and third positions on the starting grid. In a more than thrilling qualifying session, Allan McNish lost the battle for pole position by just 0.085 seconds.

Right from the start of the 25-minute session the Le Mans winner was setting the pace. From the first lap the number 1 Audi R10 TDI was topping the timing screens. McNish improved his lap-time to 1m 06.327s on his fourth flying lap, beating the track record from last year by 2.579 seconds.

Peugeot driver Stéphane Sarrazin needed 16 laps to reach McNish’s best time. Five minutes from the end of the qualifying session he narrowly demoted the Scotsman to second on the grid with his last flying lap.

Marco Werner, who had captured the pole position last year at Road Atlanta, needed longer to bring temperature into the front tyres than McNish. He then ran into traffic. Despite that, the German was able to leave all LM P2 cars behind and get the third position on the grid for Audi.

The 11th annual running of the 1,000-mile or maximum 10-hour long “Petit Le Mans” race will start on Saturday at 11:15 a.m. local time (5:15 p.m. in

Germany). Audi is undefeated and has the chance of a ninth consecutive outright "Petit Le Mans" victory on Saturday. Allan McNish will compete together with Dindo Capello and Emanuele Pirro. Lucas Luhr and Marco Werner will tackle the endurance race without a third driver.

Quotes after the qualifying in Road Atlanta

Dindo Capello (Audi R10 TDI #1): "This was a very good job from Allan (McNish). It is a positive surprise that the gap to Peugeot is so close – we did not expect this. The gap was already reduced at the LMS race at Silverstone compared to the previous races, but on this track here it is almost gone. Starting so close to Peugeot is a very good sign for the race."

Allan McNish (Audi R10 TDI #1): "The car was extremely good. We had a good balance and good grip from the tyres after one or two laps. I was able to push very hard and continue to improve. That says that we've got an extremely good race car. We are closer to Peugeot than we have ever been in the LMS Championship. This bodes well for tomorrow because we can always race faster than we can qualify. I think Peugeot will be very aware of that and very nervous right now."

Emanuele Pirro (Audi R10 TDI #1): "So far it has been very good for us. We are very happy with the balance of the car. Allan (McNish) drove very well in qualifying. Above all, yesterday we told each other we don't need another practice session because the car feels really good for the race. I think we are looking good."

Lucas Luhr (Audi R10 TDI #2): "It's no surprise that Peugeot is strong – we've seen that already in Europe. But I'm a little bit surprised how small the gap is. I had expected Peugeot to be much further in front. Marco (Werner) could not use his tyres right in qualifying, that's why we are so far behind Allan (McNish). But we are on the inside of the second row. That's okay. In a 10-hour race, it is not really important where you start from."

Marco Werner (Audi R10 TDI #2): "I'm not quite as happy with my lap time. Last year, I drove a single lap which was good for pole position. This time, it took quite a while until the tyres had really good grip and then I ran into the traffic. But we are looking forward. We have a good race-setup. I think we will look good in the race. "



Dave Maraj (Team Director Audi Sport North America): "This was a very good qualifying effort. This is the closest we have been to Peugeot in qualifying anywhere and much closer than I expected. Good job from Allan (McNish), good job from the team. I am very happy with this performance."

The starting grid at Road Atlanta

- 1 Klien/Minassian/Sarrazin (Peugeot) 1m 06.242s (1st in LM P1)
- 2 Capello/McNish/Pirro (Audi R10 TDI) 1m 06.327s (2nd in LM P1)
- 3 Luhr/Werner (Audi R10 TDI) 1m 06.818s (3rd in LM P1)
- 4 Castroneves/Briscoe (Porsche) 1m 07.061s
- 5 Dumas/Bernhard (Porsche) 1m 07.149s
- 6 Maassen/Long/Collard (Porsche) 1m 07.401s
- 7 Montagny/Kanaan/Andretti (Acura/Honda) 1m 07.486s
- 8 de Ferran/Pagenaud/Dixon (Acura/Honda) 1m 07.656s
- 9 Watts/Pla (Zytek) 1m 07.660s (4th in LM P1)
- 10 Field/Field/Berry (Lola-AER) 1m 07.784s (5th in LM P1)

- Ends -

Photographs and information available 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 57,000 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 to 40.