

Communications Motorsport

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June 12, 2009

Audi R15 TDI on front row for Le Mans début

- **Allan McNish claims second on the grid for Audi**
- **All three Audi R15 TDI on first four rows**
- **Audi Sport Team Joest uses qualifying to prepare for race**

Ingolstadt/Le Mans – Although Audi Sport Team Joest concentrated exclusively on preparing for the race throughout qualifying for the 77th running of the 24 Hours of Le Mans, one of the three Audi R15 TDI starts from the front row for the French endurance classic on Saturday at 3:00 p.m.

After it rained during free practice on Wednesday, the Audi team used Thursday evening's qualifying solely for car set-up and tire testing. During the four hour session last year's winners Dindo Capello (Italy), Tom Kristensen (Denmark) and Allan McNish (Scotland) completed a quadruple stint on a single set of Michelin tires in the Audi R15 TDI with the start number "1" and thus collected important findings about tire wear.

Only in the dying seconds towards the end of the first part of qualifying did Allan McNish make an attempt on fresh tires. In doing so he recorded a 3m 23.650s lap which proved to be almost unbreakable for the competition for the majority of the second qualifying session. Only after several attempts on fresh tires did Stéphane Sarrazin, in the fastest Peugeot, manage to eclipse the time set by McNish by 0.762 seconds just twelve minutes before the end of qualifying.

"For us, today was all about finding the optimum race set-up and to collect as much data as possible with our new car around the Le Mans race track," explained Head of Audi Motorsport Dr Wolfgang Ullrich. "The grid positions for a 24-hour race do not directly affect the final result. That Allan (McNish) managed

to secure a position on the front row while working through the program demonstrates just how much potential the R15 TDI has.”

Lucas Luhr, Mike Rockenfeller and Marco Werner also only undertook a single qualifying attempt. Around midnight Marco Werner posted a time of 3m 25.780s which secured sixth place on the grid for the Audi R15 TDI with the start number “2”.

The three Germans were assigned the task of comparing different aerodynamic configurations in the first part of qualifying. For this purpose their Audi R15 TDI was equipped with special data-logging suspension, which was changed as scheduled between the two qualifying sessions. Since the break was reduced from 60 to 35 minutes because the schedule was changed at short notice, Luhr Rockenfeller and Werner could only continue qualifying later. Changing a turbocharger cost further time.

The third Audi team with German Timo Bernhard and the two Frenchmen Romain Dumas and Alexandre Pr  mat made no qualifying attempt whatsoever. They concentrated on tire tests and will start the race on Saturday from seventh on the grid. Alexandre Pr  mat set the fastest time of 3m 27.106 s immediately at the beginning of qualifying.

The fastest ten cars on Thursday evening were all within about five seconds – this much time separated the fastest Peugeot from the quickest Audi in qualifying last year. This time the difference around the 13.629-kilometer track is less than one second.

The two Audi R10 TDI fielded by the privateer team Kolles qualified in 13th and 14th positions.

This weekend Audi has the chance of taking a ninth overall victory in the 24 Hours of Le Mans and to draw level with Ferrari in the race’s all time winners list.

The starting grid at Le Mans

- 1 Sarrazin/Montagny/Bourdais (Peugeot) 3m 22.888s
- 2 Capello/Kristensen/McNish (Audi R15 TDI) + 0.762s
- 3 Minassian/Lamy/Klien (Peugeot) + 1.972s
- 4 Boullion/Pagenaud/Treluyer (Peugeot) + 2.174s
- 5 Gene/Wurz/Brabham (Peugeot) + 2.364s
- 6 Luhr/Rockenfeller/Werner (Audi R15 TDI) + 2.892s
- 7 Bernhard/Dumas/Premat (Audi R15 TDI) + 4.218s
- 8 Charouz/Enge/Mücke (Aston Martin) + 4.292s
- 9 Davidson/Turner/Verstappen (Aston Martin) + 4.816s
- 10 Belicchi/Jani/Prost (Aston Martin) + 5.246s
- ...
- 13 Albers/Bakkerud/Mondini (Audi R10 TDI) + 8.304s
- 14 Karthikeyan/Lotterer/Zwolsman (Audi R10 TDI) + 8.660s

- Ends -

Photographs and information available at www.audi-motorsport.info

AUDI AG sold a total of 1,003,469 cars in 2008 and thus achieved its 13th consecutive record year. The Company posted new record figures with revenue of €34.2 billion and profit before tax of €3.2 billion. Audi produces vehicles in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Changchun (China) and Brussels (Belgium). Aurangabad in India saw the start of CKD production of the Audi A6 at the end of 2007 and of the Audi A4 in early October 2008. 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 currently employs around 58,000 people worldwide, including 46,500 in Germany. The brand with the four rings invests around €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 42. The AUDI brand celebrates its 100th birthday in 2009. The company was founded by August Horch in Zwickau on July 16, 1909; he named it AUDI after the Latin translation of his surname ("hark!").