



Press Information

Nürburgring, 3 July 2004

Audi R8 cars starting from the first two rows

After an exciting final qualifying session at the revival of the Nürburgring 1000-kilometre race, the three Audi R8 sports cars will start from the first two rows of the grid. Fastest Audi driver in final qualifying was Pierre Kaffer who lives at Burgbrohl close to the Nürburgring. The Audi works driver set a fastest time of 1m 46.779s initially putting him at the front of the 41-car strong field and making him hope for his first ever pole position in the Audi R8. A few minutes from the end of the session, however, he was relegated to second position by a mere 98 thousandths of a second. The two other Audi R8 prototypes start from the second row of the grid. The race is set to start at 4 p.m. local time and should last about six hours.

Quotes after qualifying

Pierre Kaffer (Audi Sport UK Team Veloqx / Audi R8 #8): "I am very happy. It was my aim to start from the front row, and we achieved this. In the LMES, due to the many cars, it is very difficult to get a clear lap. I didn't manage to have one at Monza and neither yesterday. But today it worked quite well. I am very optimistic for the race. We have a good car and I feel at home at the Nürburgring."

Allan McNish (Audi Sport UK Team Veloqx / Audi R8 #8): "Pierre was qualifying the car today and he did a superb job. He proved again how quick he is. Because of the difficult weather conditions we didn't get all the mileage we wanted. So we tried a little bit of testing in qualifying. I am happy with the balance and starting from the front row. Of course it is unfortunate that there is no Audi on pole position. But we learnt at Le Mans that is important to finish first at the end, not at the beginning."

Jamie Davies (Audi Sport UK Team Veloqx / Audi R8 #88): "Yesterday it was quite tricky as the rain started when we went out. There were wet weather flags waving at every corner, so it was difficult to push to the maximum. Even though it was a good lap. Today, the balance of the car changed a little bit, mainly on new tyres. It would have still been possible to go quicker but I got caught in traffic. Sometimes you have luck in traffic, sometimes not. But I am happy because I think for the race the car is pretty good."

Johnny Herbert (Audi Sport UK Team Veloqx / Audi R8 #88): "Unfortunately Jamie got traffic on his best lap. That's what it is like here. It simply did not work for us this time. But we are still third and in a good position. We've got a long race ahead of us. In race trim the car felt perfect. We'll just have to see what the weather does during the race."

Seiji Ara (Audi Sport Japan Team Goh / Audi R8 #5): "This is the first time I am racing on the Nürburgring. The track is not so easy to learn and the weather keeps changing. Sometimes the sky is blue, shortly later it rains. It's a little bit like last year at Spa. But I am getting used to the track and the conditions and I am looking forward to the race."

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Rinaldo Capello (Audi Sport Japan Team Goh / Audi R8 #5): "We know we have a car that can go much faster than we did in qualifying. It was a question of bad luck. I tried twice. In the first attempt I got stuck in traffic at the last chicane. When I did my fastest time I had traffic in the first part, a very good middle sector but again traffic in the chicane. I did not even imagine doing a 1m 47s with all this traffic. But this means we have a car with a lot of potential for the race."

Kazumichi Goh (Team Director Audi Sport Japan Team Goh): "The car is very well balanced. When Dindo was doing a flying lap he got stuck in traffic. But everyone is in the same situation. I am still happy with the result. We are looking forward to the race. It will be a very close competition."

Sam Li (Team Director Audi Sport UK Team Veloqx): "The team concentrated on getting a good race setup and to get all four drivers used to the car and the track. I think we were very successful in this sense. We know the Zytek is a car that is very suitable for this track. But there is a long race ahead and we are looking forward to that."

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): "Qualifying was exciting. Times are very close together. It's no surprise the Zytek is able to go that fast. But the race lasts for six hours, and we've seen that our cars can record very fast times for a long period. This is important for the race. I just hope that it won't be a race where the weather keeps changing every ten minutes. But the forecast for this afternoon is not so bad."

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The starting grid at the Nürburgring

- 1 Minassian/Campbell-Walter (Zytek) 1m 46.681s
- 2 Kaffer/McNish (Audi R8) 1m 46.779s
- 3 Davies/Herbert (Audi R8) 1m 47.009s
- 4 Ara/Capello (Audi R8) 1m 47.172s
- 5 Ayari/Helary (Pescarolo-Judd) 1m 48.373s
- 6 Gounon/Frei/Hancock (Courage-AER) 1m 48.920s
- 7 Stack/Hignett/Collini (Zytek) 1m 49.643s
- 8 Erdos/Ramos/Newton (MG Lola) 1m 50.002s
- 9 Short/Barbosa/Pearce (Dallara-Judd) 1m 50.716s
- 10 Nielsen/Keen (Lister) 1m 51.421s

Photographs and further information available on the Internet:
www.audi-sportpress.com (accreditation necessary)