

Ingolstadt, 5 May 2006

Motorsport

Audi R8 comeback in the USA

- **Three extra races for R8 in the American Le Mans Series**
- **Houston and Mid-Ohio: two races in seven days**
- **Audi heads to Texas as championship leader**

The second round of the American Le Mans Series is on the agenda two months after the new Audi R10 TDI prototype's historic victory in the season-opener at Sebring. On 12 May, the world's most important Sportscar racing series makes its début performance on the street circuit in Houston (US state Texas). The third race of the season is staged only one week later in Mid-Ohio (US state Ohio).

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Because the Audi R10 TDI is currently being prepared in Europe for the 24 Hours of Le Mans (17/18 June), the Audi Sport North America team once again competes with the proven Audi R8 in the next three races. Last year's Le Mans race winning car (chassis 605) now sports the same design as the silver-red R10 TDI – but with the slogan “Audi FSI Power” instead of “Audi TDI Power”.

Dindo Capello (Italy) and Allan McNish (Scotland) will certainly have their work cut out in Houston and Mid-Ohio: The regulations dictate that the Audi R8 must now weigh 35 kilograms more than before and now weighs 935 kilograms.

For Capello and McNish it is a question of scoring as many championship points as possible to safeguard their title chances in the races with the five-year-old Audi R8. From the race in Salt Lake City on 15 July they will return to the latest Audi R10 TDI and will receive support from defending Champions Frank Biela and Emanuele Pirro in another R10 TDI.

Capello and McNish arrive in Houston as championship leaders. The street circuit is new to both Audi drivers just as it is for the majority of the other drivers. McNish has also never started in Mid-Ohio; Capello knows the undulating course from 2001 and 2002.

The American Le Mans Series appears together with the ChampCar series in Houston. The race starts on Friday evening at 8 p.m. as darkness falls and is therefore a genuine night race. Dindo Capello and Allan McNish have vivid memories of their event with the Audi R8 in Texas: In 2000, temperatures in excess of 40 degrees ruled during the race in Dallas – and during the night. In general, however, it is not quite as hot in Houston in May.

Quotes before the races in Houston and Mid-Ohio

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “Dindo and Allan won’t have things all their own way with the additional 35 kilograms of ballast. However, the pair should nevertheless collect as many points as possible with the R8 in the next three races. The R8’s reliability and low fuel consumption should help along the way. The race in Houston certainly adds a little spice to the American Le Mans Series, and let’s not forget that many things can happen on a street circuit.”

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Dindo Capello (Audi R8 #2): “I’m looking forward to competing in the American Le Mans Series after a three year break, and to be able to drive the fantastic R8. Because of the restrictions it certainly won’t be a stroll for us, but we will bank on the R8’s legendary reliability. We want to score big points at the next races, and fight for the title after Le Mans with the R10 TDI.”

Allan McNish (Audi R8 #2): “We don’t know exactly how strong the competition will be because they had several reliability based problems in Sebring. Our R8 has been reined in by the regulations, which means we might have to set our sights a little lower and just collect points. However, this isn’t actually my goal – I always go out to win.”

Dave Maraj (Team Director, Team Audi Sport North America): “Houston is our first event with the R8 as an Audi ‘factory’ team. We are looking forward to it and don’t want to disappoint Audi. In Allan (McNish) and Dindo (Capello) we have a very potent driver line-up, who already demonstrated in 2000 just how strong they can be. Obviously it would be fantastic to give the R8 another win before it officially retires. It deserves it.”

The schedule in Houston

Thursday, 11 May

11:10 – 12:00	Free Practice
17:20 – 18:10	Free Practice
18:50 – 19:10	Qualifying (Prototypes)

Friday, 12 May

13:45 – 14:15	Warm-up
20:00 – 22:45	Race

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The schedule in Mid-Ohio

Friday, 19 May

13:25 – 15:25	Test Session
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Saturday, 20 May

09:45 – 10:45	Free Practice
13:55 – 14:55	Free Practice
15:30 – 15:50	Qualifying (Prototypes)

Sunday, 21 May

08:35 – 09:00	Warm-up
12:00 – 14:45	Race

Live Timing and Radio at www.americanlemans.com

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