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## **Audi R8 LMS faces stiff competition at Spa**

- **13 brands at 24-hour race in Belgium**
- **Audi Sport Teams Phoenix and WRT field four factory cars**
- **Customer team United Autosports with former Formula 1 stars**

**Ingolstadt, July 22, 2011 – premiere in the Belgian Ardennes: the GT3 class is the top tier for the first time at the 63rd running of the 24-hour race at Spa-Francorchamps. Audi uses the opportunity to send four factory backed R8 LMS into the battle for overall victory on July 30/31. On top of this come three customer cars with high-caliber driver line-ups.**

The Belgian endurance classic was staged for the first time in 1924 and, as a result, is almost as old as the famous 24 Hours of Le Mans and is currently the world's only 24-hour race in which GT cars compete exclusively. This includes the Audi R8 LMS which has recorded almost 100 victories since its debut in 2009 and is one of the most successful GT3 sports cars and thus automatically numbers among the candidates for overall victory.

Audi Sport has entrusted the Phoenix and WRT teams for the race in the Ardennes. Ernst Moser's Phoenix team was integrated in development of the Audi R8 LMS from the very beginning and more recently won the GT3 category twice at the 24-hour race around the Nürburgring. The experienced team from the Eifel can also be found on the 24 hours of Spa winners list: Phoenix was victorious in 2007 with a GT1 car.

Spa is a genuine home race for the season Audi factory team: WRT is at home in Belgium and current 'Belcar' champion – the Belgian endurance series. WRT Team Manager Vincent Vosse won the 24 hours of Spa in 2002 – as a driver at that time. Pierre Dieudonné, another former Spa winner, also works for WRT.

Three winners of the 24-hour classic are also found in the Audi driver line-up: Stéphane Ortelli (Monaco) won in 2003, Timo Scheider (Germany) in 2005 and Marcel Fässler (Switzerland) in 2007. Marc Basseng (Germany) and Bert Longin (Belgium) have also mounted the podium in Spa already.



### **Le Mans winner in Audi Sport Team Phoenix, DTM stars with WRT**

The two Le Mans winners Marcel Fässler (Switzerland) and Mike Rockenfeller (Germany) and also Andrea Piccini (Italy) compete for Audi Sport Team Phoenix in the R8 LMS with start number '98.' The three Germans Marc Basseng, Christopher Haase and Frank Stippler drive the '99.' Competing for Audi Sport Team WRT in the #32 R8 LMS are Filipe Albuquerque (Portugal), Bert Longin (Belgium) and Stéphane Ortelli (Monaco). The two DTM stars Mattias Ekström (Sweden) and Timo Scheider (Germany) share the number '33' sister car with the Belgian endurance specialist Greg Franchi.

All twelve Audi drivers have plenty of experience with the Audi R8 LMS, which forms Audi's third element in motorsport since the 2009 season alongside the DTM and sport prototypes. At the 24 hours of Spa the successful mid-engine sports car, which embodies the brand's ultra lightweight technology with its particularly light and strong chassis in Audi Space Frame (ASF) design and the bodywork partially manufactured in carbon, meets the strong competition from Aston Martin, BMW, Dodge, Ferrari, Ford, Lamborghini, McLaren, Mercedes-Benz and Porsche. With Lotus and Nissan in the smaller GT4 class there are cars representing a total of 13 different brands on the grid.

The 2011 24 hours of Spa is also a points scoring round of the Blancpain Endurance Series in which Filipe Albuquerque, Bert Longin and Stéphane Ortelli currently hold second place in the GT3 Pro Cup after two races. Since additional points are awarded after six and twelve hours Audi Sport Team WRT must also adjust its strategy accordingly at the end of July.

### **United Autosports with former Formula 1 stars**

In addition to the two Audi factory teams the Anglo-American Audi customer team of United Autosports also relies on the Audi R8 LMS and fields three cars with the support of Audi Sport customer racing in the Pro Am category, in which professionals and gentleman drivers share the cockpit. United Autosports' squad includes former Formula 1 stars Mark Blundell (Great Britain), Eddie Cheever (USA), Johnny Herbert (Great Britain) and Stefan Johansson (Sweden) as well as Dutch Indy 500 winner Arie Luyendyk.

The 63rd running of the endurance classic starts on Tuesday (July 26) with the technical scrutineering. On Wednesday afternoon all the race cars drive in a convoy



along public roads to Spa where every driver attends a huge autograph session. Free practice and qualifying are staged on Thursday. The race starts on Saturday (July 30) at 16:00. A concert is held in parallel to the race on Saturday evening where Bob Sinclair ('Love Generation') performs. For the more junior visitors there is a 'Children's Village.'

### **Audi R8 LMS with unique seating system**

A special feature in the Audi R8 LMS, which competes at Spa, is an innovative seat system that has already proven its value during the 24-hour race at the Nürburgring. It is the follow-up model to the seat system previously manufactured by suppliers. A modular manufacturing concept facilitates manufacture with far greater possibilities for individualization. While the conventional set shells of specialist suppliers were previously designed to a standard width, Audi can now offer and manufacture different seat widths. As a result, internationally active R8 LMS drivers can now make a selection perfectly adapted to suit their needs.

The seat is manufactured entirely from carbon-fiber, has a dual shell construction and therefore complies with the most demanding load criteria. Since the installation height of the seat allows the driver position to be lowered by around 60 mm the car's center of gravity also benefits from the new solution. This new seat system will be available in the future to all Audi Sport customer racing teams.

### **Comments before the 24 hours of Spa**

**Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport):** "The performance levels will be incredibly close at Spa. I think there are certainly 25 cars capable of winning here. So, absolutely everything must fall into place. In addition to Phoenix, WRT is a member of the factory squad for the first time. However, we know this team well and have been working successfully together for quite some time now. I believe that we are in a good position for the 24 hours of Spa with Phoenix and WRT and also our drivers."

**Ernst Moser (Team Boss Audi Sport Team Phoenix):** "In addition to the sprint races like those driven in the DTM, Phoenix was always a fan of 24-hour races. We love competing in this endurance race. The Nürburgring and Spa are often compared. We like Spa just as much as we do our home race in the Eifel. Spa is a circuit with character from the early days of racing. You need the right drivers with a big heart and good circuit knowledge. They have to extract the full potential of both the Audi R8 LMS and themselves. Our team already has several years of experience at Spa and



has finished several times on the podium and has also taken overall victory once. Because the GT3 category is now the highest class we have every chance of winning with the Audi R8 LMS.”

**Vincent Vosse (Team Boss Audi Sport Team WRT):** “This will be a very special 24 hours of Spa event. In my opinion there are at least 20 or 30 cars capable of winning. More than 60 cars will join the grid. It’ll be an absolutely fantastic fight. The Audi R8 LMS has already proved its endurance qualities many times. Audi Sport and quattro GmbH were working hard. We were able to get to know our competitors at Spa during a test on July 6. A race like never before awaits us with the competition from Maranello, Munich and Stuttgart. This means that there will be plenty of passion. We compete as factory team. I couldn’t ask for more in the second year of a new team. This is a great honor and we want to give out utmost to achieve the great goal for Audi.”

**Filipe Albuquerque (26/P), Audi R8 LMS #32 (Audi Sport Team WRT)**

- In addition to the DTM also races regularly in the Blancpain Series
- Is second in the overall standings and competes in the 24 hours of Spa for the first time

“It’ll be a very interesting race. The 24 hours at Spa is one of the biggest events of the year for GT race cars alongside the 24 hours Nürburgring. Spa is a legendary circuit. I’m already looking forward to it. I’m involved in two projects: I race in the Blancpain Series; I’m second and really want to win it. Quite obviously it’s also all about the 24-hour race itself. WRT is official Audi factory team at this race. Our clear goal: we want to win. If we don’t manage this then my goal is to finish at least ahead of the Vitaphone and Autorlando teams for the championship. By the way, this is my first real endurance race.”

**Bert Longin (45/B), Audi R8 LMS #32 (Audi Sport Team WRT)**

- Mounted the podium in both 2006 and 2007 at his home race
- Won the 24 hours of Zolder last year
- Holds second in the Blancpain Endurance Series with Stéphane Ortelli and Filipe Albuquerque in an Audi R8 LMS

“I think the key to winning an endurance race is consistency and patience. You have to look after the equipment, manage your race well and still drive quickly. In the Blancpain Series which includes the 24 hours of Spa, Stéphane (Ortelli), Filipe (Albuquerque) and I form a very well balanced trio. On top of this comes the team. Vincent Vosse was a racing driver for 20 years and since last year he is now a team owner. The way he deals with his drivers, thinks about them and guides them is exemplary. He really does do everything for us. Our goal is not only a good result in



the 24 hours; we must also keep an eye on the Blancpain championship standings. We are very motivated to win either the race or the series.”

**Stéphane Ortelli (41/MC), Audi R8 LMS #32 (Audi Sport Team WRT)**

- The former Le Mans winner also celebrated overall victory at Spa in 2003
  - He currently lies third in the French GT Championship in an Audi R8 LMS
- “Whenever a 24-hour race is mentioned it’s always Le Mans where it’s a question of prestige and tradition. However, for me Spa is the best and most interesting 24-hour race. The circuit is much more difficult. There are fewer places where you can relax. Spa is pleasure and absolute must every year. I’ve already won the race together with Marc Lieb and Romain Dumas. It’s a fantastic opportunity now to be able to race with the Audi R8 LMS. I know the car very well, as do my team mates Filipe Albuquerque and Bert Longin. We are second in the Blancpain Series just four points behind. More points than in all the other races are awarded at Spa where they are divided among different sections of the race. If we can score a lot of points in the first six or twelve hours we can then start to push for the overall victory.”

**Mattias Ekström (33/S), Audi R8 LMS #33 (Audi Sport Team WRT)**

- The two-time DTM Champion makes his debut at the 24 hours of Spa
  - Was second in the DTM race at Spa in 2005
- “I’m really looking forward to Spa. My last outing at this circuit was with the DTM. At that time I fought against Mika Häkkinen. No I compete with another car – the R8 LMS. I race for another team about which I have only heard positive things. And another small difference: there are now 24 hours of racing on the agenda and not just a sprint. It’ll be a very difficult race with many tough opponents. I know there are a lot of good GT drivers. I feel comfortable and look forward to the task in hand. It would be great if we could get through the 24 hours without any setbacks.”

**Greg Franchi (29/B), Audi R8 LMS #33 (Audi Sport Team WRT)**

- Has already won a 12-hour race at Spa
  - Won the Belcar Series in 2010 with the WRT Audi R8 LMS
- “Spa is a very important race on my calendar. It is not only my home race. We compete as factory team for Audi. It’s all about a prestigious victory, but also for valuable points in the Blancpain Series for us. So, there is real pressure to perform. I compete in the 24 hours of Spa for the fourth time. The circuit is legendary. Even though it has been constantly developed for Formula 1, it has never lost its basic character. I race together with Mattias Ekström and Timo Scheider for a very professional team that I know well with which I won the title in Belgium last year. My target for this race: to collect as many point as possible for the Blancpain Series and to help Audi win this endurance race with the R8 LMS.”



**Timo Scheider (32/D), Audi R8 LMS #33 (Audi Sport Team WRT)**

- Won the 24 hours of Spa in 2005
- The two-time DTM Champion has also celebrated overall victory in a 24 hour race at the Nürburgring in the past

“I was lucky enough to be able to celebrate overall victory at Spa with Michael Bartels and Eric van de Poele. I’ve already won the GT2 category with Mika Salo and Rui Águas. So, I have very good experience with other teams at Spa which I take to Audi and to the new WRT team. It’s a huge advantage that it is just a GT event. The performance levels should be much closer than at a race with many classes and cars of enormously different speeds. I’m looking forward to the weekend with a positive frame of mind because I think we have a good chance.”

**Marcel Fässler (35/CH), Audi R8 LMS #98 (Audi Sport Team Phoenix)**

- Won the 24 Hours of Le Mans in an Audi R18 TDI and celebrated class victory in an R8 LMS at the 24 hours Nürburgring
- Was already overall winner in the 24 hours of Spa-Francorchamps

“I have very fond memories of the 24 hours of Spa. I was second here in 2006 and I won in 2007. We’ve also already won our class here with the Audi R8 LMS. For the first time it is now possible for the Audi R8 LMS to take overall victory. I expect a great deal together with Audi Sport Team Phoenix. We are certainly one of the favorites, are outstandingly well positioned and my team mates are excellent racers. I’m looking forward to the event and certainly expect to finish on the podium if everything runs normal. However, I also hope to be in with a shout for overall victory.”

**Andrea Piccini (32/I), Audi R8 LMS #98 (Audi Sport Team Phoenix)**

- Was second at Spa with Phoenix in 2006 as team mate to Marcel Fässler
- Was a member of the Phoenix line-up in the Audi R8 LMS at Spa last year
- Is currently third in the FIA GT1 World Championship

“This is one of the world’s most fantastic races and Spa is my favorite race track. It goes without saying that the Nordschleife is also fantastic, but Spa found a place in my heart a long time ago. Last year things were running extremely well in the Audi R8 LMS before an accident. I hope for a good race this year. I’ve already driven quite often with Marcel (Fässler). Our team mate Mike (Rockenfeller) is obviously also an absolute endurance expert.”

**Mike Rockenfeller (27/D), Audi R8 LMS #98 (Audi Sport Team Phoenix)**

- Was GT2 class winner at Spa in 2005
- Has celebrated overall victories in the Le Mans, Daytona and Nürburgring 24-hour races



“I’m really looking forward to Spa. It’s my first 24-hour race with the Audi R8 LMS this year. I meet a lot of familiar people in Audi Sport Team Phoenix. We are all fully motivated. In contrast to last year only GT3 cars now race at Spa for overall victory. I believe we have a good chance of being able to fight for the win.”

**Marc Basseng (32/D), Audi R8 LMS #98 (Audi Sport Team Phoenix)**

- Took two class victories in two starts at Spa, including 2009 in the Audi R8 LMS
- Won the GT3 category at the 24 hours Nürburgring in an Audi R8 LMS
- Currently lies second in the FIA GT1 World Championship

“We saw at the Nürburgring that the Audi R8 LMS is perfectly suited for 24 hours and is completely reliable. I think that the driver pairings will be decisive at Spa. I’m delighted to be competing with European Champion Christopher Haase and Frank Stippler who as driver helped to develop the R8 LMS. Ernst Moser’s team knows exactly what’s important in an endurance race. In the Ardennes we have a different task than in the Eifel where the grid is comprised of my classes. We have much tougher opponents here in the GT3 category. They’re not as easy to overtake as the many slower cars on the Nordschleife. Another special feature in Spa: it rains repeatedly here. However, the tarmac is so special that the water drains exceptionally well and you can stay on slicks for a long, long time if there are showers.”

**Christopher Haase (23/D), Audi R8 LMS #99 (Audi Sport Team Phoenix)**

- Finished second in the GT3 class at the 24 hours Nürburgring in June
- Was FIA GT3 Champion in an Audi R8 LMS in 2009

“I’m really looking forward to the 24 hours of Spa because our Audi R8 LMS functioned perfectly for 24 hours at the Nürburgring. Top driver pairings compete in both the cars within our team. Audi Sport Team Phoenix is ready for the challenge. I believe we have a relatively good chance as far as overall victory is concerned.”

**Frank Stippler (36/D), Audi R8 LMS #99 (Audi Sport Team Phoenix)**

- Celebrated the class victory in the Audi R8 LMS at the 24 hours Nürburgring in June
- Is integrated in the race car’s development since 2009

“The circuit is similar to the Nürburgring-Nordschleife. The quick sections like Eau Rouge, the double left Pouhon and also Blanchimont are particularly exciting. The wonderful topography with around 100 meters altitude difference is also typical for this track. It’s a classic race track. The tarmac is very good, there are hardly any bumps and the kerbs are not as high as at the Nürburgring. This protects the suspension and drivetrain even though we saw in the Eifel that the Audi R8 LMS



easily handles the toughest track conditions and runs reliably for 24 hours. I think the fans will see an extremely interesting race with plenty of action.”

#### **The Audi drivers at the 24 hours of Spa**

**Filipe Albuquerque (P):** \* June 13, 1985 in Coimbra (P); residence: Coimbra (P); single; height: 1.74 m; weight: 64 kg; 24 hours of Spa wins: 0 (best result: -)

**Marc Basseng (D):** \* December 12, 1978 in Engelskirchen (D); residence: Neusalza (D); single; height: 1.83 m; weight: 76 kg; 24 hours of Spa wins: 0 (best result: 3rd)

**Mattias Ekström (S):** \* July 14, 1978 in Falun (S); residence: Salenstein (CH); single (partner Heidi), one son (Mats); height: 1.83 m; weight: 79 kg; 24 hours of Spa wins: 0 (best result: -)

**Greg Franchi (B):** \* April 6, 1982 in Rocourt (B); residence: Liège (B); single; height: 1.81 m; weight: 78 kg; 24 hours of Spa wins: 0 (best result: 6th)

**Marcel Fässler (CH):** \* May 27, 1976 in Einsiedeln (CH); residence: Gross (CH); married to Isabel, four daughters (Shana, Elin, Yael, Delia); height: 1.78 m; weight: 78 kg; 24 hours of Spa wins: 1

**Christopher Haase (D):** \* September 26, 1987 in Kulmbach (D); residence: Waging am See (D); single; height: 1.77 m; weight: 64 kg; 24 hours of Spa wins: 0 (best result: -)

**Bert Longin (B):** \* October 26, 1965 in Leuven (B); residence: Leuven (B); married to Christiane, two sons (Stienes, Teun), two daughters (Jozefien, Vie); height: 1.71 m; weight: 68 kg; 24 hours of Spa wins: 0 (best result: 3rd)

**Stéphane Ortelli (MC):** \* March 30, 1970 in Hyères (F); residence: Monaco (MC); single, height: 1.67 m; weight: 63 kg; 24 hours of Spa wins: 1

**Andrea Piccini (I):** \* December 12, 1978 in Sansepolcro (I); residence: Sansepolcro (I); single, height: 1.81 m; weight: 68 kg; 24 hours of Spa wins: 0 (best result: 2nd)

**Mike Rockenfeller (D):** \* October 31, 1983 in Neuwied (D); residence: Altnau (CH); single; height: 1.75 m; weight: 67 kg; 24 hours of Spa wins: 0 (best result: 7th)



**Timo Scheider (D):** \* November 10, 1978 in Lahnstein (D); residence: Lochau (A); single (partner Jessica), one son (Loris); height: 1.78 m; weight: 74 kg; 24 hours of Spa wins: 1

**Frank Stippler (D):** \* April 09, 1975 in Köln (D); residence: Bad Münstereifel (D); single; height: 1.89 m; weight: 77 kg; 24 hours of Spa wins: 0 (best result: 37th)

**Every winner of the 24 hours of Spa (since 2000)**

- 2000 Bouvy/Mollekens/Defourny (Peugeot)
- 2001 Duez/Bouchut/Belloc (Chrysler)
- 2002 Vosse/Bouchut/Terrien/Bourdais (Chrysler)
- 2003 Ortelli/Lieb/Dumas (Porsche)
- 2004 Cappellari/Gollin/Bryner/Calderari (Ferrari)
- 2005 van de Poele/Bartels/Scheider (Maserati)
- 2006 van de Poele/Bartels/Bertolini (Maserati)
- 2007 Deletraz/Hezemans/Gollin/Fässler (Corvette)
- 2008 Bertolini/Bartels/Sarrazin/van de Poele (Maserati)
- 2009 Hezemans/Kumpen/Menten/Mollekens (Corvette)
- 2010 Dumas/Bergmeister/Ragginger/Henzler (Porsche)



## Circuit information

Circuit length: 7.004 km

Race distance: 24 hours

Pole position 2010: Gianmaria Bruni (Ferrari), 2m 22.403s = 177.063 km/h (July 29, 2010)

Fastest lap 2010: Fabien Giroix/Frédéric Fatien/Jean-Pierre Valentini/Anthony Beltoise (Lamborghini), 2m 23.757s = 175.396 km/h (August 01, 2010)

**Mike Rockenfeller about Spa:** “Spa is best known for Eau Rouge. This is the section at which the car is incredibly quick. You drive through a compression and emerge without seeing how the track continues. This is something unique and is the best part of the track. You enjoy driving through this sector even though it can't be driven at full throttle in a GT3 race car. Spa is anyway one of my favorite tracks. The fast left Blanchimont corner is also very special. In general the circuit is medium-fast and allows a good rhythm. Only the new Bus Stop Chicane and the traditional turn 1 are very slow. The condition of the track is positive: the even tarmac surface is very pleasant and the circuit is beautifully maintained. The weather in the Ardennes is often an unpredictable factor.”

## The Spa schedule

### Thursday, July 28

09:00–10:30	Free practice
14:15–15:45	Pre qualifying
19:00–19:30	Qualifying 1
21:00–23:30	Qualifying 2

### Saturday, July 30

09:05–09:25	Warm-up
15:10	Grid
16:00	Start

### Sunday, July 31

16:00	Finish
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The Audi Group sold around 1,092,400 cars of the Audi brand in 2010. The Company posted revenue of €35.4 billion and an operating profit of €3.3 billion in 2010. 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, of the Audi A4 in early October 2008 and of the Audi Q5 in July 2010. Production of the new Audi A1 has been running at the Brussels plant since May 2010. The Company is active in more than 100 markets worldwide. AUDI AG's wholly owned subsidiaries include AUDI HUNGARIA MOTOR Kft., Automobili Lamborghini Holding S.p.A. in Sant'Agata Bolognese (Italy) and quattro GmbH in Neckarsulm. Audi currently employs around 60,000 people worldwide, including around 46,600 in Germany. Between 2011 and 2015 the brand with the four rings is planning to invest around €11 billion, mainly in new products, in order to sustain the Company's technological lead embodied in its "Vorsprung durch Technik" slogan. By 2015, Audi plans to increase the number of models in its portfolio to 42.

Audi has long been fulfilling its social responsibility on many levels – with the aim of making the future worth living for generations to come. The basis for Audi's lasting success is therefore formed by environmental protection, the conservation of resources, international competitiveness and a forward-looking human resources policy. One example of AUDI AG's commitment to environmental issues is the newly established Audi Environmental Foundation.