



## Press Information

Le Mans, 25 April 2004

### **Audi R8 setting the pace in Le Mans pre-test**

The Audi R8 importer teams were very impressive in Sunday's traditional pre-test for the Le Mans 24 Hour race on 12/13 June 2004. Using the only test possibility on the non-permanent race track, the four Audi R8 sports cars occupied the top four positions. Fastest of the day was Scotland's Allan McNish, lapping the 13.650-kilometre track in Audi Sport UK Team Veloqx's Audi R8 in 3m 32.615s. His team-mate Johnny Herbert was just 0.012 seconds behind.

The modified aerodynamics of the Audi R8 proved itself during the eight-hour pre-test. Following new regulations, the sport prototypes have to use smaller rear wings in the 2004 season. Therefore, Audi reworked the R8 in the wind tunnel and has made a new aerodynamic configuration available to its customer teams that retrieves some of the downforce initially lost as a result of the regulation change. The result of the facelift: despite the new regulations, McNish and Herbert both beat Tom Kristensen's pole position time from last year (Bentley, 3m 34.820s). "Even with the smaller rear-wing, the R8 still has a perfect balance at Le Mans," praised McNish. "Audi Sport's technicians once more have done a great job."

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich, Head of Audi motorsport, was also very positive: "The work in the wind-tunnel has paid off and Michelin has provided us with great tyres. As a result the three teams could make good use of the available time, gathering important data for June's race which should be very exciting: All four R8 cars were on a similar level for a long period during the pre-test and have strong driver line-ups."

The importer teams Audi Sport Japan Team Goh, Audi Sport UK Team Veloqx and ADT Champion Racing (Audi Sport North America) compete in the 72nd running of the French Endurance classic with a high-calibre driver line-up. Eight from the twelve Audi drivers have already won the Le Mans 24 hours. Only Pierre Kaffer, who at his first ever race in the Audi R8 won the Sebring 12 Hours in March, steps into new territory at Le Mans. "The track is really impressive and the fastest I've ever driven," declared the Le Mans rookie. "However, it's very important that I felt immediately comfortable. The track is fun to drive."

With its factory team, Audi has won the Le Mans 24 Hours three times in a row in 2000, 2001 and 2002. Last year, Audi customer teams finished third and fourth behind two Bentleys.

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### Le Mans pre-test results

- 1 Biela/Kaffer/McNish (Audi R8) 3m 32.615s
- 2 Davies/Herbert/Smith (Audi R8) 3m 32.627s
- 3 Lehto/Pirro/Werner (Audi R8) 3m 34.176s
- 4 Ara/Capello/Kristensen (Audi R8) 3m 34.347s
- 5 Brabham/Wallace (Zytek) 3m 35.132s
- 6 Katoh/Michigami/Shimoda (Dome-Mugen) 3m 36.150s
- 7 Lammers/Dyson/Katsutomo (Dome-Judd) 3m 36.384s
- 8 Bourdais/Minassian/Collard (Pescarolo-Judd) 3m 36.628s
- 9 Coronel/Wilson/Firman (Dome-Judd) 3m 37.805s
- 10 Ayari/Comas/Treluyer (Pescarolo-Judd) 3m 39.991s

Photographs and further information are available in the Internet:  
**[www.audi-sportpress.com](http://www.audi-sportpress.com)** (accreditation required)

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