

Mid Ohio, 20 May 2006

Audi R8 starts from front row at Mid-Ohio

- **Allan McNish fastest in LM P1 in Qualifying**
- **Second-last race entry for the “good old” Audi R8**
- **Advantage for the LM P2 cars at Mid-Ohio**

Dindo Capello (Italy) and Allan McNish (Scotland) will start the third round of the American Le Mans Series at Mid-Ohio (US state of Ohio) from the front row of the grid with their near five-year old Audi R8 (built in 2002). In Saturday's Qualifying, Allan McNish was second fastest overall and quickest in the LM P1 cars. The Audi “factory” driver missed pole position by just 0.160 seconds.

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On the newly resurfaced track, Capello and McNish again utilise the Audi R8 with chassis number 605 with which they took outright victory at the previous race in Houston eight days ago, scoring the 62nd victory for the most successful Le Mans prototype in history.

On Sunday, the main target for Capello and McNish will be to score as many points as possible in the LM P1 category in the penultimate race of the R8. From the Salt Lake City race on 15 July onwards they will compete with the new Audi R10 TDI which is currently being prepared in Europe for the 24 Hours of Le Mans on 17/18 June.

The green flag at Mid-Ohio will be waved at 12noon (local) on Sunday (6 p.m. in Germany), the race distance is 2:45 hours. Because the gap to the lighter LM P2 cars was much smaller in Qualifying than expected, Capello and McNish are optimistic to be in the position to fight for another outright victory.

Quotes after qualifying at Mid-Ohio

Dindo Capello (Audi R8 #2): “We have been surprised in qualifying as we’d struggled a little with low grip. The fact that the track has been resurfaced is also not good for the R8 which likes a bumpy surface. Allan did a fantastic job to get so close to the Porsche and importantly we’re in front of the Dyson-Lola. We are now more confident of repeating our Houston victory. If we finish on the podium then

that would be a good result. It is very nice to be back at this beautiful race track – I like the elevation changes.”

Allan McNish (Audi R8 #2): “P2 on the grid is much better than what we’d expected – I didn’t think I could achieve that kind of time with the poor grip issues, caused by the cold conditions, we’d encountered combined with our additional weight penalty which makes the R8 less agile than our rivals. We now have a reasonable balance. But the strength of the Audi R8 is that we can normally run a pace closer to our qualifying times than our rivals.”

Dave Maraj (Team Director, Team Audi Sport North America): “Allan did an outstanding job in qualifying. We are now in a position to attack hard in the race from the green light. I hope that our team strategy and racecraft, as in Houston, will allow us to claim another podium. Unfortunately it could be cooler again for the race and the Audi R8 does not have traction control whereas the Porsche does which is another problem for us here.”

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The starting grid at Mid-Ohio

- 1 Maassen/Luhr (Porsche) 1m 12.815s
- 2 Capello/McNish (Audi R8) 1m 12.975s
- 3 Weaver/Leitzinger (Lola-AER) 1m 13.091s
- 4 Field/Halliday (Lola-AER) 1m 14.225s
- 5 Dyson/Smith (Lola-AER) 1m 14.678s
- 6 McMurry/Lewis (Lola-AER) 1m 16.034s

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