

Communications Motorsport

Jürgen Pippig
Telephone: +49 (0)841 89 34200
E-mail: motorsport-media@audi.de

Eva-Maria Veith
Telephone: +49 (0)841 89 33922
E-mail: eva-maria.veith@audi.de

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Audi re-captures lead in Le Mans Series

- **Alex Prémat and Mike Rockenfeller runners-up at Spa again**
- **Audi in first place in the manufacturers' championship**
- **Prémat/Rockenfeller have equal points as the front runners**

Ingolstadt/Spa-Francorchamps – Audi has taken the lead of the manufacturers' championship of the European Le Mans Series at the 1000-kilometre race at Spa-Francorchamps (Belgium). The two Audi youngsters Alexandre Prémat (26/France) and Mike Rockenfeller (24/Germany) in their Audi R10 TDI finished the third race of the season again in second place, thus going to the “Audi home round” at the Nürburgring on 17 August with the same points score as the Peugeot drivers Marc Gené and Nicolas Minassian.

In brilliant sunshine and summer temperatures, the spectators in the Belgian Ardennes witnessed another captivating fight between the diesel sportscars of Audi and Peugeot. A possible first victory of the Audi R10 TDI in the Le Mans Series was prevented by two collisions of the Audi that had started from the first row with the competition from the Peugeot camp.

As early as in the starting phase and fight for second place, there was body contact between Allan McNish and the attacking Peugeot driven by Nicolas Minassian. In the incident the valve of the R10 TDI's left rear wheel broke off. The early unscheduled pit stop cost almost a minute.

Despite this setback Allan McNish and Dindo Capello, thanks to quick lap times and a good strategy of Audi Sport Team Joest, were back within striking distance



to the leading Peugeot when Alexander Wurz in the second Peugeot, at the beginning of the third hour, collided with a GT2 vehicle and then violently hit the rear of Capello's car. The necessary repair cost three laps and caused the R10 TDI to drop to position twelve. Three further minutes were lost by car #1 due to a stop-and-go penalty for disregarding the red light at the pit lane exit.

Capello/McNish pushed and recovered to fourth place, thus contributing their share to Audi's re-capturing of the lead in the manufacturers' championship of the Le Mans Series. Audi now ranks one point ahead of title defender Peugeot.

The race of the other Audi R10 TDI went without any major incidents. Alexandre Prémat and Mike Rockenfeller in their third race of the Le Mans Series again took second place, thus standing on the podium for the third time in a row.

Quotes after the race at Spa-Francorchamps

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): "The performance in the race was pretty good. Unfortunately, our #1 car was prevented from fighting for victory all the way to the end because it got entangled in an accident through no fault of its own. The second car once more showed a solid performance and took second place again. It's nice to be leading the manufacturers' championship and to have two drivers sharing the same points score with the leaders of the standings. We want to build on this and achieve an even better result in the next race at the Nürburgring."

Alexandre Prémat (Audi R10 TDI #2): "I think we can be satisfied with the result. Audi is leading the manufacturers' championship. 'Rocky' and I've got the same number of points as the Peugeot drivers. The race was really tough. Peugeot was very quick again, but we weren't slow either. We started in fourth place and finished in second for the third time in a row. This podium result makes me feel even more confident for Le Mans."

Mike Rockenfeller (Audi R10 TDI #2): "We did what we were expected to do and what we'd set out to do: safely bringing the car home. As far as our speed was concerned, we were doing pretty well in the race. Alex and I are getting along with the R10 TDI better and better. Now we've finished in second place for the third time in a row and have got the same number of points as the leaders of the standings – if someone had told me that before the start of the season ... I'm super happy. I want to thank Alex and the whole team. The car was great in the

race and very safe to drive. So I'm satisfied as far as that goes, although I'd have preferred victory of course."

Dindo Capello (Audi R10 TDI #1): "When I was hit from behind I just didn't know what had happened. It was a big impact. Then I saw the Peugeot, but I still do not know exactly what occurred. I didn't see the red light at my pit-stop. I really believed our luck would change for this race. We had a car to challenge for victory again. In each LMS race we have something unexpected happening and we have to recover. We show that our speed is good enough to fight for victory but at the moment just do not get onto the podium."

Allan McNish (Audi R10 TDI #1): "Lamy accelerated before the final corner and broke every rule that was explained to us prior to the race so I was surprised that the organisers allowed the start and that the Peugeot didn't receive a penalty. I was able to fight pretty well with both Peugeots sitting in second position until I was baulked in Eau Rouge and Minassian got a run on me on the outside into Les Combes. I was on the inside in the braking area and he turned in, which punctured my left rear tyre – he came and apologised afterwards. We came back well from that until Dindo's unlucky incident with the other Peugeot, which required repairs in the garage as is the story of our LMS year so far unfortunately. From that point it was just recovery back to fourth position."

Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Team Joest): "That was a 'déjà-vu'. Again, car 1 had problems, this time through no fault of its own. The second R10 TDI again drove a flawless race to finish as the runner-up. Congratulations to Alex (Prémat) and 'Rocky': The two are really making headway. The number one car still managed to recover to fourth after a major repair and the stop-and-go penalty – that's the best result of the season so far for Dindo (Capello) and Allan (McNish), as sad as that may sound. All in all, we should be satisfied, but I won't deny that we'd like to see our first victory pretty soon."



The results at Spa-Francorchamps

- 1 Gené/Minassian/Villeneuve (Peugeot) 143 laps in 5h 17m 48.566s
- 2 Prémat/Rockenfeller (Audi R10 TDI) + 30.387s
- 3 Panis/Lapierre (Courage-Oreca-Judd) - 3 laps
- 4 Capello/McNish (Audi R10 TDI) - 4 laps
- 5 Collard/Boullion (Pescarolo-Judd) - 4 laps
- 6 Verstappen/van Merksteijn (Porsche) - 5 laps
- 7 Lienhard/Theys (Porsche) - 5 laps
- 8 Elgaard/Nielsen (Porsche) - 8 laps
- 9 Hall/Kerr (Creation-Aim) - 9 laps
- 10 Ragues/Lahaye (Pescarolo-Judd) - 9 laps

Photographs and information available at www.audi-motorsport.info

AUDI AG sold a total of 964,151 cars in 2007 and thus achieved its twelfth consecutive record year. With revenue of €33,617 million and profit before tax of €2,915 million, the company attained its best figures ever. Audi produces vehicles in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Changchun (China) and Brussels (Belgium). At the end of 2007, production of the Audi A6 started in Aurangabad, India. The company is active in more than 100 markets worldwide. AUDI AG's wholly owned subsidiaries include Automobili Lamborghini Holding S.p.A. in Sant'Agata Bolognese, Italy, and quattro GmbH in Neckarsulm. Audi employs about 54,000 people worldwide, including 45,000 in Germany. The brand with the four rings invests more than €2 billion each year in order to sustain the company's technological lead embodied in its "Vorsprung durch Technik" slogan. Audi plans to significantly increase the number of models in its portfolio by 2015, from the 26 currently on offer to 40.