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Motorsport

Audi targets eighth straight Petit Le Mans win

- **Tenth running of the endurance classic**
- **Audi unbeaten since 2000**
- **Capello/McNish can win ALMS title at penultimate race**

The winning streak of AUDI AG in the 1000 mile race at Road Atlanta – better known as “Petit Le Mans” – could not be more impressive: Audi has contested the American long-distance classic seven times to date and has taken the chequered flag on each occasion as winner.

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The Audi R8 was triumphant six times, the powerful 650 hp Audi R10 TDI won for the first time last year. As a result, the diesel engined sportscar took overall victory in its debut season at the three most important long-distance races of the year: Sebring, Le Mans and Petit Le Mans.

AUDI AG aims to repeat this prestigious “triple” on the first weekend in October: Team Audi Sport North America is putting everything into winning the race at Road Atlanta (US state of Georgia) as the R10 TDI has already won the 12-hour race at Sebring and the 24 Hours of Le Mans this year.

However, this is no simple task for Dindo Capello/Allan McNish and Emanuele Pirro/Marco Werner since the 150 kilogram lighter LM P2 sportscars still have an advantage due to the regulations. The large weight difference between the LM P1 and LM P2 sportscars is likely to be adjusted for the 2008 season.

In spite of this handicap, which also includes a ten per cent smaller tank stipulated for diesel cars, Audi targets an eighth consecutive Petit Le Mans victory. The newly resurfaced track at Road Atlanta should suit the powerful Audi R10 TDI. The longer distance of 1000 miles, or a maximum

of ten hours, also suits Audi since reliability has always been a strength of Audi race cars.

Having won both the LM P1 Manufacturers' and Team championships in the American Le Mans Series with two races to spare, Audi can now also clinch the Drivers championship at the penultimate race of the season at Road Atlanta: Dindo Capello and Allan McNish hold a 26-point lead from their team mates Emanuele Pirro and Marco Werner. This means that Pirro/Werner must finish in front of Capello/McNish to force the championship down to the wire in the finale at Laguna Seca on 20 October.

Testing starts at Road Atlanta on Wednesday (3 October). Qualifying is held on Friday, the race starts on Saturday at 11:15 a.m. local time (5:15 p.m. German time).

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Quotes before the race at Road Atlanta

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): "The race at Road Atlanta is, along with Sebring and Le Mans, one of the most important sportscar races of the year. For this reason, we are particularly proud to have been unbeaten at Petit Le Mans to date. The LM P2 cars will make life difficult for us once again and the regulations are unchanged since the previous race. Even so, we aim to continue our impressive winning streak at Petit Le Mans."

Dindo Capello (Audi R10 TDI #1): "Petit Le Mans is the most important race in the American Le Mans Series alongside the 12-hour race at Sebring, and is, at the same time, the penultimate race of the season. This means that, at the same time as keeping one eye on the championship, it is important to score a good result so that we have a good points cushion heading into the finale at Laguna Seca. It would be even better for me if we could wrap up the drivers title in the penultimate round at Road Atlanta. I'm quite certain that our Audi R10 TDI will show its full potential in this race. It's clear that we are aiming for overall honours."

Allan McNish (Audi R10 TDI #1): "I've always been a great fan of Petit Le Mans – it really is a mini Le Mans race. The atmosphere at Road Atlanta

is comparable and the circuit is equally as fast Le Mans. The event has grown immensely since its premier ten years ago in 1998. Petit Le Mans has a permanent place in my heart because of my success there. I think that the circuit will suit our Audi R10 TDI. However, Acura/Honda and Porsche will be as strong as ever. It will certainly be a hard fight for the entire 1000 miles. Reliability is one key to success in this race – and this was always one of Audi's strengths.”

Emanuele Pirro (Audi R10 TDI #2): “A long-distance race on a fast circuit is exactly what suits our Audi R10 TDI and for this reason, I'm looking forward to Road Atlanta. The Audi brand started an impressive run there and has won every Petit Le Mans in which it has competed up until now. In spite of the difficulties we are having this season with the lighter LM P2 cars, we want to continue this winning streak – without underestimating the strong competitors.”

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Marco Werner (Audi R10 TDI #2): “Atlanta has always been a good hunting ground for Audi. We've celebrated great victories there. I'm looking forward to driving around this beautiful circuit, which certainly suits our Audi R10 TDI a lot more than the Detroit street circuit for example. The longer race distance is also good for Audi. We should be quick at Road Atlanta – and we know that the R10 TDI is reliable. I hope that 'lady luck', which you need it in such a race, is also on our side.”

Dave Maraj (Team Director Audi Sport North America): “Audi aims for its eighth straight Petit Le Mans victory. Every one of our drivers has won this race at least once. After having been cruelly robbed of victory within sight of the chequered flag at the last couple of races we really hope that Audi Sport North America can score its first overall victory in the America Le Mans Series since the race in St Petersburg in March. We will do everything possible to end the drought at this prestigious race.”

The schedule at Road Atlanta

Wednesday, 3 October

12:30 – 13:00	Test session (LM P1 / LM P2)
13:00 – 14:00	Test session (all classes)
14:00 – 14:30	Test session (GT1 / GT2)

Thursday, 4 October

10:15 – 11:15	Free practice
14:50 – 15:50	Free practice
17:00 – 17:30	Meet the Audi Team (Media reception)
19:00 – 21:00	Night practice

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Friday, 5 October

09:30 – 10:30	Free practice
11:30	ALMS press conference
14:50 – 15:15	Qualifying (GT1 / GT2)
15:25 – 15:50	Qualifying (LM P1 / LM P2)

Saturday, 6 October

08:00 – 08:25	Warm-up
11:15 – 21:15	Race

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Photographs, sound bites and additional information available on the Internet:
www.audi-motorsport.info (accreditation required)