

St. Petersburg, 30 March 2007

## Motorsport

### Audi third on the grid in St. Petersburg

- **Diesel-powered sports car also fast on street circuit**
- **Allan McNish quickest in LM P1 class despite accident**
- **Marco Werner seventh in “sister” Audi**

The two Audi R10 TDI sports cars will start Saturday’s second round of the American Le Mans Series in St. Petersburg (US state of Florida) as fastest LM P1 prototypes from the second and the fourth rows of the grid. In the first ever appearance of the revolutionary diesel-powered sports car on a street circuit, defending champion Allan McNish headed the field in the last free practice session on Friday. He also set the pace with the 650-hp R10 TDI at the beginning of qualifying before being relegated to third position by the fastest two LM P2 sports cars.

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When he tried to get the provisional pole position back, the Audi factory driver touched a wall. The Audi R10 TDI was only slightly damaged at the rear.

Marco Werner was a little more conservative at the wheel of the “sister” Audi: With a gap of almost a second to pole position, the German qualified seventh.

The race in St. Petersburg starts on Saturday at 5:05 p.m. local time (11:05 p.m. in Germany) and lasts 2:45 hours.

### Quotes after qualifying

**Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport):** “The qualifying results proved our computer calculations: On this track and with the current regulations, the LM P2 cars are just in a better position. Despite this and with a lot of effort, Allan (McNish) tried to get on to the front row. If you

take maximum risk, it can happen that you spin. Fortunately there is not much damage to the car.”

**Dindo Capello (Audi R10 TDI #1):** “It’s going to be the toughest race to date for the Audi R10 TDI. Allan showed in qualifying that we have good speed and now we must try to reproduce that pace in the race for 2 hours and 45 minutes. I believe that this will be difficult for us to achieve compared to the lighter and more agile LM P2 cars. Turns 5 to 8 especially hurt our heavier car. But the times we have achieved are better than we anticipated, especially after walking the circuit yesterday.”

**Allan McNish (Audi R10 TDI #1):** “I pushed to the absolute maximum and unfortunately pushed a little too hard resulting in me hitting the wall exiting Turn 9 after trying to carry too much speed through. Porsche had taken away my provisional pole position and I wanted it back. A good qualifying position was vital to get here and now the other battle occurs in the race. I don’t know how it’s going to work out for us with many different strategies being applied but we’ve found a good set-up for our car.”

**Emanuele Pirro (Audi R10 TDI #2):** “The St. Petersburg event is really good and the race track very well built. Although our R10 TDI is a car which likes fast straight lines more than tight corners it’s nice to share this event with the IndyCar Series. Marco did a good lap in qualifying. We have a different tyre choice than the other car. Practice time was short, so we still have to improve the set-up a little bit. But I think the condition of our car is better than our position shows in qualifying. The race is long, so I’m looking forward to it.”

**Marco Werner (Audi R10 TDI #2):** “Things did not go too bad today. We improved from session to session – even by a full second from the last practice to qualifying. The lap was good, the time also. But the starting position obviously is not perfect. Going into the race from seventh position means you are in the middle of the pack. It would have been nicer to start further towards the front. But more was not possible today for me. You have seen also with Allan that we are driving right on the edge.”

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**Dave Maraj (Team Director Audi Sport North America):** “Qualifying was better than I’d expected and our two Audis are closer to the Porsches than I’d predicted with the #1 Audi just three-tenth’s off pole-position. As to what kind of speed the LM P2 class Porsches can run in the race compared to us we’ll just have to wait and see.”

## **The starting grid in St. Petersburg**

- 1 Dumas/Bernhard (Porsche) 1m 03.039s
- 2 Maassen/Briscoe (Porsche) 1m 03.189s
- 3 Capello/McNish (Audi R10 TDI) 1m 03.415s (1st LM P1)
- 4 Fernandez/Diaz (Lola-Acura/Honda) 1m 03.432s
- 5 Herta/Franchitti (Acura/Honda) 1m 03.746s
- 6 Brabham/Johansson/Dayton (Acura/Honda) 1m 03.807s
- 7 Pirro/Werner (Audi R10 TDI) 1m 04.139s (2nd LM P1)
- 8 Dyson/Smith (Porsche) 1m 04.376s
- 9 Wallace/Leitzinger (Porsche) 1m 04.845s
- 10 Lewis/McMurry/Willman (Lola) 1m 08.536s

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