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Audi wins Le Mans Series

- **First win for the Audi R10 TDI in the LMS**
- **Capello/McNish triumph at Silverstone**
- **Champion's titles for Audi and Prémat/Rockenfeller**

Ingolstadt/Silverstone – After the triumph at the 24 Hours of Le Mans and the early title win in the American Le Mans Series, AUDI AG performed another feat with the Audi R10 TDI diesel sportscar: At the 1000-kilometre race at Silverstone (Great Britain), Audi Sport Team Joest – clinching victory as well as fourth place – secured also the champion's title in the European Le Mans Series (LMS).

In front of a record turnout of 53,000 spectators (throughout the weekend) Dindo Capello (Italy) and Allan McNish (Scotland) at the season's finalé scored the first victory of the Audi R10 TDI, which is powered by over 650 hp, in the Le Mans Series. For Alexandre Prémat (France) and Mike Rockenfeller (Germany) a fourth place at Silverstone was sufficient to win the drivers' title in the LM P1 class. The LMS manufacturers' and team titles went to Audi as well.

From the outset, the two Audi R10 TDI cars of Audi Sport Team Joest were able to keep the pace of the two Peugeot 908s in the race and put the French diesel sportscars under massive pressure. As a result, Peugeot driver Nicolas Minassian in a duel with Allan McNish spun as early as in the first turn and later retired due to an accident.

After the premature end of the race for their only remaining rivals in the fight for the drivers' title, Alexandre Prémat and Mike Rockenfeller would have merely

needed a sixth-place finish to win the title. The two youngsters were leading the race most of the time, did not take any unnecessary risks and were heading for the title win when they were forced to make an unscheduled pit stop 20 minutes before race end due to a defect on the right rear suspension. Thanks to a quick repair the car bearing number 2 in the race lost only four laps.

A slight contact and a stop-and-go penalty due to overtaking under a yellow flag caused some additional drama on the final laps. In the end, Prémat/Rockenfeller crossed the finish line in fourth place, though, and thus secured the champion's title.

Another nerve-racking experience was the victory drive of Dindo Capello and Allan McNish. Due to a quicker pit stop Audi Sport Team Joest in the second hour of the race managed moving their R10 TDI past the previously leading Peugeot. When Peugeot driver Stéphane Sarrazin after a safety car period tried overtaking Capello on the outside in turn 1, he turned in too early and collided with the Audi. Capello together with Sarrazin spun off the track, losing three laps in the gravel trap and due to a cut tyre.

From 17th place, Capello and McNish managed to make up ground again with consistently fast lap times, a good strategy and perfect pit stops to take the lead again 20 minutes before race end. This locked in the first victory of the Audi R10 TDI in the LMS as well as Audi's title win in the manufacturers' classification.

Quotes after the race at Silverstone

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): "That was a placatory end of a difficult championship. We're proud to have won the Le Mans Series straight in our first year against such strong rivals. Maybe we dreamt that we'd be going home from here with race victory and the championship title but it was hard work. The whole team did a great job. The pit stops and the strategy were very good and the boys drove a constantly fast pace. We were at the level of our strongest rivals who took themselves out of the race due to accidents, and we made the maximum of the situation. Well done to the whole squad!"

Dindo Capello (Audi R10 TDI #1): "First of all, congratulations to our teammates Alex (Prémat) and 'Rocky' on their well-deserved title win. For Allan (McNish) and me it was a nice end of the Le Mans Series. We were fast at the first four races as well but always had some kind of problems. After the

accident with Stéphane Sarrazin, in which I feel – 101 per cent – that I was not at fault, I thought that this race was over for us as well. But we never gave up. Seasoned drivers, an experienced team and a great car make for a good combination to win a race which – just like Le Mans – seemed to have been lost already on paper. This race showed that people with a lot of will power and commitment can make the seemingly impossible possible. That's why Allan and I are proud to be part of this fantastic team. Audi won Le Mans, the ALMS and the LMS. Now I'm firmly keeping my fingers crossed for Audi to win the DTM title as well."

Allan McNish (Audi R10 TDI #1): "I believe that Dindo (Capello) and I deserve this victory, and so does everyone in the team – both the exploit at the finale and the champion's title. We fought hard this year. For Dindo and me things weren't always going as well as they should have. We had incidents when we were in the position to win races. I think 24 hours ago nobody would have expected Audi to win the race and the manufacturer's title and 'Rocky' and Alex (Prémat) the drivers' title. Audi has had a clean sweep in sportscar racing this season: Le Mans, the American Le Mans Series and the now the Le Mans Series. A great year for Audi Sport."

Alexandre Prémat (Audi R10 TDI #2): "It's simply fantastic for everyone in the team and of course for 'Rocky' and I. I think we did a good job all weekend as well as throughout the year. The race was tough. Up to the final lap we were on edge because 20 minutes before the end of the race we had a damaged suspension. That was close! Fortunately, the mechanics did a great job yet again. Thank you, Audi. Thank you, Team Joest. Thank you also to Allan (McNish) and Dindo (Capello) from whom we were able to learn a lot this year."

Mike Rockenfeller (Audi R10 TDI #2): "I always believed that we could make it – and now it's come true. In a championship you've got to consistently score good points and we did that at the first four races. And today we scored the necessary points as well. Of course we'd have liked to win this race. But I'm extremely happy that our 'sister car' clinched this exploit here for Audi. Allan (McNish) and Dindo (Capello) had a lot of misfortune this year. Audi won the 24 Hours of Le Mans, the last race of the LMS and the championship – it's hard to top that. For Alex and me it was very important to clinch this title."

Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Team Joest): "That was a strange and difficult race. Previous races already showed that Peugeot tends to make mistakes when they're under pressure. In my opinion, the Peugeot

drivers clearly made mistakes here. Perhaps they got a little nervous because they didn't manage to drive away from us. After number 7 was out of the race, Alex (Prémat) and 'Rocky' were able to drive very cautiously. Fortunately, we managed to eliminate the technical problem quickly. In the end, they only missed third place by a few seconds. But that doesn't matter: they're the champions and Allan (McNish) and Dindo (Capello) have won the race. The two pushed like hell and deserve this win. A fantastic result for Audi!"

The results at Silverstone

- 1 Capello/McNish (Audi R10 TDI) 195 laps in 5h 40m24.862s
- 2 Mücke/Charouz (Lola-Aston-Martin) - 2 laps
- 3 Dumas/Boullion (Pescarolo-Judd) - 4 laps
- 4 Prémat/Rockenfeller (Audi R10 TDI) - 4 laps
- 5 van Merksteijn/Verstappen (Porsche) - 4 laps
- 6 Campbell-Walter/Hall (Creation-Aim) - 4 laps
- 7 Primat/Tinseau (Pescarolo-Judd) - 5 laps
- 8 Ortelli/Ayari (Courage-Oreca-Judd) - 6 laps
- 9 Lienhard/Theys/Lammers (Porsche) - 8 laps
- 10 Amaral/Pla (Lola-AER) - 10 laps

- Ends -

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 57,000 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 to 40.