

**Communications Motorsport**

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## **Audi with solid starting base at Spa**

- **Three Audi R18 e-tron quattro cars on rows two, three and four**
- **Fässler/Lotterer/Tréluyer as best Audi squad in third place**
- **Impeccable beginning by car #3**

**Ingolstadt/Spa, May 2, 2014 – In the weather gamble at Spa, the crowd got to see a thrilling qualifying session for round two of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC). On a drying track, the best teams opted for a second driver change, in addition to the one driver change prescribed by the regulations. The 2012 World Champions, Marcel Fässler/André Lotterer/Benoît Tréluyer (CH/D/F) were the best Audi squad. In the Audi R18 e-tron quattro, they achieved position three.**

On a wet track, Lucas di Grassi (BR) in car #1 and André Lotterer in car #2 started qualifying on intermediate tires. When Tom Kristensen (DK) took over #1 and Marcel Fässler #2 from their team-mates Audi Sport Team Joest fitted both hybrid sports cars with slicks. Both drivers were able to complete their respective mandatory timed laps this way. However, as the times had improved by about five seconds on the drying track, the team decided to let the first two drivers, respectively, take the wheel again. This choice gave the team a possibility to improve the average time set by both drivers per car on two new, faster laps. This average determines the grid positions.

Fässler/Lotterer/Tréluyer achieved grid position three this way with a 1.3-second gap to pole. Lucas di Grassi and his squad, after a good start, only missed the beginning of a final lap by a few seconds – the time had run out.

The third Audi R18 e-tron quattro was running on a completely different strategy. In Belgium, Filipe Albuquerque (P) and Marco Bonanomi (I) are preparing for the Le Mans 24 Hours. Their hybrid sports car uses an aerodynamics variant that is already geared to the endurance race in June. Sports car rookie Albuquerque and his team-mate achieved a solid performance. The Portuguese was initially running on rain tires before his Italian team-mate tackled the 7-004-kilometer track on

intermediates. On his final outing, Albuquerque relied on slicks. The duo qualified for grid position seven.

Following the unsteady weather on Friday, a low risk of precipitation is expected for the race. The Spa 6 Hours start on Saturday at 14:30. Eurosport will broadcast the final phase from 18:30 to 20:45.

### **Quotes after qualifying**

**Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport):** "It was a very thrilling and close qualifying session. The track conditions kept changing. Therefore, it made sense to start on intermediates. The track subsequently improved a lot and with more downforce we fitted the cars with slicks. It was extremely important to start another outing at the end. We were hoping for more than third place. But we're still taking it as a positive result and are now concentrating on the race."

**Chris Reinke (Head of LMP):** "We experienced an intensive qualifying session because the changing conditions didn't make our work any easier. I think we were at the right place at the right time with our tire choice. The driver changes strategically made sense as well. In such changeable conditions, there are many parameters that can shift. We're not euphoric but can be pleased with the result, The third car that was deliberately on a conservative strategy achieved its target too."

**Ralf Jüttner (Team Director Audi Sport Team Joest):** "This qualifying session was a novelty. All of the top teams not only changed drivers once but twice because the conditions dramatically improved. With car #3, with the Le Mans configuration, we proceeded with a bit of caution, also due to the drivers' lack of experience. They were initially out on rain tires but then quickly switched to intermediates and ultimately to slicks. With car #2 everything fit. André Lotterer's first laps were okay. Then Marcel drove two fast laps on slicks and turned the car over to André again. It was enough for third place. Car #1 was a few seconds too late, that's why Lucas didn't finish his second lap anymore. But the grid position isn't so important for a six-hour race. It's not the best starting base but I'm hoping for a good race."

**Marcel Fässler (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #2):** "Spa is known for very changeable weather. That's exactly what we had again. The track began to dry and you had to change the tires and drivers at the right time. We didn't do a bad job of that. Maybe I could have driven another lap. But grid position three is good. And we've got a great car. I'd like to thank my mechanics for this because they worked hard during the past week. With third place our starting base for the race certainly isn't bad. We're going to attack tomorrow."

**André Lotterer (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #2):** “Qualifying was very strategic because we had 30 minutes for the four best laps. In the beginning, it was a bit damp when I was running on intermediates. Afterwards, Marcel Fässler was out on slicks. I subsequently continued driving on Marcel’s tires. We managed to improve our average. A bit more would have been possible.”

**Benoît Tréluyer (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #2):** “It was a pretty good qualifying session. The whole team went about its work with concentration. My team-mates squeezed the best out of every lap. They drove without any mistake in difficult conditions. I’m happy with their performance.”

**Lucas di Grassi (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #1):** “It was a very difficult qualifying session. We didn’t have the perfect strategy. We only drove three laps on slicks and one lap too many on intermediates, which cost us a lot of time on average. That’s why we’re only in sixth place. We had a lot of potential and Tom Kristensen was running well. Tomorrow is a new day, the race is long. We’re aiming to clinch valuable points.”

**Loïc Duval (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #1):** “It was a complicated qualifying session due to the changing weather conditions. We had the right strategy but in the end we missed the mark by a narrow margin. Tom Kristensen and Lucas di Grassi did a good job. Unfortunately, Lucas wasn’t able to drive two laps on slicks. That deprived us of a better average.”

**Tom Kristensen (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #1):** “These were typical Spa conditions. It was important to change drivers twice because the track was improving. Lucas di Grassi missed being able to drive another lap by only a few seconds. That would probably have moved us further towards the front. I drove two timed laps and was happy with the balance of the car in these conditions. The race lasts for six hours. We’re aiming to clinch points for the championship.”

**Filipe Albuquerque (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #3):** “For the configuration of our car these weren’t the best conditions. On a dry track, we’d have probably been more competitive. Marco was running on intermediates because the track was still damp and we can’t generate enough temperature with the tires. I still switched to slicks. Seventh place was a solid performance because we didn’t risk too much.”

**Marco Bonanomi (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #3):** “It was the first qualifying session for us this year. I’m happy to be driving here and to share the car with Filipe Albuquerque. Obviously the result isn’t what we’d been wishing for. But the conditions today weren’t the best for our car with the Le Mans aerodynamics. That’s why we were running conservatively, gathered data for Le Mans and tried our best



without taking big risks. We're hoping for dry weather in the race. That would suit our car."

### **Qualifying results**

- 1 Dumas/Jani/Lieb (Porsche) 2m 01.198s
- 2 Buemi/Davidson/Lapierre (Toyota) 2m 01.836s
- 3 Fässler/Lotterer/Tréluyer (Audi R18 e-tron quattro) 2m 02.499s
- 4 Nakajima/Sarrazin/Wurz (Toyota) 2m 03.177s
- 5 Bernhard/Hartley/Webber (Porsche) 2m 03.672s
- 6 Di Grassi/Duval/Kristensen (Audi R18 e-tron quattro) 2m 03.881s
- 7 Albuquerque/Bonanomi (Audi R18 e-tron quattro) 2m 06.160s
- 8 Bradley/Howson/Imperatori (Oreca-Nissan) 2m 12.103s
- 9 Zlobin/Mediani/Minassian (Oreca-Nissan) 2m 12.751s
- 10 Canal/Pla/Rusinov (Morgan-Nissan) 2m 13.143s

- End -

The Audi Group delivered approximately 1,575,500 cars of the Audi brand to customers in 2013. In 2013 the company reported revenue of €49.9 billion and an operating profit of €5.03 billion. The company is globally operating in more than 100 markets with production facilities in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Brussels (Belgium), Bratislava (Slovakia), Martorell (Spain), Kaluga (Russia), Aurangabad (India), Changchun (China) and Jakarta (Indonesia). Since December 2013, the brand with the Four Rings has been producing cars also in Foshan (China). In 2015, Audi will start production in São José dos Pinhais (Brazil), followed by San José Chiapa (Mexico) in 2016. Wholly owned subsidiaries of AUDI AG include quattro GmbH (Neckarsulm), Automobili Lamborghini S.p.A. (Sant'Agata Bolognese, Italy) and Ducati Motor Holding S.p.A. (Bologna, Italy), the sports motorcycle manufacturer. The company currently employs more than 73,500 people worldwide, thereof more than 52,500 in Germany. Total investment of around €22 billion is planned from 2014 to 2018 – primarily in new products and sustainable technologies. Audi is committed to its corporate responsibility and has anchored the principle of sustainability for its products and processes in its strategy. The long-term goal is CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral mobility.