

Communication Motorsport

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27 April 2008

Audi youngsters take lead in LMS

- **Prémat/Rockenfeller second at Monza**
- **Controversial collision costs possible victory**
- **Capello/McNish in the points despite accident**

Ingolstadt/Monza – With a second-place finish at the 1000-kilometre race at Monza (Italy), the two Audi drivers Mike Rockenfeller (24) and Alexandre Prémat (26) took the lead in the drivers' standings of the European Le Mans Series. Shortly before the end of the turbulent endurance race they were even leading the field with their Audi R10 TDI before being deprived of their chance for victory by a controversial collision.

Due to a leaking safety valve in the fuel supply system the #2 R10 TDI had to start from the pit lane. With consistently fast lap times, perfect pit stops and a good strategy, the two youngsters fought their way forwards through the entire field to the very front. In the final stage of the race a nail-biting duel ensued between Mike Rockenfeller in the leading R10 TDI and Pedro Lamy in the Peugeot. Lamy vehemently attacked Rockenfeller, took a shortcut in the chicane and, a lap later, hit the Audi's left front wheel in a second attempt. Nine laps before race end, Rockenfeller therefore had to make an unscheduled pit stop to have his front left wheel changed. This cost Audi their victory.

The collision caused many discussions because, at that time, a stop-and-go-penalty had already been announced against Pedro Lamy for overtaking during a yellow flag period. This would have automatically played victory into the hands of the Audi squad.

For Prémat/Rockenfeller, consolation came with the lead in the drivers' standings of the Le Mans Series. After finishing as the runner-up twice, they have a two-point advantage over the Peugeot pairing of Marc Gené/Nicolas Minassian.

The second Audi R10 TDI with Dindo Capello and Allan McNish lost all chances for victory at Monza as early as in the starting stage of the race when Capello was entangled in a collision at high speed. His right rear tyre was slit in the incident. Capello was lucky that his car did not roll over in the vehement crash against the guard rails.

The Italian was not injured in the accident. Yet again the Audi R10 TDI's robustness was proved: within only fourteen and a half minutes, the heavily damaged vehicle was repaired by Audi Sport Team Joest. From 42nd place, Capello/McNish recovered to fifth. Just a few minutes before the race was over, a puncture caused them to drop to sixth position.

Quotes after the race at Monza

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): "The race was a real thriller. In terms of pure lap speed, as had been the case in practice as well, we had a slight disadvantage. Thanks to the pit crews working swiftly, a very good strategy and the lower fuel consumption of our TDI engine, we always managed to get within striking distance of the Peugeots. Ten laps before race end, we were leading before the collision occurred between the two cars fighting for victory. This robbed us of the possibility to win. Considering that this car had to start from the pit lane and was even leading the field up until the dying laps of the race it is clear that our performance on the whole was good. We were able to put pressure on our rivals but, unfortunately, the tables turned against just before the end. We take a little consolation from the fact that we're now leading the drivers' standings – with the car driven by our two youngsters. That's a great achievement. Unfortunately, car #1 was involved in an accident at a very early stage and lost time in the pit lane. Still, it was able to make up ground, improving to sixth place. That was a great feat as well."

Alexandre Prémat (Audi R10 TDI #2): "It was a very thrilling race. After the problem during the formation lap 'Rocky' drove fantastic first two stints. I pushed very hard as well to stay on the Peugeot's heels. We could have won the race. Unfortunately, we had a collision with the Peugeot shortly before the finish, which – from my perspective – was unfair and cost us victory. Still, we finished as the runner-up and that's a good result; and now we're leading the drivers' standings."

That's a bit of consolation. I want to thank Dr Ullrich, Ralf Jüttner and the entire Audi Sport Team Joest, who did a great job. I'm already looking forward to Spa!"

Mike Rockenfeller (Audi R10 TDI #2): "We had good chances here to win the race. But, unfortunately, there was a slight misunderstanding during radio communications. I was informed that the Peugeot was going to get a stop-and-go penalty after taking a short-cut in the chicane. But then he let me pass. For me, that made it pretty clear that he wasn't going to get a penalty. Of course I didn't know that he was supposed to get the stop-and-go for something totally different. When on the next lap he arrived on the outside of the end of the start-finish straight again, I defended the inside line once more. But he simply turned in and hit me, damaging my rim in the process. I had to pit and that meant my race was lost. Of course that was a shame because it could have been our first victory. At least we're now leading the championship. Still, I didn't think this action was right. We'll be defending ourselves and will really attack next time."

Dindo Capello (Audi R10 TDI #1): "Regarding my accident, I was on the straight before Parabolica. There were three cars in front of me. I overtook the second car and then suddenly found the car in front of me going slowly. I went to the right, otherwise I would have crashed into this car. Unfortunately Vanina Ickx was there and we slightly touched. The car went on one side then went on the grass before flying through the air. It was probably one of the biggest impacts I've had. I was lucky. The mechanics and the team did a fantastic job - a lesson for the other teams. We recovered with Allan and I setting very fast lap times. It was a shame to lose fifth position because of a puncture just on the lap the pace car switched off the lights."

Allan McNish (Audi R10 TDI #1): "Unfortunately we were again on a recovery drive and I'm especially disappointed because we had a car to win this race although on sheer pace, we're quite a long way from where we need to be. Audi Sport Team Joest did a superb job after Dindo's accident in repairing our extensively damaged R10 TDI in record-breaking time which allowed us to set competitive times for the remainder of the race. My thoughts are with Stéphane (Ortelli) who barrel-rolled through the air across the nose of my car. It was a shocking accident – a very frightening sight – and I wish him a quick and full recovery."

Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Team Joest): "Audi and Peugeot both lost a car again at a pretty early stage. After Dindo's (Capello) accident we practically had to prepare the car again from scratch – and we managed to do



this within fourteen and a half minutes. That's really a good time. That this car still managed to finish in sixth place is a great achievement of the entire team. Even greater was the performance of the #2 car that was a little slower. The team kept bringing Alex (Prémat) and 'Rocky' close to the Peugeot and ultimately into the leading position. Both drove a fantastic race. When the stop-and-go-penalty was imposed against the second-placed Peugeot we thought we had pocketed race victory. What Pedro (Lamy) then did to 'Rocky' was not right. It caused us to lose victory, and that's a bitter pill."



The results at Monza

- 1 Lamy/Sarrazin (Peugeot) 173 laps in 4h59m07.955s
- 2 Prémat/Rockenfeller (Audi R10 TDI) + 47.672s
- 3 Primat/Tinseau (Pescarolo-Judd) - 4 laps
- 4 Kerr/Jouanny/Hall (Creation-Aim) - 4 laps
- 5 Gené/Minassian (Peugeot) - 6 laps
- 6 Capello/McNish (Audi R10 TDI) - 7 laps
- 7 Tappy/Ickx/Short (Pescarolo-Judd) - 7 laps
- 8 Elgaard/Nielsen (Porsche) - 8 laps
- 9 Verstappen/van Merksteijn (Porsche) - 8 laps
- 10 Lienhard/Theys (Porsche) - 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.