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## **Disappointment for Audi in qualifying at Austin**

- **Second and third row on the grid for the Audi drivers**
- **Problems with lap trigger signal prevent regular qualifying**
- **Optimism for the race after good work in free practice sessions**

**Ingolstadt/Austin, September 19, 2014 – Audi started qualifying for round four of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) at Austin full of optimism. Following two best times set in the free practice sessions, the squad of Head of Audi Motorsport Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich and Chris Reinke, Head of LMP, saw itself well prepared for the final qualifying session as well. However, the failure of a lap trigger signal frustrated any hope of taking a position on the front row of the grid.**

Le Mans winner Marcel Fässler in the number 2 Audi R18 e-tron quattro and Loïc Duval in the number 1 sister car already noticed irregularities on the first timed laps of the qualifying session. The complex control systems for fuel consumption and the hybrid system were apparently receiving wrong signals that made optimal lap times impossible. As the reasons for the faulty lap trigger signal could not be found and corrected in the mere 25-minute qualifying session, Audi had to settle for grid positions four for Marcel Fässler/André Lotterer/Benoît Tréluyer (CH/D/F) and six for Lucas di Grassi/Loïc Duval/Tom Kristensen (BR/F/DK).

But the free practice sessions give Audi reason for hope. As soon as the defect has been corrected the hybrid sports cars should be able to battle for top positions. In the first free practice at Austin, Marcel Fässler achieved the best time ahead of his team-mate Lucas di Grassi. In the third free practice, Loïc Duval was in front of Marcel Fässler. In dry weather in the first and third practice sessions and heavy rain in the second one, Audi thoroughly prepared for the highly changeable conditions prevailing in the south of Texas this weekend. High humidity, temperatures of more than 30 degrees centigrade, rain showers and the chance of thunderstorms are making forecasts difficult. However, in a 6-hour endurance race top results are possible even from the current grid positions.

The starting signal in Texas will be given on Saturday at 17:00 local time (00.00 CEST). Eurosport in Germany will air full-length coverage of the race.

### **Quotes after qualifying**

**Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport):** “We were not unfortunate but both of our cars failed to function the way they should have. There was a problem with the lap trigger signal. Given the complexity of the systems, a correct run of the lap is extremely important but that didn’t work in qualifying with either car.”

**Chris Reinke (Head of LMP):** “This is a sobering result for us because we didn’t have the chance to use our full potential. We’re going to correct the issue on both cars before the race. Then we’ll be able to attack with full strength.”

**Ralf Jüttner (Team Director Audi Sport Team Joest):** “We had problems with the lap trigger signal. The systems are very complex with these cars. For the drivers, it must have felt as if they were driving a totally different car than in the previous practice sessions. The race will be on Saturday, that’s when everything counts. By that time, we’re going to provide our drivers with flawless cars again.”

**Marcel Fässler (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #2):** “For me, qualifying was difficult because we had problems with the lap trigger signal. That distracted me a bit while I was driving. We were clearly beaten below our potential. We tried to make the best of the situation. That’s why I got into the car a second time in order to improve our average lap time. Of course it would have been great to start the race from the front row but from the second row a lot is still possible too. The race will be very interesting.”

**André Lotterer (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #2):** “It was a difficult qualifying session which, unfortunately, didn’t go smoothly due to problems with the lap trigger signal. That’s why we weren’t able to use our maximum potential. But the race is long and we’ve got a good car. I’m looking forward to Saturday.”

**Benoît Tréluyer (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #2):** “We had a problem with the lap trigger signal. That impaired us quite a bit because the car depends on it. We’re going to resolve the issue by tomorrow. It’s better to have such a problem in qualifying than in the race – because, obviously, it’s the race that counts.”

**Lucas di Grassi (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #1):** “We didn’t have a good qualifying session because we had problems with the lap trigger signal. That’s really very

disappointing because we still set the best time in the third free practice and were fast in the other sessions as well. I'm sure that we're going to correct the problems by tomorrow and have a clean race then. Then I'm sure we'll be further towards the front again too."

**Loïc Duval (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #1):** "We'd been looking forward to qualifying because our times in practice had been good. Unfortunately, we had problems with the lap trigger signal, which greatly impaired our qualifying. But I'm sure that we're going to resolve everything by tomorrow. Even though we're starting from position six, anything's still possible with our competitive car. We're determined to move forward."

**Tom Kristensen (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #1):** "It's great to finally be sitting in the car again after Le Mans – especially on such a nice and modern track as the Circuit of the Americas. The car was running perfectly in the practice sessions and the team did a great job – be it in the sessions on the muggy afternoon or during the thunderstorm in the night practice. That gives us hope for a great race that we're looking forward to even though the qualifying session was less than perfect."

### **Qualifying results**

- 1 Buemi/Davidson/Lapierre (Toyota) 1m 49.093s
- 2 Dumas/Jani/Lieb (Porsche) 1m 50.283s
- 3 Bernhard/Hartley/Webber (Porsche) 1m 50.302s
- 4 Fässler/Lotterer/Tréluyer (Audi R18 e-tron quattro) 1m 50.340s
- 5 Conway/Sarrazin/Wurz (Toyota) 1m 50.363s
- 6 Di Grassi/Duval/Kristensen (Audi R18 e-tron quattro) 1m 51.456s
- 7 Belicchi/Kraihamer/Leimer (Rebellion-Toyota) 1m 54.665s
- 8 Canal/Pla/Rusinov (Morgan-Nissan) 1m 56.075s
- 9 Bradley/Howson/Matsuda (Oreca-Nissan) 1m 56.371s
- 10 Brown/Dalziel/Sharp (HPD-Honda) 1m 57.262s

– End –

The Audi Group delivered approximately 1,575,500 cars of the Audi brand to customers in 2013. As one of the most successful models, the Audi A3 has been awarded the title of "World Car of the Year 2014" by an international jury of journalists (combined fuel consumption in l/100 km: 7.1 – 3.2; combined CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in g/km: 165 – 85). In 2013, the company reported revenue of €49.9 billion and an operating profit of €5.03 billion. The company operates globally in more than 100 markets and has 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 the end of 2013, the brand with the Four Rings has also been producing cars 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 approximately 76,000 people worldwide, thereof more than 53,400 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.