

Communications Motorsport

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First major challenge for the Audi R15 TDI

- **New diesel racing sports car debuts at Sebring (USA)**
- **12-hour race in Florida acts as endurance test for Le Mans**
- **Strong competition in the LMP1 class**

Ingolstadt/Sebring – Now it's serious: After tests in Spain and Italy, the first race looms for the new Audi R15 TDI. During the 12-hour race at Sebring (Florida, USA) on Saturday, March 21, the new diesel racing sportscar meets the competition from Acura/Honda, Peugeot and others.

For Audi Sport Team Joest, the US endurance classic acts specifically as an endurance test and to gauge the level of competitiveness for the 24 Hours of Le Mans on June 13/14, 2009. At the same time, the team under Head of Audi Motorsport Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich aims to continue the brand's impressive run of results at Sebring around the demanding race track in the heart of Florida: Audi has won eight times to date – in just ten races.

It is tradition that new prototypes from AUDI AG make their debut at Sebring: Audi started its first ever sports car race at Sebring on March 20, 1999. At that time Michele Alboreto, Dindo Capello and Stefan Johansson claimed third position first time out with the Audi R8R fielded by Audi Sport Team Joest.

A year later on the debut of the Audi R8, Frank Biela, Tom Kristensen and Emanuele Pirro, took Audi's first victory in a sports car race. Another 62 wins would follow and make the R8 one of the most successful LMP1 sports cars in history.

On March 18, 2006, Audi wrote another new chapter in motorsport history: Dindo Capello, Tom Kristensen and Allan McNish scored the first victory for a diesel

racing sports car in an important international endurance race on the debut of the Audi R10 TDI.

The trio, which was victorious at Le Mans last year, remains in the same formation for the debut of the new Audi R15 TDI. Lucas Luhr, Mike Rockenfeller and Marco Werner drive the “sister” R15 TDI.

The six Audi factory drivers have the opportunity to gain experience with the new LMP1 racing sports car under race conditions for an entire week – and this on one of the world’s most difficult race tracks in temperatures expected to reach some 30 degrees Celsius in the shade.

These are entirely new conditions for the R15 TDI which until now tested almost exclusively in cool temperatures and was often running in the rain at the tests in Europe.

The 12-hour race at Sebring is also the first event in which the new technical regulations for Le Mans prototypes are valid. In contrast to last year, the width of the rear wing is reduced by 40 centimeters. Furthermore, the diesel powered cars must compete with smaller engine air intakes and less turbo pressure and, as a consequence, less engine power.

Audi Sport has attempted to compensate as much as possible with many technical innovations for the restrictions imposed by the new regulations.

Comments before the race at Sebring

Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “Sebring is an important test for the 24 Hours of Le Mans for us. Experience shows that the track is very hard and mercilessly reveals any problem a car has. Therefore it’s particularly important to compete with a newly developed car here. It goes without saying that we hope to be able to gauge the performance of our new Audi R15 TDI from the race, you can only do this when you compete against your competition – and this is the case at Sebring.”

Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Team Joest): “We are not as well prepared as we would like to be – but this is actually always the case with a new car. Unfortunately, it hurt us a lot this year that the tests in Europe were affected constantly by bad weather and we have not run in hot conditions like we can

expect at Sebring. Furthermore, for the first time we did not test at Sebring before the race – which means we have no experience whatsoever with the Audi R15 TDI on the track. Luckily there is an additional test on the Saturday before the race which we will use. The grid isn't particularly large at Sebring this time, but the quality is incredible, especially in the LMP1 class. Two Audis, two Peugeots, two Acura/Hondas as part of a grid of 28 cars – it'll be a hot race!"

Lucas Luhr (Audi R15 TDI #1): "I'm really looking forward to Sebring! It's a race of great tradition. It's a great feeling to compete as defending LMP1 champion at the opening race of the American Le Mans Series season. The target is clear: We want to win! But it won't be easy. The Audi R15 TDI is in action for the first time in race trim. The competition is strong. We come to Sebring with a few question marks and we'll see for real exactly where we stand next week. I'm convinced that the R15 TDI will handle even better in Sebring than the R10 TDI. The R10 TDI wasn't a bad car, but whoever knows Audi knows that every new Audi is even better."

Mike Rockenfeller (Audi R15 TDI #1): "I was involved in the development of the Audi R15 TDI for the first time from the very beginning. It was a new and fantastic experience for me. I've driven in three tests but we were very unlucky with the weather. We had a hard time during the Sebring race week last year. I hope that we'll be in a significantly better position this year with the new R15 TDI. It's clear that Sebring is another test for us, but it's time to compete against the others on track. I'm interested to see who has made the best of the change in regulations."

Marco Werner (Audi R15 TDI #1): "We await Sebring with enormous interest and especially in two respects: Sebring traditionally opens the season, but is also the first race for our Audi R15 TDI. We are really intrigued to see just where we stand with the new car compared to the competition. To start with such a long and hard race is obviously a challenge. Nevertheless, we are targeting the ninth Sebring victory for Audi. It would be fantastic to win the race. I've driven six times at Sebring and have won half of my races."

Dindo Capello (Audi R15 TDI #2): "Sebring is the first real test for our new Audi R15 TDI. We've previously had fantastic debuts at Sebring, both with the R8 and also the R10 TDI. Our goal is to continue this streak. However, we know that it will be particularly difficult this year. We are a behind schedule with our test program since we had bad weather at almost every test. The conditions in

Sebring will be completely different. I'm convinced that the R15 TDI will immediately be quick but we have a lot of work as far as the fine tuning is concerned. My personal goal is clear: After three Sebring victories I want to get the 'Poker' – which is what we call four wins in Italy."

Tom Kristensen (Audi R15 TDI #2): "Sebring is a very special race held in incredible surroundings with a great atmosphere, a race I have been able to win four times. I sat in the winning car on the debut of both the Audi R8 and Audi R10 TDI – obviously I also hope to be in the same position on the race debut of the new Audi R15 TDI. Dindo (Capello), Allan (McNish) and my other team mates are just as impressed with the R15 TDI as I am. The car is pretty cool. Sebring will show who did their homework properly over the winter and where we stand in comparison to Acura/Honda and Peugeot – obviously also with regard to Le Mans. I'm also really looking forward to Friday evening: The film 'Truth in 24' which documents so impressively our Le Mans victory is shown on ESPN. We'll all watch it as preparation for the race."

Allan McNish (Audi R15 TDI #2): "My target is to claim the first victory for the Audi R15 TDI on its debut. This means that we cannot afford to make any mistakes as the competition is very, very tough this year. We'll have to run at a fast pace. The new Audi R15 TDI has a smaller, lighter engine, but there is an enormous amount of work going on in the background to compensate as best as possible for the restrictions enforced by the regulations. The new car has a better weight distribution and it more agile as a result. The aerodynamics have also been optimized. The R15 TDI is a huge step compared to the R10 TDI which won the 24 Hours of Le Mans three times in succession. I'm looking forward to Sebring and its unique atmosphere with more than 160,000 spectators, the majority of which camp at the track throughout the entire week. Sebring is the world's second biggest sportscar race."

Facts and figures

Trivia: Audi has competed ten times at Sebring and has celebrated **eight overall victories** and **nine class wins** in the process ... Audi won **eight times in succession** between 2000 and 2007 ... Audi was accepted into **Sebring's "Hall of Fame"** in 2007 ... Reinhold **Joest's team** has won **six times** at Sebring to date, four times with the Audi R8, twice with the Audi R10 TDI ... **Allan McNish** and **Tom Kristensen** drove their **first races** for **Audi** in March 2000 at Sebring ...



Sebring is the oldest “road” circuit in the USA ... The first 12-hour race at **Sebring** was held on **March 15, 1952** ... **2009** is the **57th edition** of the race ... Audi holds the **distance record** at Sebring with **370 laps**, set in 2001 ... **Marco Werner** holds the **track qualifying record** (set in 2007) ... With **four wins** each, **Tom Kristensen** and **Frank Biela** are the **most successful drivers** in the history of the race ... **With eight overall victories Audi** lies in **third place** in the all time winners’ list behind Porsche (18) and Ferrari (12) ... **Lucas Luhr** celebrated **five class victories** to date at Sebring (GT2 and LMP2) ... The two **Audi R15 TDI** prototypes can be distinguished at **Sebring** by their extra red (start number 1) and silver (start number 2) **colors**.

The Audi results at Sebring

1999 3rd place (Alboreto/Capello/Johansson) Audi R8R
2000 1st place (Biela/Kristensen/Pirro) Audi R8 (402)
2001 1st place (Capello/Alboreto/Aiello) Audi R8 (502)
2002 1st place (Capello/Pescatori/Herbert) Audi R8 (602)
2003 1st place (Biela/Peter/Werner) Audi R8 (604)
2004 1st place (Biela/Kaffer/McNish) Audi R8 (603)
2005 1st place (Kristensen/Lehto/Werner) Audi R8 (605)
2006 1st place (Capello/Kristensen/McNish) Audi R10 TDI (101)
2007 1st place (Biela/Pirro/Werner) Audi R10 TDI (202)
2008 3rd place (Capello/Kristensen/McNish) Audi R10 TDI

The Audi driver teams for Sebring 2009

Audi R15 TDI #1 (chassis number 102)

Race engineer: Dominic Zeidtl (D)

Lucas Luhr (D): * 07/22/1979 in Koblenz (D); residence: Ermatingen (CH); married to Claudia, one daughter (Georgina), one son (Gianluca); height: 1.85 m; weight: 72 kg; Audi driver since 2007; Sebring overall wins: 0 (best result: 6th place); Le Mans overall wins: 0

Mike Rockenfeller (D): * 10/31/1983 in Neuwied (D); residence: Altnau (CH); single (partner Susanne); height: 1.75 m; weight: 67 kg; Audi driver since 2007; Sebring overall wins: 0 (best result: 6th place); Le Mans overall wins: 0

Marco Werner (D): * 04/27/1966 in Dortmund (D); residence: Ermatingen (CH); married to Annett, one daughter (Janina); height: 1.75 m; weight: 66 kg; Audi driver since 2002; Sebring overall wins: 3; Le Mans overall wins: 3

Audi R15 TDI #2 (chassis number 103)

Race engineer: Howden Haynes (GB)

Dindo Capello (I): * 06/17/1964 in Asti (I); residence: Canelli (I); married to Elisabetta, one son (Giacomo); height: 1.72 m; weight: 66 kg; Audi driver since 1994; Sebring overall wins: 3; Le Mans overall wins: 3

Tom Kristensen (DK): * 07/07/1967 in Hobro (DK); residence: Monaco (MC); single (partner Hanne), two sons (Oliver and Oswald), one daughter (Carla Malou); height: 1.74 m; weight: 72 kg; Audi driver since 2000; Sebring overall wins: 4; Le Mans overall wins: 8

Allan McNish (GB): * 12/29/1969 in Dumfries (GB); residence: Monaco (MC); married to Kelly, one son (Finlay), one daughter (Charlotte Amelie); height: 1.65 m; weight: 58 kg; Audi driver since 2000 and since 2004; Sebring overall wins: 2; Le Mans overall wins: 2

The Sebring schedule

Saturday, March 14

10:15 – 11:45	Test session
13:30 – 14:45	Test session
15:45 – 17:00	Test session

Monday, March 16

09:10 – 10:40	Test session (GT cars)
10:50 – 12:20	Test session (prototypes)
14:30 – 16:00	Test session (GT cars)
16:10 – 17:40	Test session (prototypes)

Tuesday, March 17

13:00 – 13:30	Test-Session (GT cars)
13:30 – 14:30	Test-Session (all classes)
14:30 – 15:00	Test-Session (prototypes)

Wednesday, March 18

10:45 – 11:40	Free practice
14:40 – 15:35	Free practice

Thursday, March 19

10:20 – 11:15	Free practice
14:45 – 15:10	Qualifying (GT cars)
15:15 – 15:40	Qualifying (prototypes)
19:15 – 21:00	Night practice



Friday, March 20

09:55 – 10:55 Free practice

Saturday, March 21

08:00 – 08:25 Warm-up

10:30 – 22:30 Race (12 hours)

Media appointments

Thursday, March 19

15:50 Qualifying Press Conference (Media Interview Area)

Friday, March 20

13:15 – 14:00 Audi Press Conference (Audi Hospitality in the paddock)

14:00 – 15:00 Meet the Audi Team (Audi Hospitality in the paddock)

Saturday, March 21

ca. 23:30 Winners Press Conference (Media Interview Area)

- Ends -

Photographs and information available at www.audi-motorsport.info

AUDI AG sold around 1,003,400 cars in 2008 and thus achieved its thirteenth consecutive record year. Audi produces vehicles in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Changchun (China) and Brussels (Belgium). Aurangabad in India saw the start of local production of the Audi A6 at the end of 2007 and of the Audi A4 in early October 2008. 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 currently employs around 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. The Audi brand celebrates its 100th birthday in 2009. The company was founded by August Horch in Zwickau on July 16, 1909; he named it Audi after the Latin translation of his surname ("hark!").