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Laurens Vanthoor wins title in Blancpain Endurance Series for Audi

- **#1 Audi R8 LMS ultra wins in finale at the Nürburgring**
- **Belgian Audi Club Team WRT wins teams' classification as well**
- **First title for the Audi R8 LMS ultra in the 2014 season**

Ingolstadt, September 21, 2014 – Laurens Vanthoor in the Audi R8 LMS ultra won the driver title in the Blancpain Endurance Series (BES) for Audi Sport customer racing. In the season finale, the Nürburgring 1000, the mere 23-year-old Belgian together with Christopher Mies and César Ramos was victorious in difficult conditions. In addition, the 33 points awarded for the victory at the Nürburgring earned the Belgian Audi Club Team WRT the team title in the prestigious endurance racing series. With that, the driver and team titles have gone to Audi for the third time in the Blancpain Endurance Series that has existed since 2011.

Vanthoor, who together with the Germans Markus Winkelhock and René Rast had won the 24-hour race at Spa-Francorchamps at the end of July, had traveled to the Nürburgring as the sole leader of the standings with a seven-point advantage. His team-mate Christopher Mies put the #1 Audi R8 LMS ultra on the pole position in qualifying. In the race that was started behind the safety car in pouring rain, start driver Christopher Mies stood his ground in the pack of front runners. In second place, he turned over driving duties to the Brazilian César Ramos. Shortly after the turbulent race's midpoint, Christopher Mies took the lead. Laurens Vanthoor defended the top position on a drying track and after six hours of racing crossed the finish line with an advantage of 57 seconds.

"Obviously, after having won the Sprint Series last year, I'm overjoyed about now winning the Endurance Championship. This shows that we're competitive in both series," said the Belgian. "I'd like to thank my team-mates without whom I couldn't have clinched this title because in Markus Winkelhock, René Rast and Marc Basseng, and now here in the finale in Christopher Mies and César Ramos, I've had strong drivers running with me this season."



“After the tough first three races, it didn’t look like we were going to again clinch the title,” said WRT team boss Vincent Vosse. “The turnaround happened when we clinched victory in the Spa 24 Hours. In the finale, all three drivers showed an absolutely impeccable performance on a slippery track in pouring rain and poor visibility. Winning both titles with a victory in such a race – you can’t do better than that.”

The #26 R8 LMS ultra of Team Saintéloc Racing became an early victim of the extremely difficult conditions. Stéphane Ortelli/Edward Sandström/Grégory Guilvert (MC/S/F), who had arrived at the Nürburgring as the runners-up in the standings, had to bury their championship ambitions after start driver Sandström had been touched by another vehicle and slid into the gravel trap at an early stage. The run of Super-G world champion Didier Cuche in the R8 LMS ultra of the Audi race experience was over early as well, following an off-track excursion by his team-mate Rahel Frey.

“The title win in the Blancpain Endurance Series, one of the world’s most challenging GT3 championships, marks another highlight in the customer sport program with the Audi R8 LMS ultra,” commented Romolo Liebchen, Head of Audi Sport customer racing. “Sincere congratulations to Laurens Vanthoor and the WRT squad. But Saintéloc Racing fought a respectable battle as well, albeit the team was unfortunate in the finale. Congratulations also to Ian Loggie and Julian Westwood from Team Parker Racing, who were the front runners in the Gentleman Trophy in the finale.”

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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 CO₂ 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 CO₂-neutral mobility.