

Communications Motorsport

Jürgen Pippig

Telephone: +49 (0)841 89 34200

E-mail: motorsport-media@audi.de

www.audi-motorsport.info

Eva-Maria Veith

Telephone: +49 (0)841 89 33922

E-mail: eva-maria.veith@audi.de

Le Mans: Audi in lurking position

- **Positions two, three and four in first qualifying**
- **Main focus was on race preparation**
- **Accident by Romain Dumas**

Ingolstadt/Le Mans, June 9, 2011 – After the first qualifying session for the 79th edition of the Le Mans 24 Hours (start at 3 p.m. on Saturday) the three new Audi R18 TDI cars occupy positions two, three and four.

Audi Sport Team Joest used the first practice day primarily to prepare for the race. All three cars were pursuing different programs on the track. One R18 TDI was equipped with additional sensors to measure tire temperatures among other things. On another car the balance for the aerodynamics version planned for use in wet conditions was tested. The third team was mainly working on the suspension set-up.

To make optimal use of the six available hours Audi Sport Team Joest chose not to intervene in the battle for the pole position in the final phase of qualifying. Only Mike Rockenfeller (Audi R18 TDI #1), André Lotterer (#2) and Allan McNish (#3) each received a set of fresh Michelin tires at the beginning of qualifying on which they moved to the front of the field. They were bumped to positions two, three and four by the best Peugeot only half an hour before the end.

The fastest lap of an Audi R18 TDI was achieved by André Lotterer (3m 27.939s). Mike Rockenfeller was merely one hundredth of a second slower (3m 27.949s). Allan McNish had no free lap and set a time of 3m 28.301s.

At 22:23 Audi Sport Team Joest suffered a set-back when Romain Dumas in the Audi R18 TDI designated as car number “1” hit a GT vehicle that was standing on the track in the Mulsanne corner head on. “I saw neither yellow flags nor warning lights,” reported Dumas, who was not injured in the accident. The safety concept of the new LMP1 sports car proved its viability as well: damage occurred primarily to body parts. A repair before the final qualifying session will be possible without any



problem, particularly since all three cars will be prepared partly anew on Thursday according to schedule and equipped with the engines intended for the race.

“Of course it was unfortunate that the accident happened, especially since it caused Timo (Bernhard), Romain (Dumas) and Mike (Rockenfeller) to lose valuable practice time,” commented Head of Audi Motorsport Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich. “But we’re happy that the incident had relatively minor consequences. We collected a lot of valuable data today that will help us with our race preparation. We only sent our cars out on the track on fresh tires at the beginning and immediately afterward concentrated on our work for the race again. That the quickest five cars are within just 1.8 seconds of each other confirms how close the competition is at Le Mans this year.”

The grid positions will be decided in two additional qualifying sessions on Thursday night (19:00 to 21:00 and 22:00 to 24:00).

The Audi Group sold around 1,092,400 cars of the Audi brand in 2010. The Company posted revenue of €35.4 billion and an operating profit of €3.3 billion in 2010. Audi produces vehicles in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Changchun (China) and Brussels (Belgium). Aurangabad in India saw the start of CKD production of the Audi A6 at the end of 2007, of the Audi A4 in early October 2008 and of the Audi Q5 in July 2010. Production of the new Audi A1 has been running at the Brussels plant since May 2010. The Company is active in more than 100 markets worldwide. AUDI AG’s wholly owned subsidiaries include AUDI HUNGARIA MOTOR Kft., Automobili Lamborghini Holding S.p.A. in Sant’Agata Bolognese (Italy) and quattro GmbH in Neckarsulm. Audi currently employs around 60,000 people worldwide, including around 46,600 in Germany. Between 2011 and 2015 the brand with the four rings is planning to invest around €11 billion, mainly in new products, in order to sustain the Company’s technological lead embodied in its “Vorsprung durch Technik” slogan. By 2015, Audi plans to increase the number of models in its portfolio to 42.

Audi has long been fulfilling its social responsibility on many levels – with the aim of making the future worth living for generations to come. The basis for Audi’s lasting success is therefore formed by environmental protection, the conservation of resources, international competitiveness and a forward-looking human resources policy. One example of AUDI AG’s commitment to environmental issues is the newly established Audi Environmental Foundation.