



**Communications Motorsport**

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## **Marc Gené to replace Timo Bernhard at Le Mans**

- **Audi reserve driver Marc Gené to compete at Le Mans 24 Hours**
- **Timo Bernhard's full recovery has priority**
- **Audi will fight for eleventh overall victory at Le Mans**

**Ingolstadt, June 1, 2012 – After three consecutive runs for Audi at the Le Mans 24 Hours and his overall victory at the wheel of the Audi R15 TDI in the 2010 season, Timo Bernhard will not participate in the endurance classic this year. In close coordination with the physicians and with Audi Sport the Audi factory driver attaches major importance to making a complete recovery after his accident.**

Following the testing accident in March in which he was not at fault Timo Bernhard started a rehabilitation program with his personal trainer and received comprehensive medical care. "I'm very pleased with the steps I've managed to make during this time," says Bernhard who hails from Germany's Saar-Palatinate district. "We've created a tight system of medical checks, so my progress has constantly been monitored. Unfortunately, there's not enough time before the Le Mans 24 Hours to become 100 percent fit again. Le Mans is a world-class race that doesn't allow any compromises. I only want to compete at this event in perfect physical condition. That's why on the advice of my doctors and in close coordination with Audi I decided not to run at Le Mans this year."

For the Le Mans 24 Hours, the 31-year-old Audi factory driver was planned to run in the Audi R18 ultra designated as car number "3." His place will now be taken by Audi's reserve driver Marc Gené. The Spaniard drove his first race for Audi in early May at the second round of the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC where together with Romain Dumas and Loïc Duval he clinched overall victory.

"All of us had very much been wishing for Timo to be fit again for the test day and the Le Mans 24 Hours," stresses Head of Audi Motorsport Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich. "Unfortunately, the time was too short for this. That's a real shame for Timo and for us too. Despite this responsible and probably not easy decision there's generally

positive news as well, as we all know that Timo will completely recover again. Naturally, he will continue to enjoy our full support. By signing Marc Gené in April as a reserve driver we've got a tried and tested solution for the current situation. Marc will now be nominated as a racer driver in the number "3" car. At Spa, he took advantage of the opportunity to get to know the team and to immediately show a very good performance."

Marc Gené will take Timo Bernhard's place as early as on the test day at Le Mans on June 3. On that day, the new Audi R18 e-tron quattro as the first diesel hybrid sports car in history as well as its sister model, the new Audi R18 ultra, will be driven on the 13.629-kilometer circuit for the first time. On June 16 and 17, Audi will be battling for its eleventh overall victory in the world's most important endurance race with two cars of both models.

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The Audi Group delivered 1,302,659 cars of the Audi brand to customers in 2011. In 2011 the Company posted revenue of €44.1 billion and an operating profit of €5.3 billion. Audi produces vehicles in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Changchun (China) and Brussels (Belgium). The Audi Q7 is built in Bratislava (Slovakia). In July 2010, CKD production of the Audi Q5 was added to the existing Audi A4 and A6 manufacturing operations in Aurangabad (India). At the Brussels plant, production of the Audi A1 has been running since May 2010, while production of the new A1 Sportback began in 2012. The Audi Q3 has been built in Martorell (Spain) since June 2011. The Company is active in more than 100 markets worldwide. AUDI AG's wholly owned subsidiaries include AUDI HUNGARIA MOTOR Kft., Automobili Lamborghini S.p.A. in Sant'Agata Bolognese (Italy), AUDI BRUSSELS S.A./N.V. in Brussels (Belgium) and quattro GmbH in Neckarsulm. Subject to a positive decision by the responsible competition authorities, the Italian sports motorcycle manufacturer Ducati Motor Holding S.p.A. will also belong to the Audi Group. Audi currently employs around 64,000 people worldwide, including around 48,000 in Germany. Between 2012 and 2016 the brand with the four rings is planning to invest a total of €13 billion – mainly in new products and the extension of production capacities – in order to sustain the Company's technological lead embodied in its "Vorsprung durch Technik" slogan. Audi is currently expanding its site in Győr (Hungary) and will start production in Foshan (China) in late 2013 and in Mexico in 2016.

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 Audi Environmental Foundation. Within the context of "Vorsprung durch Technik," which extends far beyond its products, the Company is directing its activities toward a major goal – comprehensive CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral mobility.