

## Communications Motorsport

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## **Petit Le Mans: Both Audi R15 TDI prototypes on row two**

- **Accidents and night shifts for Audi Sport Team Joest**
- **Focus on race set-up**
- **Uncertain race day weather forecast**

**Ingolstadt/Atlanta – Audi Sport Team Joest’s two Audi R15 TDI prototypes will start the “Petit Le Mans” 1000-mile race at Road Atlanta (U.S. state of Georgia) from the second row of the grid. The U.S. endurance classic serves Audi as preparation for the 2010 Le Mans 24 Hours.**

Best Audi driver in Friday’s 25-minute qualifying session was Dindo Capello (Italy) who set the third fastest time with the #2 Audi R15 TDI in 1m 08.200s. Teammate Lucas Luhr (Germany) was just 28 thousands of a second behind with the #1 “sister” car.

During the three practice days, the Audi team focused entirely on the race set-up of the technically innovative Audi R15 TDI which competes only in its third ever race at Road Atlanta. The effort was complicated by the external conditions: After torrential rain falls, the challenging track had little grip on the first day on Wednesday. High temperatures of almost 85 degrees Fahrenheit and extremely high humidity added to this.

Principally harmless minor off-road excursions from Lucas Luhr on Wednesday and Marco Werner on Thursday gave the mechanics two night shifts. The two Germans each slid slightly off the race track. The rain of the previous days, however, had washed out the grass and the deep holes were responsible for significant damage to their R15 TDI. As a consequence the team had to change

the monocoque of the number “1” car during the night from Wednesday to Thursday. At 4:30 a.m., the rebuilt car was ready and back on its wheels.

Heavy rain showers are predicted for Saturdays race at Road Atlanta (starting at 11:20 a.m. local time) which should make this challenging race even more difficult.

Audi competes in the “Petit Le Mans” event since 2000 and is undefeated in this 1000-mile race. In the last three years, Dindo Capello and Allan McNish took the victory with the R15-predecessor the Audi R10 TDI. Capello and McNish are teamed up again. Lucas Luhr shares the “sister” car with Marco Werner.

### **Quotes after qualifying**

**Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport):** “It was a difficult start for us with the accidents on the first two days. This caused a lot of work. Today we were at least able to find a good race set-up for both cars. Our main problem right now is the traction, which means we are fighting with spinning rear wheels. This cost us a lot of time out of the slower corners during qualifying with the higher track temperatures.”

**Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Team Joest):** “It took us quite some time to set-up the car for this track. You just see that we are lacking race experience with the R15 TDI. The positive thing is that we have contented drivers in both cars now. We did not unpack our sharpest weapon for qualifying which was not our target, but I believe we are well prepared for the race. I’m expecting a fierce battle with many caution periods. The big question mark in the background is the weather. There are forecasts with torrential rain. I’m curious as to what to expect. I would like to thank the whole crew who have worked so hard after the accidents.”

**Dindo Capello (Audi R15 TDI #2):** “Qualifying was a little disappointing in terms of the time difference to pole-position. The track temperature was high during qualifying which caused understeer and loss of traction which cost me time. Allan and I really liked the car this morning in the final practice. The weather forecast for the race isn’t good but fortunately we had a run here in wet conditions last Sunday.”



**Allan McNish (Audi R15 TDI #2):** "It's going to be a big fight tomorrow. The weather forecast is for rain during the race which will be another aspect and to some extent cancel out what has been learnt over the past few days. Peugeot have an advantage in one-lap qualifying trim but we [Audi] showed earlier today in practice that we can match their pace in race set-up. It's going to be an interesting race."

**Lucas Luhr (Audi R15 TDI #1):** "Unfortunately the practice days have been quite turbulent for us. We have to analyze why our competitor is quicker. Dindo (Capello) and I pressed everything out of the car in qualifying which is possible at the moment. But I believe we have a very good racecar right now. We'll drive to keep up with them in the race. In the past it has been often the case that Peugeot was much quicker in qualifying than in the race. I hope this will be also the case tomorrow."

**Marco Werner (Audi R15 TDI #1):** "We are here to learn – and we've already learned a lot over the past few days. It's something different to drive under race conditions instead of testing. I think this week gave a big push to the whole team. I expected the times to be like they are. The gap to Peugeot is a little bit too big. We have to see how things will develop during the race. It was always a big strength of Audi to be very good in the race while our competitors normally made a step backwards compared to qualifying."



### **The starting grid**

- 1 Minassian/Lamy (Peugeot) 1m 06.937s
- 2 Sarrazin/Montagny (Peugeot) 1m 07.160s
- 3 Capello/McNish (Audi R15 TDI) 1m 08.200s
- 4 Luhr/Werner (Audi R15 TDI) 1m 08.228s
- 5 de Ferran/Pagenaud/Dixon (Acura/Honda) 1m 08.348s
- 6 Panis/Lapierre/Dumas (Oreca-AIM) 1m 09.566s
- 7 Field/Field (Lola-AER) 1m 09.685s
- 8 Leitzinger/Franchitti/Devlin (Lola-Mazda) 1m 10.152s
- 9 Drayson/Cocker/Bell (Lola-Judd) 1m 10.552s
- 10 Pickett/Graf/Maassen (Porsche) 1m 11.405s

- Ends -

**Photographs and information available at [www.audi-motorsport.info](http://www.audi-motorsport.info)**

AUDI AG sold a total of 1,003,469 cars in 2008 and thus achieved its 13th consecutive record year. The Company posted new record figures with revenue of €34.2 billion and profit before tax of €3.2 billion. 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 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 58,000 people worldwide, including 46,500 in Germany. The brand with the four rings invests around €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 42. 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!").