

## Communications Motorsport

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## **“Petit Le Mans” is Le Mans preparation for Audi**

- **Two Audi R15 TDI cars in U.S. endurance classic**
- **Test run for next year’s 24 Hours of Le Mans**
- **Audi aims to continue string of exploits with TDI Power**

**Ingolstadt/Atlanta – The countdown for the 2010 Le Mans 24 Hours is underway. In preparation for the sports car highlight of the year, Audi Sport Team Joest will contest the U.S. endurance classic “Petit Le Mans” at Road Atlanta (U.S. state of Georgia) on September 26 with two Audi R15 TDI cars.**

The inaugural “Petit Le Mans” race was held in 1998 and has been bringing Le Mans flair to the United States ever since. The 1,000-mile race near the U.S. metropolis Atlanta helped launch the American Le Mans Series in which Audi was the dominant brand from 2000 to 2008. The exploits of the Audi R8 and the Audi R10 TDI over the past nine years have helped Audi achieve a better development of its business in the difficult U.S. market than other premium brands. With 8,057 vehicles sold, Audi most recently recorded the second-best August result in Audi of America’s history.

By competing in the popular “Petit Le Mans” race, Audi Sport supports the market launch of TDI technology in North America: Since April 2009, the Audi Q7 TDI 3.0 has been available in the United States; in December, the Audi A3 TDI 2.0 will arrive at U.S. dealerships.

The Audi R15 TDI demonstrates the high performance capabilities of a TDI power-plant. The Audi engineers extract over 600 hp from the 5.5-liter V10 TDI engine that celebrated an important victory on its racing debut in March: Dindo Capello, Tom Kristensen and Allan McNish at the wheel of the brand new LMP1 vehicle immediately won the 12-hour race at Sebring (Florida).



On the other hand, the R15 TDI's Le Mans debut that ended in a third-place finish did not go according to Audi's plans. The aim is for Audi Sport Team Joest to gather more racing experience with the technologically innovative racing sports car at Road Atlanta which will then be fed into the further development of the R15 TDI for 2010.

The vehicles being fielded in the U.S. race are unchanged except for adaptations suiting the special characteristics of the track at Road Atlanta. During tests at Vallelunga (Italy) in early September various set-up versions for Road Atlanta were compared.

Although the race mainly serves as a test run for Le Mans 2010, Audi would like to continue its string of exploits in the U.S. endurance classic: The brand with the four rings has contested the "Petit Le Mans" race nine times so far and each time an Audi crossed the finish line as the winner. Six races were won by the Audi R8, and three by the Audi R10 TDI.

The last three victories for Audi were clinched by the driver team Dindo Capello (Italy)/Allan McNish (Scotland) who will again be competing together and targeting a fourth consecutive triumph, a feat no driver has achieved to date. The "sister car" designated as car number 1 will be driven by the reigning ALMS Champions Lucas Luhr and Marco Werner (both Germany), who took third place last year at Road Atlanta.

Practice at Road Atlanta will start on Wednesday. Qualifying will be held on Friday afternoon. The race will start on Saturday at 11:15 am local time and will cover a distance of 1,000 miles or a maximum of ten hours into the night.

### **Quotes before the “Petit Le Mans” race**

**Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport):** “The fielding of our cars at Road Atlanta marks the first part of our preparation for the 2010 Le Mans 24 Hours. It shall help our engineers to learn more about the new Audi R15 TDI in direct competition with strong rivals. You can simulate a lot of things during rig and track tests but nothing can replace the accurate data gained in actual racing events. At the same time, we’re pleased about the opportunity to start from the ‘Petit Le Mans’ grid again. Audi has had huge success there in the past few years. Particularly the two most recent, extremely thrilling races will be remembered by the fans. We’d like to continue our series of good results there. We’ve got a great car in the Audi R15 TDI and a highly motivated team.”

**Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Team Joest):** “We’re happy to be able to contest a race again three months after Le Mans. We want to show that the R15 TDI is better than it looked at Le Mans. I think that the track at Road Atlanta should suit the car pretty well. Still, it won’t be an easy race for us. With twelve LMP1 cars on the grid, it’ll be a real battle that will probably be heavily shaped by tactics as well. Last year, there were ten caution periods. Getting everything just right will be crucial – and of course a little racing luck is necessary as well. For us as a team it’s important to quickly find the right rhythm again after the break; the drivers and mechanics have not contested any races since Le Mans. That means that everyone is looking forward to ‘Petit Le Mans’ with even greater anticipation – both the team and the drivers.”

**Lucas Luhr (Audi R15 TDI #1):** “Of course I’m incredibly happy about the fact that we’re contesting another race this year – originally, that wasn’t planned. And, what’s more, we’re going to ‘Petit Le Mans,’ which is one of the best races in America on a fantastic circuit. I’m really looking forward to it even though the first laps at Road Atlanta with the R15 TDI will probably feel a little unusual: Since Le Mans I haven’t really driven the R15 TDI any more, except for the aerodynamics tests – but that was just straight-line driving. But this shouldn’t be a problem for me – and neither should the fact that I didn’t get into a car again right after my accident at Le Mans. I’ll try not to think about that but will fully concentrate on the things to come.”

**Marco Werner (Audi R15 TDI #1):** “Finally, we’re racing again! We’re happy to be in action again. It’s been a long time not having really sat in a race car since

Le Mans. That means you start burning and are hot to race. We're tremendously looking forward to 'Petit Le Mans,' even though we realize that, particularly for Lucas (Luhr) and me, it'll be an extremely tough race. We haven't contested a race for a long time and, unlike our team-mates, were not even able to test since Le Mans. The drivers who regularly compete in the ALMS are more attuned to the rhythm. For us, it'll be a little like starting all over again."

**Dindo Capello (Audi R15 TDI #2):** "It's hard to make a prediction. For us, the race is primarily a test run in preparation for next year's 24 Hours of Le Mans. But for me, personally, the goal after five victories in just six 'Petit Le Mans' events is clear: I want to continue the results from recent years. We're sure that we'll be competitive. That's why we're confident that we'll be able to clinch a good result for Audi."

**Allan McNish (Audi R15 TDI #2):** "I'm very happy about being able to contest a race again. I think everyone on the team feels that way. 'Petit Le Mans' has been a fantastic event for over ten years – and for Dindo (Capello) and me it's also been a very successful one. I'm expecting strong competition by Acura, more than at Sebring, because they've contested a relatively large number of races since then and understand their car better. And of course the battle with Peugeot continues. After the podium result at Le Mans we're shooting for more at Atlanta."

## **Facts and figures**

The two Audi R15 TDI cars are fielded by **Audi Sport Team Joest**, but the car of the reigning ALMS Champions Lucas Luhr and Marco Werner will run under the banner of "**Audi Sport North America**" ... **Team Joest** will contest the "Petit Le Mans" race for the first time since 2003. A part of the squad was deployed to Road Atlanta in 2006 for the debut of the Audi R10 TDI to support Audi Sport North America ... On Sunday before the race there will be a **testing opportunity** at Road Atlanta which Audi Sport Team Joest will use with a car for Dindo Capello, Allan McNish and Marco Werner... **Lucas Luhr** will be the guest star at AUDI AG's booth at the International Motor Show (IAA) in Frankfurt on the weekend before "Petit Le Mans" and will travel to Atlanta afterwards ... **Mike Rockenfeller** was nominated as reserve driver for the race at Road Atlanta. The young German will go to Atlanta directly after the DTM race at Barcelona ... Audi has not been beaten in the "Petit Le Mans" race although the fight was close in each of the previous years: In 2007, Dindo Capello and Allan McNish won with a

lead of just **0.923 seconds**, last year their lead amounted to **4.512 seconds** – after races that lasted almost ten hours ... With a total of five overall victories so far, **Dindo Capello** is the most successful “Petit Le Mans” driver.

#### **All “Petit Le Mans” winners**

1998 Eric van de Poele/Wayne Taylor/Emmanuel Collard (Ferrari)  
1999 David Brabham/Éric Bernard/Andy Wallace (Panoz)  
2000 Michele Alboreto/Dindo Capello/Allan McNish (Audi R8)  
2001 Frank Biela/Emanuele Pirro (Audi R8)  
2002 Dindo Capello/Tom Kristensen (Audi R8)  
2003 Johnny Herbert/JJ Lehto (Audi R8)  
2004 JJ Lehto/Marco Werner (Audi R8)  
2005 Frank Biela/Emanuele Pirro (Audi R8)  
2006 Dindo Capello/Allan McNish (Audi R10 TDI)  
2007 Dindo Capello/Allan McNish (Audi R10 TDI)  
2008 Dindo Capello/Allan McNish (Audi R10 TDI)

#### **The Audi drivers at Road Atlanta**

**Dindo Capello (I):** \* June 17, 1964 in Asti (I); residence: Canelli (I); married to Elisabetta, one son (Giacomo); height: 1.72 m; weight: 66 kg; Aud driver since 1994; “Petit Le Mans” overall victories: 5; Le Mans overall victories: 3

**Lucas Luhr (D):** \* July 22, 1979 in Koblenz (D); residence: Ermatingen (CH); married to Claudia, one daughter (Georgina), one son (Gianluca); height: 1.85 m; weight: 72 kg; Aud driver since 2007; “Petit Le Mans” overall victories: 0 (best result: 3<sup>rd</sup> place); Le Mans overall victories: 0

**Allan McNish (GB):** \* December 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 in 2000 and since 2004; “Petit Le Mans” overall victories: 4; Le Mans overall victories: 2

**Mike Rockenfeller (D):** \* October 31, 1983 in Neuwied (D); residence: Altnau (CH); single (partner Susanne); height: 1.75 m; weight: 67 kg; Aud driver since 2007; “Petit Le Mans” overall victories: 0 (best result: 6<sup>th</sup> place); Le Mans overall victories: 0



**Marco Werner (D):** \* April 04, 1966 in Dortmund (D); residence: Ermatingen (CH); married to Annett, one daughter (Janina); height: 1.75 m; weight: 66 kg; Audi driver since 2002; "Petit Le Mans" overall victories: 1; Le Mans overall victories: 3

### **The schedule at Road Atlanta**

#### **Wednesday, September 23**

14:00 – 14:30	Test session (prototypes)
14:30 – 15:30	Test session (all classes)
15:30 – 16:00	Test session (GT vehicles)

#### **Thursday, September 24**

10:05 – 11:05	Free practice
15:20 – 16:20	Free practice
19:20 – 21:05	Night practice

#### **Friday, September 25**

09:00 – 10:00	Free practice
14:25 – 14:50	Qualifying (GT vehicles)
14:55 – 15:20	Qualifying (prototypes)

#### **Saturday, September 26**

08:15 – 08:40	Warm-up
11:15 – 21:15	Race (1,000 miles or max. 10 hours)

- 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!").