

Communications Motorsport

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Quotes after the 24-hour race on the Nürburgring

Ingolstadt/Nürburg – All four Audi R8 LMS cars saw the checkered flag at their maiden run in the 24-hour race on the Nürburgring. Christian Abt, Jean-François Hemroulle, Pierre Kaffer and Lucas Luhr (Team ABT Sportsline) finished as the overall runners-up and clinched victory in the GT3 class. Quotes after the race.

Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “For the Audi R8 LMS, this race was a final test under extreme conditions on the world’s longest race track. We were able to show that our new GT3 sports car is absolutely competitive for customer sport. And the number 97 Audi R8 LMS ran without the slightest problems despite the incredibly high speed. We’re going to analyze the problems that occurred on the other three vehicles and feed the findings into the final version of the R8 LMS to be delivered to customers starting this fall. We know that we’ve got a very good base.”

Christian Abt (Audi R8 LMS #97/Team ABT Sportsline): “I’m very proud because I’ve been involved in the GT3 vehicle development from the outset. Being one of the drivers standing on the podium at the 24-hour race is really special. I’m totally happy. We’ve said from the beginning that we’d opt for a strategy. That’s exactly what we did and always remained within a striking distance nevertheless. We’re totally happy with second place.”

Jean-François Hemroulle (Audi R8 LMS #97/Team ABT Sportsline): “We maintained a constant pace throughout the race. I think that was the right decision. The car was always in perfect condition. Clinching podium here at the first run of the R8 LMS is a perfect start for Audi.”

Pierre Kaffer (Audi R8 LMS #97/Team ABT Sportsline): "We're very happy. Audi created a very good base for the R8. The ABT Sportsline team converted it into action in a superb way. I can only thank Audi and ABT for letting me take part in this project at this fantastic race. It was a tremendous experience driving the same car with such great teammates. The entire crew did a great job. I thank everyone very much for this."

Lucas Luhr (Audi R8 LMS #97/Team ABT Sportsline): "I'm overwhelmed, totally happy and really have goose bumps. This is really a great result for us. It's too bad that the other cars had problems. I think that second place is a great achievement by Audi, the ABT team and my driver colleagues. It's really wonderful being a part of this squad. Now, I'm looking forward to the next 24-hour race with Audi at Le Mans."

Marc Basseng (Audi R8 LMS #99/Phoenix Racing): "Today we showed that Audi is a serious contender on the Nordschleife. I'm pleased that I had the chance to contribute my endurance experience from the Nürburgring. The way I was welcomed to this family was sensational. I'm happy for ABT to have clinched podium. Of course there's also a feeling of disappointment because our car was so powerful in the end that we'd definitely have had our say in the fight for victory as well."

Mike Rockenfeller (Audi R8 LMS #99/Phoenix Racing): "We had a great weekend. Qualifying was already very good and the race was great as well. We were able to keep the pace of the front runners at all times and also led the race for many hours. Unfortunately, we then had a problem with the drive shaft and only finished fifth. That's too bad because I think we were the fastest Audi in the race. For me, this was my debut on the Phoenix team and it was a lot of fun. My thanks go to the whole squad."

Frank Stippler (Audi R8 LMS #99/Phoenix Racing): "I think we did a decent job. Due to poor weather conditions the car did not have the chance to run as much on the Nordschleife before the race as we'd wanted it to so the race turned into a real test. Considering this, we delivered a good showing and led the field for a long time. In second place, the Abt car is close to the optimum. We know what we need to do to improve for next year. The race was planned as a test and on the whole we can be happy with the way things went."

Frank Biela (Audi R8 LMS #98/Phoenix Racing): “The result is completely okay. I think we can be very happy with our performance. The number 99 car was able to keep the pace for a long time and even set it as the leading vehicle. That was very important for us. Alright, so we had a couple of problems with our new cars, but let’s face it, it’s a 24-hour race. We all know how hard the Nordschleife is on the cars. Second place at such a race is a fantastic achievement. That’s something you can definitely build on.”

Marcel Fässler (Audi R8 LMS #98/Phoenix Racing): “Unfortunately, we had a stop-and-go penalty early on that set us back. During the night we had a cooling problem and then we had to change the transmission as well. That was probably not the best situation. But the base exists in any event. Audi’s got a very good and very fast car. I hope they’ll be here again next year.”

Emanuele Pirro (Audi R8 LMS #98/Phoenix Racing): “This was a very nice weekend for me. I returned to the Nordschleife after 18 years. It was a lot of fun. I had to learn the track again from scratch. But during the race I felt very comfortable in this car. The positive aspect of the race is that the car proved its speed and competitiveness from the get-go. Of course a few minor problems still need to be resolved but for us it was a development race. We’ve always said that. We’re taking a task list with us from this race and loads of information. In the end, all four cars finished. On the whole, we can be happy.”

Hans-Joachim Stuck (Audi R8 LMS #98/Phoenix Racing): “Audi deserves a compliment for a car that made it possible to fight for overall victory right from the start. That this didn’t work out completely is nothing to be ashamed of. Coming to the ‘Green Hell’ – which everyone knows is the toughest test for a new car - with a new car and finishing as the runner-up almost equates to victory. The important thing was the experiences we gained, which Audi Sport can now feed into the customer cars. The whole project was a customer sport run in keeping with the motto ‘100 years of Audi – Vorsprung durch Technik.’“

Mattias Ekström (Audi R8 LMS #100/Team ABT Sportsline): “Driving the R8 on this track is fantastic. Of course there are always a few minor things that can be improved but, basically, the R8 already represents ‘Vorsprung durch Technik’ in an impressive way. Of course I had different expectations of the race than getting stranded right on the first lap. More importantly, though, I’m happy about

the podium result of our “sister car” because I know exactly how much work and passion has been invested in this project.”

Timo Scheider (Audi R8 LMS #100/Team ABT Sportsline): “We saw that it’s possible to clinch a podium place with the Audi R8 LMS right away. At such a high racing speed, this is a sensational result for us. I want to thank Audi for enabling us to fight for podium as early as at this debut race because that was not to be expected. I’m overjoyed that our “sister car” made it on the podium as the runner-up. We’re going to analyze the information and data so that next year we’ll come back even stronger.”

Marco Werner (Audi R8 LMS #100/Team ABT Sportsline): “We were incredibly happy to come back to the Nordschleife. Driving here is fun, especially if you’ve got a car like the R8 LMS. It showed its potential. Unfortunately, we had a little too much bad luck. But you also need to be honest about it: the car has never run across such a distance in one go. As is often the case with Audi, it was probably a very good test run.”

Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Director Team ABT Sportsline): “I think this is a sensational result for Audi as well as for us. We knew that we’d be competing with very tough rivals. For 24 hours, it was an incredibly close race. Achieving such a result with the R8, the new vehicle, on the Nordschleife at the world’s toughest race as it’s called, is a feat on which you can only congratulate everyone who was involved in developing this car.”

Ernst Moser (Teamchef Phoenix Racing): “We didn’t dominate the race but experienced a duel. But most of the time we were in front. It was tremendously exciting and enjoyable. Unfortunately, the ‘defect devil’ struck once. But now that’s water down the river. We need to learn from our mistakes and then we’ll be at the very top. The car can do it, the team can do it, and the brand can do it. So we’ll be able to do it too.”

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Photographs and information available at 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!").