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Season opener for Audi racing series in Asia with numerous innovations

- **Even more suspense: ‘Super Pole’ in qualifying, standing starts, new technology for the car**
- **Rene Koneberg: “We’re set on further consolidating our leading position in developing motorsport in Asia”**
- **Broad TV presence in Asia and live streaming on www.audir8lmscup.com**

Ingolstadt/Beijing, March 17, 2015 – The Audi R8 LMS Cup is starting its fourth season at Zhuhai, South China, on the opening weekend of March 21–22. Audi’s Asia-wide one-make cup will be offering numerous innovations to fans and drivers in 2015. The aerodynamics of the Cup car has been improved and the series will now be featuring standing starts with launch control and a new qualifying format with subsequent single timed laps, plus an equivalence system to balance differences in the drivers’ body weight. Up to 22 entrants will be battling each other in thrilling duels in two sprint races on each of the six race weekends.

The racing series that was launched in 2012 is visiting Taiwan for the first time this year. In addition, the calendar for the season encompasses events in China, South Korea, Malaysia and Japan. On two race weekends, the Audi brand will be on the grid twice. At Fuji (Japan) and Shanghai (China), the fans will be able to watch the Audi R8 LMS Cup together with the prototype team of Audi Sport in the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC).

“The Audi R8 LMS Cup stands for attractive, thrilling races. With the numerous innovations in technology and the regulations we’ve laid the foundation for another season packed with dynamics, plus, at Penbay in Taiwan, we’ve included a new race track in our program. We’re set on further consolidating our leading position in developing motorsport in Asia,” says Rene Koneberg, Head of Audi Sport customer racing Asia.

Several sports channels in Asia, including Fox Sports and Star Sports, will be airing reports of the race weekends in half-hour highlight shows. In the 2014 season, the Audi racing series reached more than 30 million TV viewers and in 2015, all the races can again be watched live on www.audir8lmscup.com.

The winner of last year's Cup and former Formula One driver Alex Yoong has to defend his title against strong competitors, including Marchy Lee, the 2012 Cup winner, the Swiss GT specialist Rahel Frey and China's racing star 'Franky' Cheng Congfu. Cheng is driving for the new 'FAW-VW Audi Racing Team' of Audi's Chinese joint venture. For the first time, an Indian driver – Aditya Patel – is among the entrants as well. In total, the driver field features a well-balanced mix of seasoned pros and ambitious amateurs.

In the past, the series used flying starts but now the format will feature one standing and one flying start per race weekend. The Audi R8 LMS has now been equipped with a launch control system for this purpose which assists the drivers in standing starts. Other innovations: a lighter clutch for more agile response and a rear wing that has been moved further rearwards for greater aerodynamic downforce. In addition, the Cup car has been fitted with a modified system for optimized brake force distribution.

New as well is the so-called Super Pole qualifying format. Following the 15-minute qualifying session, the eight best drivers compete in a second session of single timed laps. A new equivalence concept guarantees greater equality of opportunity. After the driver's weight with full gear has been determined, a sufficient additional weight must be installed on board of the race car so that the driver's body weight and ballast together amount to at least 80 kilograms. As a result, lighter drivers no longer have an advantage.

Greater freedoms are enjoyed by the drivers in 2015 in terms of tactics. Starting this season, two tire sets for qualifying and the race are permitted. In the past, only one set was allowed. A tactical element from last year has proved its viability. As the first GT3 racing series to do so, the Cup established a push-to-pass system which allows the driver to briefly use additional engine power. The number of these boosts is limited and makes for thrilling maneuvers in the race. Another element serves to prevent a possible dominance of individual drivers. The three best drivers in each race have to start with ballast in the subsequent race.

For the first time, the teams can support their cars with their own technical personnel. The first team to have opted for this possibility is B-Quik Racing from Thailand. The option to book the entire turnkey package of the Cup is concurrently available.

Audi Sport customer racing Asia sends its drivers to Europe as well. 19-year-old Shaun Thong from Hong Kong will be contesting the Audi Sport TT Cup in Europe. In addition to that, together with Marchy Lee and Markus Winkelhock he is going to share a cockpit in the Blancpain Endurance Series. For the GT3 Endurance Series, Audi Sport customer racing Asia cooperates with the renowned Phoenix Racing team. Thong is also a member of the first all-Asian driver team of the Audi race experience in the Nürburgring 24 Hours. The commitments of this talent are part of Audi's Young Driver Development Program in Asia. The race cars to be driven by Thong and his team-mates in Europe advertise the Audi R8 LMS Cup, among other things.

This year, the Cup drivers will again be representing the colors of the Audi R8 LMS Cup in the GT Asia racing series. As a result, the commitment of Audi Sport customer racing Asia not only shapes the motorsport landscape in and around China but hones the profile of the Audi R8 LMS Cup in other regions of the world as well.

Audi R8 LMS Cup Official Website at: www.audir8lmscup.com

2015 Audi R8 LMS Cup Calendar*

Date	Circuit	Event	Rounds
March 21-22	Zhuhai International Circuit, China	Pan Delta Racing Festival	1&2
May 16-17	Korea International Circuit, South Korea	GT Asia Series	3&4
July	Penbay International Circuit	Chinese Taipei	5&6
August	Malaysia	TBC*	7&8
October 10-11	Fuji International Speedway, Japan	FIA World Endurance Championship	9&10
October 31 – November 1	Shanghai International Circuit, China	FIA World Endurance Championship	11&12

** Provisional Programme Version 4. Subject to changes*

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In 2014, the Audi Group delivered approximately 1,741,100 cars of the Audi brand to its customers. The company achieved revenue of €53.8 billion and an operating profit of €5.15 billion in 2014. Audi operates globally in more than 100 markets and has production facilities in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Brussels (Belgium), Bratislava (Slovakia), Martorell (Spain), Kaluga (Russia), Aurangabad (India), Changchun and Foshan (China) as well as Jakarta (Indonesia). The brand with the Four Rings will start producing cars in Curitiba (Brazil) this year and in San José Chiapa (Mexico) in 2016. Wholly owned subsidiaries of AUDI AG include quattro GmbH (Neckarsulm), Automobili Lamborghini S.p.A. (Sant'Agata Bolognese, Italy) and sports motorcycle manufacturer Ducati Motor Holding S.p.A. (Bologna, Italy). The company currently employs approximately 80,000 people worldwide, thereof around 58,000 in Germany. Total investment of about €24 billion is planned from 2015 to 2019 – primarily in new products and sustainable technologies. Audi is committed to its corporate responsibility and has anchored the principle of sustainability for its products and processes in its strategy. The long-term goal is CO₂-neutral mobility.