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Tenth pole position for Audi at Sebring

- **Fastest time for Audi FIA World Endurance Championship premiere**
- **André Lotterer surpasses last year's pole by 0.751 seconds**
- **Audi R18 TDI occupies top three grid positions on its farewell run**

Ingolstadt/Sebring, March 16, 2012 – Audi is starting into the new FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) from the top three grid positions. At the Sebring 12 Hours (U.S. state of Florida) André Lotterer managed to post his first fastest time in qualifying as an Audi driver. This means that for the tenth time an Audi will enter the endurance classic race in Florida from the pole position. The other two Audi R18 TDI cars created very good prerequisites for themselves as well: Tom Kristensen took position two and Romain Dumas third on the grid.

Perfect performance: André Lotterer in the Audi R18 TDI designated as car number “1” managed an impressive pinpoint landing. The German only needed one flying lap in the qualifying session that merely lasted 15 minutes to set the fastest time. Right on his first trial Lotterer, who is running together with Marcel Fässler and Benoît Tréluyer, was clocked at 1m 45.820s, beating last year's fastest time by 0.751 seconds. A performance that is exceptionally strong as the current regulations have reduced the engine output of the Audi R18 TDI once more at the beginning of the 2012 season.

The five-time Sebring winner Tom Kristensen, who in car number “2” qualified for the front row as well, followed 0.395 seconds behind Lotterer on position two. The next best rival was Romain Dumas in the Audi R18 TDI of Audi Sport Team Joest. The Frenchman in car number “3” achieved the third-best time (1m 46.935s).

The three top grid positions were a nice reward for the mechanics of Audi Sport Team Joest, who after an incident in the night practice session on Thursday evening in which two of the R18 TDI cars were involved had to work late into the night.

Numerous accidents and red flags in all previous practice sessions proved that the 64 participants in the 60th running of the Sebring 12 Hours are in for a particularly tough race. The drivers nominated to drive the three Audi R18 TDI cars at the start are Marcel Fässler (#1), Allan McNish (#2) and Timo Bernhard (#3). The fans can watch the eagerly awaited WEC inaugural event on Saturday (10:30 to 22:30, local time) via live streaming at www.audi.tv.

The Audi R18 TDI that was victorious in Le Mans in 2011 is contesting its last race at Sebring before being replaced by the new Audi R18 e-tron quattro that was presented to members of the media and guests of Audi of America on the fringes of the event and the new Audi R18 ultra.

Quotes after qualifying

Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “Grid position one for the tenth time at Sebring is a great result after Thursday hadn’t been so easy for us. We’ve now seen a positive turn of events and that’s a nice reward for the team’s hard work. On the other hand we know that although a good qualifying result is very nice the race is obviously the crucial part. We’re in for twelve hours that’ll be difficult for all the teams.”

Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Team Joest): “Well done to André (Lotterer). That was a superb lap which he set right on the mark. The others tried that as well but didn’t quite make it. Romain even had a small spin. The cars are good, we knew that. After the major repair we tried out the third car again in free practice on Friday morning. The guys did a great job. In qualifying we saw that the others aren’t that far away. That’ll be a very close situation in the race. The important thing is that our cars are easy to drive in traffic.”

Marcel Fässler (Audi R18 TDI #1): “I don’t know what André (Lotterer) had for breakfast. His showing was simply incredible – he just needed one lap to lay a 1m 45.8 on track. That’s a word! Well done to André, that was a fantastic lap.”

André Lotterer (Audi R18 TDI #1): “It wasn’t easy because we didn’t drive the last free practice session this morning. Going into qualifying like this is a nice wake-up call. The lap was okay and, fortunately, it was enough for pole. Of course it’s nice being in front today. But with 60 cars on track, tomorrow will be a much tougher story. Pole won’t be of such great help then. Still, it’s a great thing for my team-mates and me.”

Benoît Tréluyer (Audi R18 TDI #1): “Things couldn’t have gone any better for us than this. It was a great qualifying session for us. André (Lotterer) only went out on track for a very short time and it took him only one lap to clinch the pole position for us: a fantastic performance!”

Dindo Capello (Audi R18 TDI #2): “A tremendous result. On the first start of the Audi R18 TDI at Sebring the car takes positions one, two and three. Tom (Kristensen) did a very good job of driving in qualifying. It was important not to risk too much because we need a good car for the race. André’s lap was fantastic. He drove his best time right on his first trial. Well done to him, to Tom and also to Romain (Dumas). The front row on the grid is very good for not having extremely heavy traffic. Allan is a fantastic starter.”

Tom Kristensen (Audi R18 TDI #2): “This was a productive week in which we did a good job of preparing for the race. Qualifying was interesting: In the beginning I was in front. And when I had a particularly good feeling for the next trial a car came out on track from the pit lane. As a result, I wasn’t able to defend myself against André Lotterer who was running really well. Positions one, two and three – in the end we couldn’t have scored a better result than that: a good start into the world championship and the 60th running of the Sebring 12 Hours.”

Allan McNish (Audi R18 TDI #2): “Sebring is showing us again that this track is anything but easy. More than anything else, the heavy traffic will be an issue. It’s important that we’ve been doing well so far. We’ve concentrated on the race set-up and not on having the quickest car in the end. We’ll be doing nothing but overtaking for twelve hours and need a car that’s good in these conditions. Well done to André (Lotterer) and Tom (Kristensen) on taking the front row and to Romain (Dumas), who is completing the trio. That’s a head start to the world championship!”

Timo Bernhard (Audi R18 TDI #3): “For Audi, with positions one, two and three, qualifying went really well. In our car Romain (Dumas) was very quick on a particularly good trial up to the last turn. But then he unfortunately lost the car on the bumps in the track. We took a closer look at that: Up to that point he was equal to André (Lotterer). But third place is not a bad starting base for an endurance race. We’re pleased with the set-up of our Audi R18 TDI and looking positively toward the race.”

Romain Dumas (Audi R18 TDI #3): “Qualifying was quite alright. My first trial hadn’t been so good and on my second one a Rebellion came out of the pit lane right

in front of me. Afterwards the tires weren't good enough anymore and I made a driving mistake. Still, I agree with the result."

Loïc Duval (Audi R18 TDI #3): "Our Qualifying was pretty good. And for Audi the main aim has been achieved, grid positions one to three. Romain (Dumas) drove the third-best time in our car. Unfortunately, he spun on a very fast trial on the bumps in the last turn. Otherwise, a bit more might have been possible."

Qualifying results

- 1 Fässler/Lotterer/Tréluyer (Audi R18 TDI) 1m 45.820s
- 2 Capello/Kristensen/McNish (Audi R18 TDI) 1m 46.215s
- 3 Bernhard/Dumas/Duval (Audi R18 TDI) 1m 46.935s
- 4 Luhr/Graf/Pagenaud (HPD-Honda) 1m 47.536s
- 5 Moreau/Baguette/Kraihamer (OAK-Pescarolo-Judd) 1m 48.319s
- 6 Brabham/Chandhok/Dumbreck (HPD-Honda) 1m 48.439s
- 7 Leventis/Watts/Kane (HPD-Honda) 1m 48.590s
- 8 Prost/Jani/Heidfeld (Lola-Toyota) 1m 48.630s
- 9 Belicchi/Primat/Bleekemolen (Lola-Toyota) 1m 48.956s
- 10 Collard/Boullion/Jousse (Pescarolo-Judd) 1m 50.200s

– End –

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. 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.

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. Under the heading of "Audi balanced mobility," the Company is directing its activities toward a major goal – comprehensive CO₂-neutral mobility.