

Salt Lake City, 14 July 2006

Third start, third pole for the Audi R10 TDI

- **Both Audi R10 TDI sportscars on front row at Salt Lake**
- **Frank Biela fastest in qualifying**
- **First international race on new race track in Utah**

The new Audi R10 TDI remains the sportscar to beat at its first race after its historic victory in the 24 Hours of Le Mans: The two diesel sportscars of Frank Biela (Germany) and Emanuele Pirro (Italy) and their team-mates, Allan McNish (Scotland) and Dindo Capello (Italy), start the fifth round of the American Le Mans Series in Salt Lake City (US state Utah) from the front row once again.

AUDI AG
Kommunikation
85045 Ingolstadt
www.audi.com

Allan McNish initially claimed the fastest lap with a time of 2mins 22.109secs in the 20-minute qualifying session for the "Utah Grand Prix" at the Miller Motorsports Park. Shortly before the end of qualifying, the Scotsman bettered his quickest time (2m 21.762s) only for team-mate Frank Biela to eclipse it seconds later with a 2m 21.553s and clinch for himself and co-driver Emanuele Pirro pole position for the race that starts on Saturday at 18:00hrs local time (Sunday 02:00hrs German time).

The diesel-powered sportscar of Audi proves itself in the desert of Utah in extreme conditions: With outside temperatures of 40 degrees and an altitude of 1,500 meters above sea level, the Audi R10 TDI is competing in intense heat and extremely high terrain.

In the 2hr 45mins race on Saturday, the drivers will await another true test under tough conditions: The completely new racetrack, built approximately 30 miles west of Salt Lake City and staging an international race for the first time, is difficult and demanding. The Audi drivers have had just three and a half hours of free practice on Thursday and Friday to learn the 4.5 miles (7.242 kilometre) circuit before the race, the longest permanent race track in North America.

Quotes after qualifying in Salt Lake City

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “I am very satisfied with the result of this first qualifying session after Le Mans. The new team that was able to get to know the R10 TDI only after Le Mans has worked hard in a short space of time and prepared the cars to the optimum level. It is a good start for the weekend. But the race will be difficult because you can see that the drivers have to fight on every lap. We calculated that one stint will take over 1hr10min here. This means in these high temperatures a high effort is required from the drivers and extreme demands are placed on the R10 TDI.”

Frank Biela (Audi R10 TDI #1): “I am very happy. It is a nice comeback for us having not competed in the last three American Le Mans Series races. The cars worked well and the technicians did a perfect job. My second attempt in qualifying went fantastically well. To be in pole position and to be faster than Allan McNish gives me a good feeling.”

Emanuele Pirro (Audi R10 TDI #1): “First and second is a good team result for the return of the R10 TDI in America since our victory in Sebring. Our cars are competitive and strong. This makes me optimistic. The race on Saturday will be very hard, because the track is difficult. It is quite dirty if you drive off the racing line. It will also be difficult to overtake slower cars.”

Dindo Capello (Audi R10 TDI #2): “A nice result: Like at Sebring, both of the Audi R10 TDI cars are on the front row, that is good for the team. There was a nice duel until the final second. We were already happy about our lap time, then Frank just beat Allan – it was very close. The new race track at Salt Lake City is nice, together with Laguna Seca, it is maybe the nicest racetrack in the American Le Mans Series.”

Allan McNish (Audi R10 TDI #2): “We’ve had to work hard to find a good balance on a track which features many camber and elevation changes and is totally new for us all and has been difficult to learn in a short space of time. But we’ve gradually ‘dialled’ the car in to the circuit and I posted two, good qualifying laps – one at the beginning and one at the end – but Frank just pipped me for pole on his final lap. I wanted pole, it is always nice, but to have an all Audi R10 TDI front row, like on the car’s début at Sebring, is satisfying.”

Dave Maraj (Team Director Team Audi Sport North America): “Our actual qualifying times surprised me but the entire Audi Sport North America team has worked hard since we arrived here to achieve this performance. Frank and Allan must be congratulated for some great driving and for earning us an all-Audi front row. It’s a good start for the return of the R10 TDI to the American Le Mans Series but it’s going to be a long, hot, tough race.”

The starting grid at Salt Lake City

- 1 Biela/Pirro (Audi R10 TDI) 2m 21.554s
- 2 Capello/McNish (Audi R10 TDI) 2m 21.763s
- 3 Weaver/Leitzinger (Lola-AER) 2m 22.535s
- 4 Maassen/Luhr (Porsche) 2m 23.387s
- 5 Bernhard/Dumas (Porsche) 2m 23.460s
- 6 Dyson/Smith (Lola-AER) 2m 24.291s

AUDI AG
Kommunikation
85045 Ingolstadt
www.audi.com

Live Timing and Radio at www.americanlemans.com

Communication Motorsport

Telephone +49 (0)841 89 34200, Telefax +49 (0)841 89 38617

E-Mail motorsport-media@audi.de

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