

Communications Motorsport

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World Champions Audi start from front row

- Audi on first and second row at WEC season opener
- Di Grassi/Duval/Kristensen beaten by five thousandths
- Extremely close performance by three brands in positions one to three

Ingolstadt/Silverstone, April 19, 2014 – Audi demonstrated a good qualifying form at the beginning of a new era in the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC). At Silverstone (Great Britain), last year's World Champions had to admit defeat in a thrilling qualifying session by merely five thousandths of a second. The average of four lap times, which have to be set by two drivers, is decisive for all entrants. The #1 Audi R18 e-tron quattro will start from the front row on Sunday, car #2 from the second row.

For the World Champions Tom Kristensen (DK) and Loïc Duval (F), the beginning of the season was made to measure. The Dane started qualifying and on his two fastest laps achieved an average of 1m 42.625s before turning the car over to the Frenchman. At 1m 42.477s, the nine-time Le Mans winner also drove the fastest lap in the whole field. Together with the two best laps by Loïc Duval car #1 achieved an average of 1m 42.779s, which meant it was the front runner for a short time. In the end, the Audi factory drivers had to admit defeat to the #7 Toyota by only 0.005 seconds. Regarding the results it should be noted that, according to the new regulations, not only the fastest times are crucial in qualifying. Just like in the race, the efficiency rules allow the entrants to use a maximum amount of energy per lap in qualifying. The new Audi R18 e-tron quattro consumes up to 30 percent less, but despite the lower consumption is on par with last year's time levels.

The #2 sister car on the other hand struggled with some adversity in the season's first qualifying session. Benoît Tréluyer (F), according to his own assessment, found it difficult to optimally coordinate the maximum permissible energy consumption with his time chase. The 2012 World Champion did not find his typically fast rhythm. Afterwards, his team-mate André Lotterer (D) had to do without radio communications on his first two laps because a cable had separated from his helmet. When he established the connection again himself and was able to rely on

Audi Sport Team Joest's instructions from the pit lane he improved once more on his last outing and the #2 diesel hybrid sports car advanced from fifth to fourth place.

The 6-hour race at Silverstone starts on Sunday at 12:00 (13:00 CEST). Lucas di Grassi (BR), who has been registered for the World Championship for the first time this year, will drive the first stint in car #1, André Lotterer in car #2. Eurosport 2 will broadcast the race from 14:00 to 15:00, Eurosport 1 will cover the final stage of the race from 18:00 to 19:00 (CEST).

Quotes after qualifying

Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): "We experienced a very thrilling qualifying session. Of course it's painful to have missed the pole position by only five thousandths. The new cars at the front are very close together despite the different aerodynamics concepts they use here. That's why we could see big differences in various track sectors, for instance in terms of top speed. I'm very eager to see what will happen in the race, because it's probably going to rain. That would suit us well because we decided to drive with relatively high downforce – which may not have been optimal in qualifying. Still, I'm pleased with the result. We worked very hard during the winter. Now we can tell that we're in contention at the front."

Chris Reinke (Head of LMP): "As we were able to previously see in the Prologue at Le Castellet in March and in the first practice sessions at Silverstone, the cars of the three manufacturers are very close in terms of their lap times despite the big differences in their concepts. So the audience can look forward to an exciting situation from a basic perspective. We can hardly wait for the first race of the season to start."

Ralf Jüttner (Team Director Audi Sport Team Joest): "This was a thrilling qualifying session. All three manufacturers are represented on the top three grid positions. We already thought we'd clinched position one but then Kazuki Nakajima made up another tenth of a second. Afterwards, Loïc would have liked to go out once more. It would have been possible to recapture the pole position but we decided to save tires for the race. If he hadn't been back in the pits yet but still out on track we probably would have given it another try. My congratulations to Toyota on their first pole position."

Lucas di Grassi (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #1): "It was definitely a very close qualifying session. Tom Kristensen and Loïc Duval showed brilliant performances. Now we've got to wait and see how the weather develops on Sunday."

Loïc Duval (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #1): "At the front it was really close. It's a

shame it wasn't enough for the pole position. Unfortunately, a Toyota cost me a bit of time on my second fast lap. But I don't know if I could have achieved the best time otherwise. But all in all, we're happy with a position on the front row. That's not a bad beginning for the new season."

Tom Kristensen (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #1): "An incredibly exciting qualifying session with new cars, new participants and new rules. The way the grid looks we can expect a very thrilling race. The lap times are very good despite the lower energy consumption. The LMP1 models such as our Audi are the most fascinating race cars of the world for me at the moment. 'Thank you' to Audi Sport and Audi Sport Team Joest for having done such a good job of developing and preparing our cars."

Marcel Fässler (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #2): "The result is really close, considering that very different concepts are competing. That makes it very interesting. We didn't have an easy qualifying session but came close to the front runners. We can keep the pace on Sunday. Our team did a good job. It'll be a very interesting race."

André Lotterer (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #2): "I'm happy with my two laps and the balance of the car is okay. Unfortunately, a cable connection on my helmet came off and I had to fix it again even though that caused me to lose some time. Then our race engineer Leena Gade told me that I should drive another lap. That allowed us to improve once more. This is not a bad starting base for the race in which all the teams are faced with a lot of unknown quantities due to the new regulations."

Benoît Tréluyer (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #2): "Unfortunately, things didn't go the way I'd been wishing for. On my outings, I used too much energy and, as a result, had to lift on the last straight. During the tests in winter I achieved the consumption target but, unfortunately, today I didn't. My team-mate André Lotterer was doing really well in qualifying today and our Audi R18 e-tron quattro was running perfectly. Tomorrow, I've got to be as good as my two team-mates."

Qualifying results

- 1 Nakajima/Sarrazin/Wurz (Toyota) 1m 42.774s
- 2 Di Grassi/Duval/Kristensen (Audi R18 e-tron quattro) 1m 42.779s
- 3 Dumas/Jani/Lieb (Porsche) 1m 43.087s
- 4 Fässler/Lotterer/Tréluyer (Audi R18 e-tron quattro) 1m 43.137s
- 5 Buemi/Davidson/Lapierre (Toyota) 1m 43.189s
- 6 Bernhard/Hartley/Webber (Porsche) 1m 43.226s
- 7 Belicchi/Kraihamer/Leimer (Lola-Toyota) 1m 44.285s
- 8 Beche/Heidfeld/Prost (Lola-Toyota) 1m 44.392s
- 9 Canal/Pla/Rusinov (Morgan-Nissan) 1m 49.156s



10 Bradley/Howson/Matsuda (Oreca-Nissan) 1m 49.439s

- End -

The Audi Group delivered approximately 1,575,500 cars of the Audi brand to customers in 2013. In 2013 the company reported revenue of €49.9 billion and an operating profit of €5.03 billion. The company is globally operating in more than 100 markets with production facilities in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Brussels (Belgium), Bratislava (Slovakia), Martorell (Spain), Kaluga (Russia), Aurangabad (India), Changchun (China) and Jakarta (Indonesia). Since December 2013, the brand with the Four Rings has been producing cars also in Foshan (China). In 2015, Audi will start production in São José dos Pinhais (Brazil), followed by 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 Ducati Motor Holding S.p.A. (Bologna, Italy), the sports motorcycle manufacturer. The company currently employs more than 73,500 people worldwide, thereof more than 52,500 in Germany. Total investment of around €22 billion is planned from 2014 to 2018 – 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.