



Communications Motorsport

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World Champions Audi unfortunate in WEC season opener after strong performance

- **Accidents end the race of both Audi R18 e-tron quattro cars**
- **Fastest lap time in qualifying and the race for Audi**
- **Intensive work phase before the second WEC round in two weeks**

Ingolstadt/Silverstone, April 20, 2014 – For Audi, the season opener of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) at Silverstone began with good performances, but the race ended in disappointment. Both Audi R18 e-tron quattro cars retired due to accidents in which the drivers sustained no injuries.

The World Champions had started strongly. At the beginning of the new sports car era which is governed by efficiency regulations, Audi proved its technological expertise in the battle against two challengers. World Champion Tom Kristensen (DK), sharing car #1 with Loïc Duval (F) and Lucas di Grassi (BR), managed setting the fastest single lap in qualifying on Saturday. A day later André Lotterer (D), on posting the fastest race lap, showed that the diesel hybrid sports car from Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm is fast across a single lap despite a restrictive rating.

In the thrilling early phase of the 6-hour race, Lotterer advanced from position four on the grid to the front within 22 minutes. Rainshowers setting in made for extremely critical track conditions in the first hour. On the slippery track, Lucas di Grassi lost control of his car and crashed into the guard rails. The Audi factory driver managed to head for the pits under his own power. However, Audi Sport Team Joest discovered damage to the monocoque and took car #1 out of the race.

When André Lotterer slipped into a gravel trap on the wet track on lap 34, car #2 lost four laps in the rescue operation. The 2012 World Champion turned over his race car after 1h 51m of driving time in fourth place to Benoît Tréluyer (F). When the rain became heavier the Frenchman received an intermediate tire version from partner Michelin. Twelve laps later, Tréluyer, in the fast Copse corner, slipped off track and damaged the front of his R18 e-tron quattro too severely for heading back to the pit lane.

With that, Audi experienced a sad premiere. The 2012 and 2013 World Champions had never suffered the retirement of all its race cars in any of the previous WEC races. The last sports car race in which damage resulting from an accident prevented Audi from finishing was the Petit Le Mans race at Road Atlanta in the 2011 season. With 13 victories in 24 races (success rate: 54 percent) the R18 has set the benchmark in its era since 2011.

For Audi Sport and Audi Sport Team Joest, a race against time has begun. In only two weeks, round two of the WEC is on the agenda at Spa (B). By that time, the damaged cars #1 and #2 have to be prepared from scratch again. In addition, in preparation for the Le Mans 24 Hours, a third R18 e-tron quattro, shared by Filipe Albuquerque (P) and Marco Bonanomi (I), is being prepared.

Quotes after the race

Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “Losing both cars in a race due to accidents is extremely bitter. It’s the first time since Road Atlanta 2011 that we’re going home from a race with the Le Mans prototypes without having scored a single point. But the performance at the beginning of the race was good. When it started to rain we trusted our weather radar and waited too long before changing the tires. That was our mistake and, in retrospect, an unnecessary risk. It really hit us at full force: Both cars slipped off track. The car of Lucas (di Grassi) was so heavily damaged that we had to take it out of the race. André (Lotterer) was able to continue driving but lost a lot of time. Although afterwards we played it safe with the tires and Benoît Tréluyer was running on intermediates that worked well, he slipped off track, too. As both cars were heavily damaged, we’re in for a real marathon run before the next WEC race at Spa.”

Chris Reinke (Head of LMP): “The beginning of the race weekend at Silverstone was the way we’d imagined it to be. The field was close together and we were able to confirm our performance in qualifying by setting the fastest single lap. The fastest race lap goes to the R18 as well. That both cars didn’t finish is – fortunately – an unusual situation for us. But I’m sure this will bring the team even closer together and that we’re going to do everything within our power to properly prepare the cars again for Spa and strike back there.”

Ralf Jüttner (Team Director Audi Sport Team Joest): “A total loss is the worst-case scenario. We’re going home with zero points. We’d have wished to finish the race, also in order to gather experience. Of course the conditions were extremely difficult and with regard to the tires we made a choice that proved too risky. Losing both cars and having to pack up shortly after the first half of the race was absolutely not what

we'd imagined. The positive thing is: The car is good – that was obvious. Up to our retirement we also did a pretty good job of coping with the regulations, even though there's still a lot to learn. For the guys, having to prepare two cars again from scratch, is going to be really rough now. There's not much time left until Spa – where we'll have to try and do better."

Marcel Fässler (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #2): "The weekend showed a lot of positive things for us. The car was very fast in qualifying, as well as in the early phase of the race. We were in a good basic position before the rain set in. But then we unfortunately made the wrong decision of continuing to drive on slicks for such a long time. Of course I'm happy that nothing happened to Ben in his accident. We'd have obviously liked to finish the race and take home points. Unfortunately, that wasn't possible today. A few things went wrong today that normally never happen at Audi. Scoring no points at all is something that hasn't happened in a long time."

André Lotterer (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #2): "I had a good start and quickly took the lead. In the beginning, it was also real fun. But, unfortunately, you'll have days like this at some point in time. That's very unfortunate, but we've got to live with it. Luckily, nothing happened to Lucas and Benoît. The good news is that our car is fast, which our fastest race laps has shown as well."

Benoît Tréluyer (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #2): "As far as the performance of our car goes, we can be pleased. But, unfortunately, we had two accidents in the race. Obviously, not finishing with either car is not what we aim for. In such wet conditions, it's hard to name a cause. Whether it was the driver, the general track conditions, the curbs in a particular corner or the car is hard to say in such conditions. We're going to analyze this in detail over the next few days. As a driver, you can make a mistake, but we need to find out the cause and ensure that something like this won't happen to us at Le Mans."

Lucas di Grassi (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #1): "We hadn't expected the rain to become so heavy, that's why we continued to run on slicks. But, unfortunately, the track was too cold and wet for the tires. That's why I had an accident in which the monocoque was so severely damaged that we had to give up. This wasn't a good day for us, although in dry conditions the prospects had been promising at the beginning of the race. There were a few nice duels at the front of the field. It won't be an easy year, from now on we can't afford to make any more mistakes. But the season is still long and I'm confident that Audi will be successful again in the next race and we're going to score many points."

Loïc Duval (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #1): "Today, unfortunately, the luck you need in racing left us in difficult weather conditions. I'm not blaming anybody because it



was raining heavily while we were still running on slicks. We'd expected the rain to end soon. That's why my team-mates didn't pit. Unfortunately, the rain wouldn't stop and so our car had an accident and subsequently our sister car too. But on a positive note, we were very competitive this weekend. From now on, we mustn't lose any points anymore."

Tom Kristensen (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #1): "Lucas was driving an excellent stint. Unfortunately, our race was much too short after two promising days of practice and qualifying. The conditions became very dangerous in the rain. Our car spun off track. These things can happen. We need to avoid getting into such situations in the future. Unfortunately, the World Championship started for us with the worst possible result."

Race results

- 1 Buemi/Davidson/Lapierre (Toyota), 167 laps in 5h 22m 42.296s
- 2 Nakajima/Sarrazin/Wurz (Toyota) – 1 lap
- 3 Bernhard/Hartley/Webber (Porsche) – 2 laps
- 4 Beche/Heidfeld/Prost (Lola-Toyota) – 8 laps
- 5 Canal/Pla/Rusinov (Morgan-Nissan) – 13 laps
- 6 Bradley/Howson/Matsuda (Oreca-Nissan) – 15 laps
- 7 Holzer/Lietz/Makowiecki (Porsche) – 20 laps
- 8 Bergmeister/Pilet/Tandy (Porsche) – 20 laps
- 9 Mücke/Turner (Aston Martin) – 20 laps
- 10 Bruni/Vilander (Ferrari) – 20 laps

– 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.