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Audi on front row for Le Mans dress rehearsal

- **Timo Bernhard takes second on the grid at Spa-Francorchamps**
- **All Audi R15 TDI prototypes on the first three rows**
- **Race comeback of Le Mans record winner Tom Kristensen**

Ingolstadt/Spa-Francorchamps, May 8, 2010 – Audi will tackle the dress rehearsal for the Le Mans 24 Hours from the front row of the starting grid. Timo Bernhard qualified second for the 1000 km of Spa-Francorchamps (Belgium) with a time of 1m 58.519s (212.746 km/h).

On the 7.004-km track, the German was just 0.635 seconds slower than pole setter Sébastien Bourdais in the Peugeot 908. Audi Sport Team Joest had expected a bigger gap because, in contrast to the competition, all three Audi R15 TDI prototypes are running in full Le Mans spec – and thus with much less down force than usual at Spa-Francorchamps.

Audi Sport Team Joest was able to improve the drivability of the three Diesel-powered sports cars – trimmed for high-speed in low down force specification – during the three free practice sessions which were run in cold and changing weather conditions on Friday and Saturday. After the 20-minute qualifying session, the drivers of all three R15 TDI cars were happy with the improvements and the handling.

Timo Bernhard managed a perfect lap in qualifying. André Lotterer recorded the fifth fastest time in his first race for Audi Sport Team Joest despite having not completed a single lap in the morning practice due to a fuel leak.

Tom Kristensen, competing in his first race since injuring a foot, set the sixth fastest time. The Dane was not seen in the “La Source” hairpin by the driver of a slower car when he started his first flying lap. Kristensen’s R15 TDI lost a front left aerodynamic part in the contact. Later the Le Mans record winner had to abandon his fastest lap due to yellow flags.



For Sunday's race changeable weather has been forecast. Eurosport will show the opening stages of the race from 1115 hrs (local time) live from Spa-Francorchamps.

Quotes after qualifying

Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): "We have worked hard and improved the cars from session to session. We continuously made progress up to qualifying. Timo (Bernhard) did a great lap. But also André (Lotterer) and Tom (Kristensen) drove well as all three cars had significant changes compared to the free practice session. I think we have a good basis for tomorrow and while preparing the race setup we will bear in mind that it should again be cooler and rainy."

Timo Bernhard (Audi R15 TDI #9): "I am satisfied with my performance. For the team it is a small success to start from the front row tomorrow. We see the race here in preparation for Le Mans. Such a feeling of success helps the entire team to find even more confidence. It was a good debut. So far the weekend for the No. 9 crew was very good."

Romain Dumas (Audi R15 TDI #9): "I am positively surprised about the outcome of qualifying. Timo (Bernhard) has driven a very good lap – a great performance from him. The higher temperatures in qualifying played into our hands. I hope we can build on this performance tomorrow in the race."

Mike Rockenfeller (Audi R15 TDI #9): "For us, the whole thing is a test race as a preparation for Le Mans. I had my first dry laps today. Timo (Bernhard) has done a great job in qualifying and squeezed the maximum out of the car. We are on the front row, that's a good sign. Now we hope for stable conditions for the race."

Marcel Fässler (Audi R15 TDI #8): "André (Lotterer) did a superb job. He was not in the car at all this morning and did not know the tire compound under these conditions. We are doing well, in the middle of the pack. It has been a great start for us."

André Lotterer (Audi R15 TDI #8): "It was not easy for me because I did not drive in the third free practice session. I did not know what to expect in terms of tires and track conditions. I just went out and did my best. It is particularly important that we succeeded in further improving the car compared to yesterday."

Benoît Treliuyer (Audi R15 TDI #8): "Our main goal is to train for Le Mans. We are in the middle of it. Unfortunately I could not drive much today because of a fuel leak. I



do not know the track well as the last time I was here was twelve years ago. But this does not stress me. I still have got the warm-up and the race.”

Dindo Capello (Audi R15 TDI #7): “Like at Le Castellet, we have also used the qualifying session to improve the R15 TDI for the race tomorrow. The car is now much more pleasant to drive than this morning and yesterday. Driving with low down force on such a track is not easy. But we already knew this before we came here. We will try to get the best possible result for Audi.”

Tom Kristensen (Audi R15 TDI #7): “Running in Le Mans specification on this track, it was a good qualifying for Audi in general. Personally I was not too lucky. At the beginning of my first flying lap I was not seen by another car. We touched and I’ve lost a part on the car. Nevertheless the car still felt okay and I had a very good lap before I had to slow down because of a yellow flag. Thus the car has more potential – and a good base set-up for Le Mans.”

Allan McNish (Audi R15 TDI #7): “From the Audi perspective the qualifying session was encouraging. Timo (Bernhard) is much closer to the top than expected. I had expected a gap of more than a second. That gives us confidence for the race. Grid position six is not bad, especially since we are in the middle between the Peugeots and can mix them up. The race could be dictated by changing weather conditions.”

Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Team Joest): “We are racing here with a little handicap because we do not drive with the down force which you would normally use here. But that is part of our Le Mans preparation. We’re making progress. Also qualifying was a good step forward. The starting grid is a nice mix – the start could be fun tomorrow ...”

Qualifying results

- 1 Lamy/Bourdais/Pagenaud (Peugeot) 1m 57.884s
- 2 Bernhard/Dumas/Rockenfeller (Audi R15 TDI) 1m 58.519s
- 3 Montagny/Sarrazin/Minassian (Peugeot) 1m 59.421s
- 4 Panis/Lapierre/Duval (Peugeot) 1m 59.623s
- 5 Fässler/Lotterer/Treluyer (Audi R15 TDI) 1m 59.707s
- 6 Capello/Kristensen/McNish (Audi R15 TDI) 1m 59.795s
- 7 Gené/Wurz/Davidson (Peugeot) 1m 59.989s
- 8 Ragues/Mailleux/Ickx (Lola-Aston Martin) 2m 02.413s
- 9 Prost/Jani (Lola-Rebellion) 2m 02.845s
- 10 Leventis/Watts/Kane (Acura/Honda) 2m 03.135s



AUDI Group sold around 950,000 cars in 2009. The Company posted revenue of €29.8 billion and an operating profit of €1.6 billion. Audi produces vehicles in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Changchun (China) and Brussels (Belgium). Aurangabad in India saw the start of CKD production of the Audi A6 at the end of 2007 and of the Audi A4 in early October 2008. The Company is active in more than 100 markets worldwide. AUDI AG's wholly owned subsidiaries include AUDI HUNGARIA MOTOR Kft., Automobili Lamborghini Holding S.p.A. in Sant'Agata Bolognese (Italy) and quattro GmbH in Neckarsulm. Audi currently employs around 58,000 people worldwide, including 45,500 in Germany. Between 2010 and 2012 the Audi Group is planning to invest around €5.5 billion in order to sustain the Company's technological lead embodied in its "Vorsprung durch Technik" slogan. By 2015, Audi plans to significantly increase the number of models in its portfolio to 42.

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 newly established Audi Environmental Foundation.