

Communications Motorsport

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Audi R10 TDI on front row for first time in LMS

- **Thrilling qualifying at Spa-Francorchamps**
- **Allan McNish clinches position two for Audi**
- **Both Audi cars on first two rows of the grid**

Ingolstadt/Spa-Francorchamps – At its third running in the European Le Mans Series, the Audi R10 TDI starts to the race from the front row of the grid for the first time. In qualifying at Spa-Francorchamps (Belgium), Allan McNish managed to push himself between the two Peugeot 908s. Mike Rockenfeller in the second R10 TDI of Audi Sport Team Joest secured fourth place on the grid despite having been obstructed on his fastest lap.

Due to accidents the qualifying on the 7.003-kilometre Grand Prix circuit in the Ardennes had to be stopped twice. Therefore, Audi Sport Team Joest's strategy of going out at the very beginning of the 20-minute session paid off. When the red flags were flown for the first time, both Audi R10 TDI cars were at the front of the field.

Allan McNish on his first and only flying lap set a time of 1m 58.795s, which was only beaten by Stéphane Sarrazin in the quicker of the two Peugeots shortly before the end of qualifying. McNish decided not to go out for another trial in order to save the tyres for the race.

Mike Rockenfeller, as well, did his quickest lap at the very beginning of qualifying. The young German had to overtake two other cars and was slowed by a car spinning in front of him in the chicane before the start and finish. Nevertheless,



he managed taking fourth place on the grid. After the first red flag period, “Rocky” went out again but was not able to improve on used tyres any more.

Mike Rockenfeller and his team-mate Alexandre Prémat will start to the third round of the Le Mans Series as the leaders of the drivers’ standings on Sunday at 12:50. Eurosport will broadcast the starting phase live from 12:45 and, starting at 10:45 p.m. (local time), will air a half-hour summary report.

Quotes after qualifying at Spa-Francorchamps

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “We had figured that we’d be a little closer to the Peugeots here than at the first two races and are pleased to be starting from the front row. The gaps between the first four cars are very small. I think that’s a good base for an exciting race.”

Dindo Capello (Audi R10 TDI #1): “Allan (McNish) did a great job in qualifying and the gap between us and the pole-starting Peugeot in qualifying was not as much as we thought, which means for the race we are more confident than we were at Barcelona and Monza. I really hope that at Spa Allan and I will have the chance for victory because we have had very bad luck since the beginning of the season – we must catch up and fight for the championship.”

Allan McNish (Audi R10 TDI #1): “I was able to get a very good lap in at the very beginning just before the first red flag. We knew that the potential to improve on that was minimal and so we decided to save ourselves and the tyres especially for the start of the race. We have seen consistently in previous races that the Audi R10 TDI is more competitive and can race better. Over six hours and 160-plus laps round this circuit that’s the type of car that we will actually need.”

Alexandre Prémat (Audi R10 TDI #2): “Starting from position four on the second row is a good base. Everything is possible, particularly here at Spa-Francorchamps. I’m expecting an action-packed race with lots of safety car periods. If we stay clear of any trouble, we’ll clinch another good result.”

Mike Rockenfeller (Audi R10 TDI #2): “On my fast lap I had to overtake three cars and one of them spun directly in front of me. Between this morning and qualifying we made a lot of changes to the car and I first had to get used to them.



I think we're well set for the race. At a six-hour race, you don't need to start from pole in order to finish at the very front."

Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Team Joest): "Allan (McNish) drove a fantastic lap – just one, and he got it right on the mark. That's the way we really like things to be going. I take my hat off to him! That Peugeot managed to bump us from pole in the end is not surprising. But the fact that only one of the two Peugeots made to the front is. 'Rocky' did well too. He and Alex (Prémat) had opted for an aerodynamic version with more downforce for a long time but then decided to switch to a different variant for qualifying. That practically gave 'Rocky' a new car. Considering this, his time was very good. It was a superb performance by everyone, well done!"

The starting grid at Spa-Francorchamps

- 1 Lamy/Sarrazin/Wurz (Peugeot) 1m 58.069s
- 2 Capello/McNish (Audi R10 TDI) 1m 58.795s
- 3 Gené/Minassian/Villeneuve (Peugeot) 1m 58.787s
- 4 Prémat/Rockenfeller (Audi R10 TDI) 2m 00.796s
- 5 Charouz/Mücke (Lola-Aston Martin) 2m 02.510s
- 6 Collard/Boullion (Pescarolo-Judd) 2m 04.709s
- 7 Primat/Tinseau (Pescarolo-Judd) 2m 05.201s
- 8 Verstappen/van Merksteijn (Porsche) 2m 05.841s
- 9 Belicchi/Pompidou/Zacchia (Lola-Judd) 2m 05.880s
- 10 Barbosa/Ickx/Forsten (Pescarolo-Judd) 2m 05.918s

Photographs and information available at www.audi-motorsport.info

AUDI AG sold a total of 964,151 cars in 2007 and thus achieved its twelfth consecutive record year. With revenue of €33,617 million and profit before tax of €2,915 million, the company attained its best figures ever. Audi produces vehicles in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Changchun (China) and Brussels (Belgium). At the end of 2007, production of the Audi A6 started in Aurangabad, India. The company is active in more than 100 markets worldwide. AUDI AG's wholly owned subsidiaries include Automobili Lamborghini Holding S.p.A. in Sant'Agata Bolognese, Italy, and quattro GmbH in Neckarsulm. Audi employs about 54,000 people worldwide, including 45,000 in Germany. The brand with the four rings invests more than €2 billion each year in order to sustain the company's technological lead embodied in its "Vorsprung durch Technik" slogan. Audi plans to significantly increase the number of models in its portfolio by 2015, from the 26 currently on offer to 40.