

Communications Motorsport

Jürgen Pippig
Telephone: +49 (0)841 89 34200
E-mail: motorsport-media@audi.de

Eva-Maria Veith
Telephone: +49 173 939 35 22
E-mail: eva-maria.veith@audi.de

September 26, 2009

Audi R15 TDI wins efficiency trophy in the U.S.

- **Rain brings “Petit Le Mans” race to an early end**
- **Classification after less than five of the scheduled 10 hours**
- **Audi R15 TDI winner of the “Michelin GreenX Challenge”**

Ingolstadt/Atlanta – Audi Sport Team Joest’s test entry in the 1000-mile “Petit Le Mans” race at Road Atlanta (U.S. state of Georgia) had an unexpected outcome: The American endurance classic had to be red flagged just before half-time due to torrential rainfall. Although Audi had led almost entirely, the two R15 TDI prototypes were only classified in third and fourth positions. Small consolation: The Diesel-powered racing car won the efficiency award “Michelin GreenX Challenge” – a trophy awarded to the most environmentally friendly car.

The technically innovative Audi R15 TDI had also been the fastest car on race day. At the start in wet conditions, Allan McNish and Marco Werner immediately passed the two Peugeot 908s which started from the front row of the grid, pulling further and further away from their competitors. Then on a drying track, the superiority of the R15 TDI was even more impressive: Only a caution period prevented Allan McNish putting the second of the two Peugeots a lap down after one and a half hours.

In the following hours, drizzle and a total of seven caution periods ensured that the leaders stayed close together. Despite this, Allan McNish and Dindo Capello kept the lead for more than four hours before McNish spun behind the Safety Car on the extremely slippery track at the start of the fifth hour dropping behind the two Peugeot 908s.

When heavy rain started shortly afterwards, Audi Sport Team Joest was quick to react and brought the two R15 TDI cars into the pits for a change to rain tires a lap earlier than the competition from Peugeot. The rain, however, became so torrential that more and more cars spun off the track due to aquaplaning, including the two Audi R15 TDI cars.

When the prototypes could not even follow the Safety Car anymore, the race was red flagged after 4h52m of the scheduled 10 hours. At this point, the two Peugeot 908s were running slightly ahead of the two Audi R15 TDI cars. As the weather did not improve, the race was not re-started with Peugeot declared the winners although less than half of the distance had been completed.

For safety reasons, Audi also voted not to re-start the race although the two Audi R15 TDI cars would have been hard to beat on this day – a positive feeling with a view regarding Le Mans 2010.

Quotes after qualifying

Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “Except for the result, we can draw a positive conclusion. We wanted to use the race to gain experience with the R15 TDI, and we have seen that the car has the basic performance. That was very important for us. We’ve always been faster or at least on the same level as our competitors in the rain, on a drying track and in dry conditions. Unfortunately, Allan (McNish) spun behind the Safety Car. When the heavier rain started, we brought our cars back into good positions with good strategic decisions. But then the red flag came out. The fact that the race was not re-started was a shame for us but absolutely right for safety reasons.”

Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Team Joest): “We came here to learn and we learnt a lot – among other things that a race can be very crazy ... The early stages were amazing: Allan (McNish) was impressive in the rain. Peugeot had nothing to oppose, surprisingly. But later Peugeot had an awful lot of luck. They were about to be lapped by us when the first yellows came out. It was very unfortunate that Allan spun behind the Safety Car and lost the lead due to this mishap. Nobody could know that this would transform into the final result of the race which was really a shame for us. For me personally, this race has no result and I see us as the moral winners. Until the red flag it was definitely a good show.”

Dindo Capello (Audi R15 TDI #2): “This was a crazy race. Unfortunately, the weather conditions have destroyed a possible big show, because I think it would have been a great fight with Peugeot until the very end. But we already had to stop before half-time. We had an awful lot of bad luck with the yellow flags and lost the lead just a few minutes before the red flag. That was really bad luck! On the other hand, it was very nice to be back in America, especially at Petit. And it was good to see that we can more than match the pace of Peugeot – unlike at Le Mans.”

Allan McNish (Audi R15 TDI #2): “Obviously the end – having the race stopped due to bad weather – was very frustrating because we were in such a strong position at the beginning. We had a good and drivable car. I was able to pull quite a gap which was slashed by the yellows. I lost the lead because of a spin behind the Safety Car when the track had very little grip due to the drizzle. We would have had another shot on it when the red flag came out. We still had 650 miles or so of a 1,000-mile race to run. It was sad for everybody but the track conditions made it impossible to continue.”

Lucas Luhr (Audi R15 TDI #1): “This was a very short-lived pleasure. Since I’ve only contested three races this year, I obviously would have liked to race for longer. I think we would have had a really good chance here. But safety comes first. It really would have been too risky to re-start the race. Therefore, the decision was entirely reasonable. The outcome of the race is not a happy one for us. But we have to live with that.”

Marco Werner (Audi R15 TDI #1): “If the conditions would have been a little bit better we would have really been looking for a re-start. We were one lap down, but we would have had a chance to come back onto the lead lap. We had a small advantage over Peugeot under these conditions. On the drying track, our cars were much more gentle to the tires than the Peugeots. We had a clear 1-2 lead at the beginning and a 1-2 victory would have been possible. It’s a shame that Audi has been beaten for the first time at Petit. But I don’t see it like this: Under real circumstances the result would have been different. This was no real race.”



Results

- 1 Sarrazin/Montagny (Peugeot) 184 laps
- 2 Minassian/Lamy (Peugeot) + 2.011s
- 3 Capello/McNish (Audi R15 TDI) + 3.465s
- 4 Luhr/Werner (Audi R15 TDI) - 1 lap
- 5 Panis/Lapierre/Dumas (Oreca-AIM) - 3 laps
- 6 Brabham/Sharp/Franchitti (Acura/Honda) - 4 laps
- 7 Dyson/Smith (Lola-Mazda) - 7 laps
- 8 Melo/Kaffer/Salo (Ferrari) - 14 laps
- 9 Müller/Milner/Müller (BMW) - 15 laps
- 10 Henzler/Werner (Porsche) - 15 laps

- Ends -

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

AUDI AG sold a total of 1,003,469 cars in 2008 and thus achieved its 13th consecutive record year. The Company posted new record figures with revenue of €34.2 billion and profit before tax of €3.2 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 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 46,500 in Germany. The brand with the four rings invests around €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 to 42. The AUDI brand celebrates its 100th birthday in 2009. The company was founded by August Horch in Zwickau on July 16, 1909; he named it AUDI after the Latin translation of his surname ("hark!").