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## **Audi R18 TDI in third place on its debut**

- **Capello/Kristensen/McNish clinch podium result at Spa**
- **Third, fourth and fifth places at R18 TDI's first run in a race**
- **Strong performance in early phase went unrewarded**

**Ingolstadt/Spa-Francorchamps, May 7, 2011 – Audi Sport Team Joest experienced a roller-coaster ride of emotions on the new Audi R18 TDI's race debut at Spa-Francorchamps (Belgium): After a perfect qualifying session and a great showing in the early phases of the race the three Audi R18 TDI cars occupied positions three, four and five.**

At the beginning of the race the 34,600 spectators saw a strong performance of the new LMP1 sports car of AUDI AG. André Lotterer took the lead at the start and defended it almost up to his first pit stop. Timo Bernhard, who had started from pole, and Allan McNish (despite a spin on the first lap) were part of the action at the front of the field during the first hour as well and fought some thrilling duels with their rivals in heavy traffic.

However, a number of minor incidents, which in total had major effects, caused all three Audi R18 TDI cars to lose ground. André Lotterer, who had a clear lead in the early phase, had to be pushed backward at his first pit stop and lost valuable time in the process. His team-mate Benoît Tréluyer had to make an unscheduled stop after picking up an unusually large piece of rubber on his front left-hand tire. Shortly afterward the same phenomenon occurred again, causing the Frenchman to slide into the gravel trap and losing two laps. Marcel Fässler subsequently complained about a car that was too demanding to drive – he, too, was struggling with pick-up. In the end, the Audi R18 TDI designated as car number “2” finished fifth.

Timo Bernhard, who had started from pole position, suffered misfortune as well. In the battle for the top the rear of his car was touched by another vehicle in the fast “Blanchimont” sector. The rear hood and the diffuser were damaged in the incident. Romain Dumas and Mike Rockenfeller were subsequently struggling with handling differences in left- and right-hand turns. Like the other two Audi R18 TDI vehicles



car number “1” had to make a brief refueling stop shortly before the finish. With a two-lap gap Bernhard/Dumas/Rockenfeller came fourth.

The first podium result for the new Audi R18 TDI was clinched by Dindo Capello, Tom Kristensen and Allan McNish, who, like last year, took third place at the Le Mans “dress rehearsal” at Spa. But the cockpit crew of car number “3” was also beaten below its potential. While a spin by Allan McNish on the starting lap had no consequences as the Scotsman quickly made up ground to the front of the field from 16th place, Dindo Capello on his stint accidentally activated the speed limiter for the pit lane and thus lost 20 seconds. After correcting the inflation pressure of the front tires Tom Kristensen was on the advance in the final phase: The Le Mans record winner was already setting his sights on the second-placed Peugeot when one hour before race end the left rear tire was suddenly losing air, which forced him to make an unscheduled pit stop. With a one-lap gap Capello/Kristensen/McNish ultimately finished in third place.

#### **Quotes after the race**

**Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport):** “Naturally, the result of the race at Spa is disappointing for us because the Audi R18 TDI was clearly beaten below its potential on its debut. We were on a par with Peugeot in terms of pure speed but there were simply too many small things that went wrong – and unfortunately with all three cars. That was certainly frustrating. We’ll take home the positive finding of having a fast car that we’ll have to make better use of though. We’ve learned a lot today in racing conditions. Now we’ve got to put these findings into action before Le Mans.”

**Dindo Capello (Audi R18 TDI #3):** “It was a difficult race for me. On my first stint I was really struggling with the car. The front didn’t have any bite at all. I had the feeling that there was way too little downforce or a lot of pick-up on the front tires. It was strange that the car was suddenly feeling normal again toward the end of my second stint. That was a bit confusing.”

**Tom Kristensen (Audi R18 TDI #3):** “That was an action-packed weekend. We had a few problems in the race at first. But the car kept getting better after we adjusted the tire pressure. I was on the advance when I started suffering a slow puncture. Unfortunately, I had to drive a whole lap with this handicap but managed to bring the car to the pits safely. That wasn’t easy but (our engineer) Howden (Haynes) did a fantastic job and kept telling me the pressure levels over the radio. Still, the slow puncture destroyed our race because toward the end we had to make an additional



pit stop to refuel. That I was 'kissed' by a GT vehicle just about at the same time I had the flat tire almost made no difference any more."

**Allan McNish (Audi R18 TDI #3):** "A podium is always a good result, also with a view toward the championship. But to be honest: It's a bit frustrating dropping to third place after starting from one, two and three on the grid due to minor problems. The Audi R18 TDI was competitive at its first race from the outset. It was a very close battle between us and Peugeot during some of the phases. Unfortunately, in the end it didn't turn out in our favor."

**Timo Bernhard (Audi R18 TDI #1):** "That was a very tough race today. The positive thing about it is that we can take a lot of things with us with respect to Le Mans because it was a test in racing conditions. Our car was lacking a bit of racing luck today. That was a shame because in the beginning I was definitely in contention. I was running in second and third place the whole time, everything was right, actually. But then an LMP2 unfortunately touched the rear of my car, which damaged the rear hood. Things like this can happen in a field of 55 cars."

**Romain Dumas (Audi R18 TDI #1):** "That was a pretty crazy day. We were strong throughout the weekend. Qualifying was great and we were running really well for the first hour and a half of the race. We had a fantastic battle with our main rival. Unfortunately, we lost ground due a lot of small things which made the difference in the end. The race at Spa didn't go well for us. Last year it was similar here – and instead Le Mans was all the better."

**Mike Rockenfeller (Audi R18 TDI #1):** "We had pretty high expectations before the race. Timo (Bernhard) fought a great battle at the beginning. Up to the incident with the LMP things were looking really good. We changed the rear lid but decided against replacing the whole rear body part although the damage was more extensive. That made the car extremely difficult to drive for Romain (Dumas) and me. Actually, we were just rolling around. I still tried to save diesel fuel but that didn't really work out either. The positive thing is that we've learned a lot. And we were competitive. If we eliminate the mistakes for Le Mans our prospects should be pretty good."

**Marcel Fässler (Audi R18 TDI #2):** "My car had oversteer. The aerodynamic balance had shifted somehow. The second stint in particular was difficult. I had three hairy moments, one in Blanchimont and two in Eau Rouge. That forced me to realize that it didn't make any sense to continue to attack. In the end, I reduced my pace. There



was no danger from behind and there was nothing I could do to push forward. For me, it was simply important to bring the car home.”

**André Lotterer (Audi R18 TDI #2):** “The start was great. I had a good lead. Things were beginning to get more difficult when the tires started becoming more slippery. That allowed the others to come closer again. The fight with the Peugeot was pretty nice. At the pit stop we lost some time because we had to push the car back. I was able to attack again afterward and make up some ground to the Peugeot. But ‘Ben’ subsequently suffered a huge amount of misfortune with some really strange things. Twice he had an enormous amount of pick-up on his tires. We’ve still got to get a handle on a large number of minor issues before Le Mans to be well set there.”

**Benoît Tréluyer (Audi R18 TDI #2):** “The car was really good before we started having the pick-up problem. I had to make an unscheduled pit stop and shortly afterward it happened again. The pick-up was probably due to the fact that we had to overtake the GT cars alongside the racing line. I really don’t know though. We’ll find out and come up with a solution. The good thing is that the car is fast. I was almost always able to close the gap to the Peugeots when things were going normal. Naturally, it would have been nice to win this race. But our goal is Le Mans – we’ve got to continue to concentrate on that.”

**Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Team Joest):** “We had higher expectations of this race but encountered a lot of strange problems: incidents of body contact, pick-up on the tires and things like that. Mechanically, the cars held up. Still, we collected a long list for Le Mans today which we’ve got to check off. That was a championship round that we would have liked to have won. The Peugeots were quick and had no unusual issues. We’ still got quite a few things to do.”

## Results

- 1 Gené/Wurz/Davidson (Peugeot) 161 laps in 6h 02m 03.799s
- 2 Montagny/Sarrazin/Minassian (Peugeot) + 42.965s
- 3 Capello/Kristensen/McNish (Audi R18 TDI) - 1 lap
- 4 Bernhard/Dumas/Rockenfeller (Audi R18 TDI) – 2 laps
- 5 Fässler/Lotterer/Tréluyer (Audi R18 TDI) - 3 laps
- 6 Collard/Tinseau/Jousse (Pescarolo-Judd) - 5 laps
- 7 Jani/Prost (Lola-Toyota) - 5 laps
- 8 Lamy/Bourdais/Pagenaud (Peugeot) - 6 laps
- 9 Belicchi/Boullion (Lola-Toyota) - 6 laps
- 10 Lapierre/Duval/Panis (Peugeot) - 9 laps



The Audi Group sold around 1,092,400 cars of the Audi brand in 2010. The Company posted revenue of €35.4 billion and an operating profit of €3.3 billion in 2010. 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, of the Audi A4 in early October 2008 and of the Audi Q5 in July 2010. Production of the new Audi A1 has been running at the Brussels plant since May 2010. 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 60,000 people worldwide, including around 46,600 in Germany. Between 2011 and 2015 the brand with the four rings is planning to invest around €11 billion, mainly in new products, in order to sustain the Company's technological lead embodied in its "Vorsprung durch Technik" slogan. By 2015, Audi plans to 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.