

Communications Motorsport

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Audi R8 LMS successfully passes ultimate endurance test

- **All four vehicles finish 24-hour race on the Nürburgring**
- **Runner-up in first 24-hour commitment**
- **Winner in GT3-class right from the start**

Ingolstadt/Nürburg – The new GT3 sports car of AUDI AG successfully passed the ultimate endurance test: In the fastest 24-hour race the Nürburgring has ever seen, all four Audi R8 LMS cars that started to the race crossed the finish line. Christian Abt, Jean-François Hemroulle, Pierre Kaffer and Lucas Luhr (Team ABT Sportsline) clinched an unexpected second place in front of 235,000 spectators (throughout the weekend) and grabbed victory right away in the GT3 class for the Audi R8 LMS at its first 24-hour run.

“For the Audi R8 LMS, this race represented a final test under extreme conditions on the world’s longest race track,” said Head of Audi Motorsport Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich. “We were able to demonstrate that our new GT3 sports car is absolutely competitive for customer sport. And the number 97 R8 LMS ran without the slightest problems despite the incredible speed.”

Up to a few hours before the finish there was even a sensation in the air at the Nürburgring: Marc Basseng, Mike Rockenfeller and Frank Stippler in the Audi R8 LMS #99 of Team Phoenix Racing were leading the race for almost 17 hours before the car – at 11:21 am in the Karussell circuit sector – stopped due to a defect in the power transmission system. After replacing the right rear suspension and the drive shaft, the three Germans were able to continue the race with a six-lap gap and – in the end – managed clinching the fifth place.

Frank Biela, Marcel Fässler, Emanuele Pirro and Hans-Joachim Stuck (Audi R8 LMS #98/Phoenix Racing) in twelfth place merely missed a place among the top ten. A stop-and-go penalty cost the seasoned campaigners three minutes as early as in the starting phase. During the night a leaking cooler of the power steering system had to be exchanged, which cost about 30 minutes. At noon on Sunday, car number 98 was back in the top six before the gearbox had to be replaced.

Mattias Ekström, Timo Scheider and Marco Werner (Audi R8 LMS #100/Team ABT Sportsline) suffered a particular case of misfortune. Their vehicle was hit in the rear right at the start, crushing the right-hand tailpipe in the process. Shortly afterwards, the engine stopped. After an extensive effort to find the source of the problem, the mechanics discovered a defective plug which had caused a short circuit and resulted in an overloading of the CAN bus on-board system.

From 166th place, Ekström, Scheider and Werner recovered to 23rd despite stopping a second time on the Nordschleife during the night due to a fuel supply system problem and, later, a component of the right rear suspension had to be fixed.

“We’ll analyze the problems that occurred on the three other vehicles and feed the findings into the final version of the R8 LMS, which will be delivered to customers starting this fall,” said Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich. “We now know that we’ve got a very good base.”

“None of us really expected us to immediately clinch a podium result here,” said Audi “factory” driver Lucas Luhr after the finish of the race. “Putting a new car on the podium in its first run at a 24-hour race is an achievement you’ve simply got to take your hat off to.”

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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!").