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Audi starts from second row in China

- **ILMC finale at Zhuhai with changeable weather**
- **Conservative tire choice in qualifying**
- **Audi R8 LMS shines in GTC class**

Ingolstadt/Zhuhai, November 6, 2010 – The two Audi R15 TDI cars fielded by Audi Sport Team Joest will tackle the first major endurance race for sports prototypes in China from the second row of the grid. Rainfalls obstructed the work of the teams at Zhuhai on practice days and made qualifying a gamble as well.

After all three free practice sessions had taken place on a wet track the rain stopped shortly before the qualifying on Saturday afternoon. Because the track still had some damp spots Audi Sport Team Joest decided to play it safe and to initially send both cars out on intermediates. When Tom Kristensen and Dindo Capello switched to slicks rain set in again. The eight-time Le Mans winner was able to improve to grid position three despite the fact that the track was becoming increasingly slippery and missed the first row by merely 199 thousandths of a second. Dindo Capello changed to slicks one lap later and was no longer able to improve as the rain was getting heavier.

The Italian used the remaining minutes of qualifying to optimize the set-up of the Audi R15 TDI as sunshine and temperatures of up to 26 degrees in the shade have been predicted for the day of the race after the two previous days had seen rain and fog.

Audi Sport Team Joest will have another 20 minutes in warm-up on Sunday to optimize the Audi R15 TDI cars for dry conditions. Due to the many narrow turns at Zhuhai an optimal race set-up and efficient brakes will play a crucial part over the 1000-kilometer distance.



On the first showing of the Le Mans sports cars in China Tom Kristensen and Allan McNish will be running in the Audi R15 TDI designated as car number “7.” Dindo Capello shares the cockpit of car number “8” with Romain Dumas.

The Audi R15 TDI will start into a sports car race in current trim for the last time. From the 2011 season onward new Technical Regulations will apply to the Le Mans prototypes that prescribe smaller engines with less power output.

For the first time, at the finale, the grid of the new Intercontinental Le Mans Cup will include three Audi R8 LMS cars that caused a sensation as early as in qualifying. The former Formula 1 racer Alex Yoong clinched the pole position in the GTC class and position eleven overall. The two other R8 LMS cars will start from positions 13 and 22.

The 1000-kilometer race at Zhuhai will start on Sunday at 12 (local time) (5 a.m. CET) and will last a maximum of six hours.

Quotes after qualifying

Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “At the beginning of the qualifying session the track was in such a condition that it was possible to either use intermediates or slicks. We decided to use intermediates for both cars in order to not take any risks. When we put the cars on slicks drizzling rain set in again. That’s why we couldn’t achieve a better result. Based on the weather forecast we’re expecting dry conditions. That means we’ll be seeing a new game.”

Tom Kristensen (Audi R15 TDI #7): “It’s great to be in Zhuhai, it’s great to be in China. We enjoyed the first days. The last two days, though, the weather changed to rain which lasted up to the qualifying. It was very difficult to find the right set-up and make the right tire choice. We went out on intermediates. It seems we should have gone out on slicks. When I changed to slicks they were definitely faster but it was already starting to rain again. P3 is fine but is not what we had hoped for.”

Allan McNish (Audi R15 TDI #7): “Even though we had a test day beforehand the pretty inconsistent weather conditions it has been quite difficult to find a setup for this circuit. It is very specific as well with so many hairpins, long straights and no really fast corners. From that point of view we did not see in qualifying the real performance of any of the frontrunners. Overall we are third and fourth of the grid. We have made some quite good improvements to the car in the wet. If it is a wet race we know the car very well. If it is a dry race everyone is very much in the open.”



Dindo Capello (Audi R15 TDI #8): “It was tricky. Looking back, we made a mistake by starting on intermediates. But now this is easy to say. Unfortunately I stopped for slicks one lap too late. When I joined the track it started to drizzle. On the second lap I felt good grip from the slicks on the first part of the track, but on the second part it was already wet. I immediately understood that every chance to fight for higher positions was gone. What is good is that we improved the car during qualifying. At the beginning it was very harsh over bumps. I even had problems to keep my feet on the pedals. After the stop we made it much smoother. But unfortunately the rain came.”

Romain Dumas (Audi R15 TDI #8): “For sure it was very difficult with the changing weather conditions. It is not easy to find a good setup. On the first day when it was dry we had a few vibrations from the brakes, so we could not set the car up properly for the dry. So far it hasn’t been easy. But we have the warm-up again tomorrow to work and to be ready for the race.”

Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Team Joest): “We had some time on a dry track on Thursday. The track was still pretty dusty though and new to us, that’s why our learning curve wasn’t that good yet. Then it was wet the whole time and almost dry again for qualifying. That was a little bit of a lottery. We’re hoping that what we worked out in the rain will work on a dry track too. But we’ll only know that tomorrow. We sent both cars out on intermediates in qualifying so that the drivers would see the damp spots. That was the right thing to do. Unfortunately, it started to rain again when we changed slicks. We didn’t draw the best lot in the lottery. But the race tomorrow will be long. We’ll try to be more on the mark tomorrow.”



Qualifying results

- 1 Montagny/Sarrazin (Peugeot) 1m 21.868s
- 2 Bourdais/Pagenaud (Peugeot) 1m 22.953s
- 3 Kristensen/McNish (Audi R15 TDI) 1m 23.152s
- 4 Capello/Dumas (Audi R15 TDI) 1m 24.589s
- 5 Drayson/Cocker (Lola-Judd) 1m 28.916s
- 6 Wakisaka/Mitsuyama (Courage-Oreca) 1m 30. 869s
- 7 Nicolet/da Rocha/Lafargue (Pescarolo-Judd) 1m 32.936s
- 8 Zacchia/Zhang/Lee (FLM-Oreca) 1m 33.227s
- 9 Iiri/Sekiguchi/Yuya (Lamborghini) 1m 33. 516s
- 10 Bergmeister/Long (Porsche) 1m 33.789s
- 11 Lee/Yoong/Marsh (Audi R8 LMS) 1m 34.959s (1st GTC)
- ...
- 13 Watts/Meins/Yu (Audi R8 LMS) 1m 35.682s (2nd GTC)
- 22 Richard/Li (Audi R8 LMS) 1m 37.888s (4th GTC)

The Audi Group sold around 950,000 cars of the Audi brand 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. 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 58,000 people worldwide, including 45,500 in Germany. Between 2010 and 2012 the Audi Group is planning to invest around €5.5 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.