

Houston, 11 May 2006

## Audi starts from second row in Houston

- **Dindo Capello fourth fastest in qualifying**
- **Audi R8 still competitive despite weight handicap**
- **Drivers expect tough race on Friday evening**

Audi starts the second round of the American Le Mans Series in Houston (US state of Texas) from fourth position on the grid on Friday evening and second in the LM P1 class. Audi factory driver Dindo Capello (Italy) set a personal fastest time of 1min 5.382secs at the wheel of the Audi Sport North America Audi R8 in Thursday's 20-minute qualifying session – less than a second behind James Weaver's pole-sitting Lola.

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New regulations dictate the Audi R8, which has scored 61 wins since making its race début over six years ago, must weigh 935 kilograms this season – 35 kg more than Audi's LM P1 rivals.

Dindo Capello and co-driver Allan McNish (Scotland) begin the second round of the American Le Mans Series as leaders of the LM P1 Drivers' classification. The Anglo-Italian combination plus Tom Kristensen claimed a historic victory in the season opening 12 Hours of Sebring (18 March) in the diesel-powered Audi R10 TDI which is being prepared in Europe for the Le Mans 24 Hours (17/18 June). The R10 TDI will race in the American Le Mans Series again during the second half of the season.

The 1.7-mile, 10-corner temporary "street" circuit has been constructed in Houston's Reliant Park. The 165-minute race begins at 8 p.m. (local time) on Friday evening (3 a.m. German time on Saturday morning).

## Quotes after qualifying in Houston

**Dindo Capello (Audi R8 #2):** "I'm satisfied with a second row start – it's about where I guessed we'd be with the additional weight. I had a little issue with the steering in qualifying. It cost me time but I could not have got onto the front row

anyway. I believe the race will be different. The reliability of the R8 is well-known.”

**Allan McNish (Audi R8 #2):** “It’s a very slow and incredibly bumpy track. Considering our weight penalty, our performance has been reasonable. The race will be demanding. Overtaking will be extremely hard while tyre choice will be critical due to the expected high wear rate. It’s going to be a long, tough race.”

**Dave Maraj (Team Director, Team Audi Sport North America):** “I’m pleased with our qualifying performance – the drivers and team could not have worked any harder. The important thing is to get a nice, well-balanced car for the race. I will be a very proud man tomorrow – representing Audi Sport North America as an Audi ‘factory’ team is a dream for me.”

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## **The starting grid in Houston**

- 1 Weaver/ Leitzinger (Lola-AER) 1m 04.459s
- 2 Dumas/ Bernhard (Porsche) 1m 04.481s
- 3 Maassen/Luhr (Porsche) 1m 05.245s
- 4 Capello/ McNish (Audi R8) 1m 05.382s
- 5 McMurry/Willman (Lola-AER) 1m 06.629s
- 6 Fellows/O’Connell (Chevrolet) 1m 08.035s

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