

Road Atlanta, 29 September 2006

Both Audi R10 TDI cars on the first two rows

- **Positions two and four on the “Petit Le Mans” grid**
- **Allan McNish misses “pole” by just 0.081 seconds**
- **Audi seeks seventh consecutive “Petit” victory**

The two Audi R10 TDI sportscars of Team Audi Sport North America will start the “Petit Le Mans” race at Road Atlanta (US state of Georgia) from the front two rows of the grid. Scotland’s Allan McNish missed pole-position in Friday’s exciting qualifying session by just 81 thousandths of a second. Frank Biela was fourth fastest in the “sister” car.

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The two Audi R10 TDI prototypes were quicker than all other cars competing in the American Le Mans Series on a regular basis. Faster were only two petrol-driven prototypes from Europe, which are allowed to run with the same 65-kilogram weight advantage as the two Lolas of the Dyson team.

Despite the weight handicap, Allan McNish held the provisional “pole” in the number 2 Audi R10 TDI for a long time. He was narrowly beaten by Nicolas Minassian’s Creation-Judd just before the end of the qualifying session. Frank Biela, after setting the fastest time with the number 1 R10 TDI in the morning practice, was on his quickest lap when qualifying had to be interrupted due to an accident.

The race at Road Atlanta starts on Saturday at 11:45 a.m. local time (5:45 p.m. in Germany) and lasts 1000 miles or a maximum of ten hours whichever comes first. Audi is unbeaten at “Petit Le Mans” since its début in 2000. The same is the case for the 650-hp Audi R10 TDI which has won all of the six races it has contested to date. With another victory, Audi could also prematurely clinch the Manufacturers’ Championship having already securing the LM P1 Drivers’ and Teams’ titles.

Quotes after qualifying at Road Atlanta

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “This has been an exciting and competitive qualifying session. The fastest seven cars are within a second. This proves how high the level is at the front. Our disadvantage remains that the petrol driven LM P1 cars are allowed to race with less weight. The cars coming from Europe showed today how fast you really can go with this advantage. Despite this we will try to achieve a strong result in the race with a good strategy, consistent lap times and the well known consumption advantage of the TDI engine.”

Dindo Capello (Audi R10 TDI #2): “I think our race prospects are very good. Allan did a great job to get a front row start and so close to being on ‘pole’. The Petit Le Mans is always a difficult race – there is no opportunity on the track to relax. It’s a long race with a lot of traffic so you have to concentrate fully all of the time to stay away from trouble but at the same time keep up a good speed. I have already won this race twice but a third win will be my goal tomorrow.”

Allan McNish (Audi R10 TDI #2): “The Audi was better balanced than in the morning practice due to the higher ambient temperature. I was right on the limit but Nicolas ultimately pipped me by less than one tenth of a second. I’m slightly disappointed but we have a very good car for a 1,000-mile race.”

Frank Biela (Audi R10 TDI #1): “Fourth position on the grid is not bad to go into this long race, but of course I had preferred to be further up the front. We definitely had the car for this today. The R10 TDI was really good, but I had not a single clear lap. I encountered traffic on my first lap while on the second one the red flags came out. On my second run I again had another car in front of me on my first flying lap.”

Emanuele Pirro (Audi R10 TDI #1): “I’m happy with today despite Frank (Biela) not enjoying a clear lap in qualifying and subsequently not able to be as fast as he had liked. It’s more important that we have a good set-up for this long race which we won last year. Meanwhile Marco (Werner) has perfectly reintegrated himself into our team. That’s why I’m optimistic and motivated for the race.”

Marco Werner (Audi R10 TDI #1): “I’m glad to finally contest another race with the Audi R10 TDI. I did not drive too much in practice. But I’ve already contested a couple of races here, so this should be no problem. It looks like I will do the start which is the ‘hottest’ section of the race. We have a good position despite we’ve not been as fast in qualifying as in the morning practice.”

Dave Maraj (Team Director Team Audi Sport North America): “Qualifying proved that the race will be tough but then we knew that before we arrived. To claim places on the first and second rows of this high-quality grid and taking into account how much heavier we’re running compared to our LM P1 rivals, is better than I had imagined. Having won at Le Mans and at Sebring, it would also be good to claim another win for Audi in this ‘classic’ sportscar race.”

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The starting grid at Road Atlanta

- 1 Minassian/Primat/Campbell-Walter (Creation-Judd) 1m 10.829s
- 2 McNish/Capello (Audi R10 TDI) 1m 10.910s
- 3 Johansson/Mowlem/Kurosawa (Zytek) 1m 11.090s
- 4 Biela/Pirro/Werner (Audi R10 TDI) 1m 11.372s
- 5 Luhr/Dumas/Rockenfeller (Porsche) 1m 11.409s
- 6 Maassen/Bernhard/Collard (Porsche) 1m 11.631s

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