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Perfect debut for the Audi R15 TDI

- **New Audi wins 12 Hours of Sebring (USA)**
- **Fastest Sebring race ever**
- **Audi also wins efficiency award**

Ingolstadt/Sebring – The Audi R15 TDI has defeated its competition in its debut race: Dindo Capello (Italy), Tom Kristensen (Denmark) and Allan McNish (Scotland) achieved a historic victory in the 12 Hours of Sebring (US state of Florida) with the new diesel-powered sports car of AUDI AG. The Audi drivers completed 383 laps – beating the previous distance record by an impressive 13 laps.

In the fastest ever Sebring race, Audi Sport Team Joest's pair of Audi R15 TDI prototypes ran the entire distance without technical problems despite the innovative Le Mans prototype having only completed its maiden run in December. Bad weather had hampered Audi Sport's test program and temperatures never exceeded 15 degrees during the tests in Europe.

At Sebring, the Audi crew faced ambient temperatures almost double that and worked day and night to learn more about the new diesel sports car and to adapt it to the extremely bumpy race track in the center of Florida. They were able to solve all minor teething troubles which arose just in time for race day.

In the race the new Audi R15 TDI proved fast from the very beginning: Allan McNish outpaced the pole sitting Acura/Honda at the start completing the first lap with more than five seconds advantage. Later, however, it was not the Acura/Hondas which were the cars to beat but the two Peugeot 908s. The lead swapped no fewer than 22 times among the diesel-powered prototypes from Audi

and Peugeot. Over long periods of the race, the four leading prototypes were covered by just a few tenths of a second.

In the exciting final stages of the race Allan McNish was able to fully exploit the optimized weight distribution and the sophisticated aerodynamics of the new R15 TDI compared to its predecessor, the R10 TDI. He was able to open such a big lead that he was able to stop for a 'splash-and-dash' just before the end of the race without losing the lead. He eventually crossed the finish line 22.279 seconds in front of the second placed Peugeot.

It was the ninth overall victory for the Audi brand at Sebring continuing an impressive series: After the Audi R8 (2000) and the Audi R10 TDI (2006) a new Le Mans prototype from Audi drove to victory in its debut race at Sebring for the third time. Tom Kristensen scored his fifth victory in the US endurance classic becoming the most successful driver in the history of the race. Dindo Capello won at Sebring for a fourth time with Allan McNish chalking up his third victory.

The Audi success at Sebring was completed by the three Germans Lucas Luhr, Mike Rockenfeller and Marco Werner finishing third at the wheel of the second Audi R15 TDI. Luhr and Rockenfeller had to complete almost the whole race on their own after Marco Werner had to be sidelined due to a rib injury. They kept contact with the leading sister car for a long time. Only in the final stages did they dropped back due to extreme pick-up on the front right tire which forced Lucas Luhr to pit an extra time just before the end of the race. It was the only unscheduled pit stop of the day for Audi Sport Team Joest.

The Audi R15 TDI was not only the most reliable and fastest prototype on its debut but also the most efficient: Audi celebrated a clear 1-2 victory in the so-called "Michelin Green X Challenge" in which the fuel consumption is measured in relation to the performance.

For Audi, the 12 Hours of Sebring was a dress rehearsal for the 24 Hours of Le Mans in which a total of three new R15 TDI prototypes will compete. An intensive test program is scheduled for Audi Sport Team Joest until the race on June 13/14.

Quotes after the race at Sebring

Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): "This is a great result for a brand new car which came to Sebring with less mileage under its wheels than we had planned. We've seen not only the fastest 12-hour race in Sebring history, but also one of the most exciting with so many lead changes and a very tight battle between Audi and Peugeot – and this in the 100th ALMS race since 1999. I can't remember that four cars have been setting almost identical lap times at Sebring for such a long time. Little things have been decisive in the end. It's a shame that our second car, which was also running at the front for most of the race, lost some time at the end. I'm very happy with the debut of our new Audi R15 TDI and I would like to say a big thank you to everybody who made this success possible."

Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Team Joest): "It was incredibly hard work but also a great experience. To finish first and third against such strong competition and with such little time of preparation and achieving a new record distance is really remarkable. We did not only have a new car here, we also had some changes in our team including a new chief mechanic for the winning car. It was a crazy race. The Peugeots were very fast. The game of double stints and single stints and having to fight back all the time was really nerve wrecking. I'm totally exhausted. Both crews did a fantastic job. I'm proud of the whole squad."

Dindo Capello (Audi R15 TDI #2): "It was a fantastic race and is a fantastic victory for Audi to add to the debut wins already scored here by the R8 (2000) and with the R10 TDI (2006). I honestly did not expect to win with the R15 TDI at Sebring because the car is so new and had little testing in Europe. To go from start to finish without any problems with such a new car is almost unbelievable. It's a dream result and shows the incredible technology that Audi is able to exploit. I'm so proud to be a part of the team and thus the Audi brand, to be driving for Audi Sport and to have two great team-mates in Allan and Tom."

Tom Kristensen (Audi R15 TDI #2): "It's an absolutely fantastic feeling. Wow, what a race – the fastest ever race at Sebring covering a record distance. Winning with such a young car which had completed low testing miles in dry weather before we got here is amazing. I won here on the debut of the R8, then the R10 TDI and now the R15 TDI – thanks to the know how and experience of the crew. Everyone at Audi Sport, and all six drivers here at Sebring, have

worked very hard to be in a position to beat Peugeot here at this very difficult track and after an extremely hard fight. I'm proud to be a part of this team – it's a cool feeling."

Allan McNish (Audi R15 TDI #2): "Our brand new R15 TDI was flawless throughout and allowed Audi to secure another Sebring victory. This must go down in the history books as one of the best Sebring 12 Hour races ever when you take in to account our competition, the intensity from start to finish making it a sprint race, with the final two hours especially typifying what Audi Sport is all about: grit and determination – the entire team can be proud in taking the laurels back to Germany."

Lucas Luhr (Audi R15 TDI #1): "This was a tough day for us. Marco (Werner) had to stop because of his injury. This meant we had to complete the race with two drivers. Of course we had preferred winning the race or completing a 1-2 for Audi. But we had strong competition. And our sister car was a little bit faster, that's why they deserved to win. We just couldn't make it. Despite the personal disappointment we can be content: Everybody at Audi Sport and Team Joest can be proud of coming through a Sebring race with two new cars without any major problems."

Mike Rockenfeller (Audi R15 TDI #1): "I've been in the car for three times and basically things went well every time. I could almost match the times of our sister car. Unfortunately we could not finish better than third in the end but I'm happy with my performance. The car was running well. It's a shame that Marco (Werner) was injured, but it was no real problem for us to finish the race with just two drivers. Congratulations to our sister car and Audi. Many have come to Sebring with a new car – but we can be proud of completing the distance with both cars basically without any problems and we can build on this for Le Mans."

Marco Werner (Audi R15 TDI #1): "This was a fantastic day for Audi. What could be better than giving a new car a victory here? Allan (McNish) once again did a fantastic job as did the entire team. It was an exciting race, one of the most incredible races I've ever seen – unfortunately I have to say 'seen' because, with my rib injury, I was not able to continue."



The results at Sebring

- 1 Capello/Kristensen/McNish (Audi R15 TDI) 383 laps in 12h 00m 38.638s
- 2 Sarrazin/Montagny/Bourdais (Peugeot) + 22.279s
- 3 Luhr/Rockenfeller/Werner (Audi R15 TDI) - 2 laps
- 4 Fernandez/Diaz (Acura/Honda) - 23 laps
- 5 Minassian/Klien/Lamy (Peugeot) - 27 laps
- 6 Magnussen/O'Connell/Garcia (Chevrolet) - 34 laps
- 7 Beretta/Gavin/Fässler (Chevrolet) - 35 laps
- 8 Melo/Kaffer/Salo (Ferrari) - 51 laps
- 9 Compagnon/Russo/Bruni (Ferrari) - 53 laps
- 10 Farnbacher/James (Panoz) - 54 laps

- Ends -

Photographs and information available at www.audi-motorsport.info

AUDI AG sold around 1,003,400 cars in 2008 and thus achieved its thirteenth consecutive record year. Audi produces vehicles in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Changchun (China) and Brussels (Belgium). Aurangabad in India saw the start of local 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 57,000 people worldwide, including 45,000 in Germany. The brand with the four rings invests more than € 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 40. 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!").