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Pole position for Audi driver Laurens Vanthoor in home round at Spa

- **Belgian Audi Club Team WRT in position one**
- **Three Audi R8 LMS ultra cars in the top five spots on the grid**
- **Sixth row for the Le Mans winners**

Ingolstadt/Spa, July 25, 2014 – The Belgian Audi Club Team WRT has achieved a perfect starting base for the Spa 24 Hours. The #1 Audi R8 LMS ultra will be starting the race from position one on the grid on the 90th anniversary of the endurance event. In the super pole qualifying session for the top 20 participants, the Belgian team, with the Belgian Laurens Vanthoor, achieved the best time in its home round.

A look at the time sheets reveals how balanced the performance level at the front of the field in the world's biggest GT3 race is. Seven marques are represented in the top ten and a single second separates grid position one from 14th place. Laurens Vanthoor managed to set a lap time that was 46 thousandths of a second better than that of his closest rival in a Ferrari. Even a partially wet track did not prevent the 23-year-old Audi driver from Hasselt in Belgium to achieve a lap time that turned out 1.965 seconds better than that of the fastest team last year. Vanthoor is sharing the R8 LMS ultra with the Nürburgring 24-hour race winners René Rast and Markus Winkelhock.

Edward Sandström qualified as the second-best Audi driver. The Swede, who is competing for Saintéloc Racing together with Grégory Guilvert and Stéphane Ortelli, achieved a second row place by posting the fourth-best time. Christopher Mies trails him in the subsequent position with a gap of 43 thousandths of a second. He is sharing the cockpit of car #3 of the Belgian Audi Club Team WRT with James Nash and Frank Stippler.

As the fourth-best R8 team, the Le Mans winners took a spot on the sixth row of the grid. Marcel Fässler, who is running with André Lotterer and Benoît Tréluyer, set the twelfth-fastest time in the field of 60 entrants in the #2 WRT Audi.



On Thursday, four other driver teams had achieved their grid positions in the combined qualifying session. Marc Basseng/Fabian Hamprecht/Filip Salaquarda took 29th place for Team ISR from the Czech Republic. Jan-Luc Blanchemain/Fred Bouvy/Christian Kelders/Vincent Radermecker in the R8 LMS ultra of the Belgian Audi Club Team qualified for position 33. Ian Loggie/Leonid Matchiski/Carl Rosenblad/Julian Westwood will be starting the race for Team Parker Racing from position 54. Jean-Paul Buffin/Claude-Yes Gosselin/Philippe Haezebrouck/Marc Rostan will be starting for Saintéloc Racing from 59th place.

The race starts on Saturday at 16.30. Before the start, there will be a joint appearance of two great endurance race winners from Audi: At 15.00, the spectators will be able to watch the Le Mans winning Audi R18 e-tron quattro, driven by André Lotterer, together with the Nürburgring winning R8 LMS ultra, driven by René Rast, during a demo drive on the track. The race can be followed on television on Eurosport and Motors.tv. Audi will be broadcasting the endurance race live on the internet on www.audi-motorsport.com.

Selected quotes

Romolo Liebchen (Head of Audi Sport customer racing): “It was a fantastic surprise to have clinched the pole position and further good places in the super pole qualifying session. We primarily prepared for the race and didn’t take any major risks for qualifying. Pole is a superb gift but shouldn’t delude us about the fact that this race lasts 24 hours. We’re expecting tough confrontations with our rivals because the field is extremely competitive. Surviving the 24 hours without any problems is no mean feat if you’re set on finishing the race with a similar result.”

Laurens Vanthoor (Audi R8 LMS ultra #1/Belgian Audi Club Team WRT): “I’m very happy about the pole position. My second lap was right on the mark. I never even gave any thought to the fastest time all day. When I asked my engineer what position we were in he said first place. For a few seconds, I thought he was joking. The pole position in our home round is great for Team WRT and the Belgian Audi Club. But it’s just a very small step this weekend, as the bigger one is yet to follow. Now we can sleep well. That’ll make life easier for us tomorrow.”

Qualifying results

- 1 Laurens Vanthoor (Audi R8 LMS ultra #1), 2m 18.710s
- 2 Alessandro Pier Guidi (Ferrari #50), 2m 18.756s
- 3 Step Dusseldorp (Mercedes #85), 2m 18.934s
- 4 Edward Sandström (Audi R8 LMS ultra #26), 2m 18.989s



- 5 Christopher Mies (Audi R8 LMS ultra #3), 2m 19.032s
- 6 Steven Kane (Bentley #7), 2m 19.093s
- 7 Bernd Schneider (Mercedes #84), 2m 19.166s
- 8 Kevin Estre (McLaren #99), 2m 19.316s
- 9 Nick Catsburg (BMW #12), 2m 19.334s
- 10 Stefan Mücke (Aston Martin #107), 2m 19.491s
- 12 Marcel Fässler (Audi R8 LMS ultra #2), 2m 19.569s
- ...
- 29 Fabian Hamprecht (Audi R8 LMS ultra #75), 2m 20.882s
- 33 Fred Bouvy (Audi R8 LMS ultra #4), 2m 21.084s
- 54 Carl Rosenblad (Audi R8 LMS ultra #22), 2m 23.513s
- 59 Marc Rostan (Audi R8 LMS ultra #25), 2m 27.037s

– End –

The Audi Group delivered approximately 1,575,500 cars of the Audi brand to customers in 2013. As one of the most successful models, the Audi A3 has been awarded the title of “World Car of the Year 2014” by an international jury of journalists (combined fuel consumption in l/100 km: 7.1 – 3.2; combined CO₂ emissions in g/km: 165 – 85). In 2013, the company reported revenue of €49.9 billion and an operating profit of €5.03 billion. The company operates globally in more than 100 markets and has production facilities in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Brussels (Belgium), Bratislava (Slovakia), Martorell (Spain), Kaluga (Russia), Aurangabad (India), Changchun (China) and Jakarta (Indonesia). Since the end of 2013, the brand with the Four Rings has also been producing cars in Foshan (China). In 2015, Audi will start production in São José dos Pinhais (Brazil), followed by San José Chiapa (Mexico) in 2016. Wholly owned subsidiaries of AUDI AG include quattro GmbH (Neckarsulm), Automobili Lamborghini S.p.A. (Sant’Agata Bolognese, Italy) and Ducati Motor Holding S.p.A. (Bologna, Italy), the sports motorcycle manufacturer. The company currently employs more than 73,500 people worldwide, of which more than 52,500 in Germany. Total investment of around €22 billion is planned from 2014 to 2018 – primarily in new products and sustainable technologies. Audi is committed to its corporate responsibility and has anchored the principle of sustainability for its products and processes in its strategy. The long-term goal is CO₂-neutral mobility.