



**Communications**

**Audi Sport customer racing**

Eva-Maria Becker

Tel: +49 841 89-33922

E-mail: [eva-maria.becker@audi.de](mailto:eva-maria.becker@audi.de)

[www.audi-mediacycenter.com/en](http://www.audi-mediacycenter.com/en)

## **Audi Sport with four RS 3 LMS in WTCR – FIA World Touring Car Cup**

- **Test in Barcelona: conclusion of pre-season preparation**
- **Niels Langeveld and Frédéric Vervisch to race for Comtoyout Team Audi Sport, Gordon Shedden and Jean-Karl Vernay with Leopard Racing Team Audi Sport**
- **Comprehensive TV coverage on Eurosport**

**Neuburg a. d. Donau, March 29, 2019 – Curtain-up for the second season: The official pre-season test at Barcelona marks the conclusion of Audi Sport customer racing’s preparation for the 2019 WTCR – FIA World Touring Car Cup. The second season of the highest-ranking TCR racing series with new regulations, manufacturers and drivers promises even more suspense than the previous one.**

“In 2018, we managed a strong inaugural season but this year we’ve set our sights even higher,” says Chris Reinke, Head of Audi Sport customer racing. “Our aim is to fight for the titles in both classifications with our teams and drivers.” Last year, Audi Sport was already among the best: At the end of the season, the tally reflected six victories, scored by the three Audi drivers Gordon Shedden, Jean-Karl Vernay and Frédéric Vervisch, and a total of 17 podium finishes. Three pole positions and six fastest race laps completed the track record of the year in which Jean-Karl Vernay kept his title chances open up until the finale. The 31-year-old Frenchman and his Scottish teammate Gordon Shedden are racing again for Leopard Racing Team Audi Sport this year. The Belgian Frédéric Vervisch from Comtoyout Team Audi Sport will have a new teammate – Dutchman Niels Langeveld. This means that for the first time Audi Sport has signed four drivers in the FIA WTCR. 31-year-old Langeveld in 2018 was the most successful privateer at the wheel of an Audi RS 3 LMS in the national ADAC TCR Germany racing series.

With the test at Barcelona on March 28 and 29, Audi concludes its pre-season preparations. The drivers completed a total distance of some 10,000 test kilometers in the Audi RS 3 LMS that was TCR Model of the Year in 2018. Since December, Audi Sport has tested in Belgium, Germany, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Spain and Hungary. “After a good first season, we intend to fight for the title this year,” says Jean-Karl Vernay, who as the best Audi Sport driver won four races and clinched two pole positions last year. “The competition will be even more intensive and I’m really looking forward to that.” Seven marques and 26 entrants will be represented in the field. “As a team we worked very hard last year. Now I want to personally improve once again. Pole position and victory at Wuhan have made me hungry for more,” says



Gordon Shedden. Frédéric Vervisch delivered several top performances last winter: In November, at the FIA WTCR finale in Macau, and in January, in Dubai, he won his first 24-hour race in the GT3 category with Audi Sport customer racing. “In 2018, I finished on podium in the FIA WTCR seven times. Now I intend to go for all-out attack right in the first race,” says Vervisch. “For me, the signing by Audi Sport has made a dream come true,” says Niels Langeveld. “We want to be in contention at the front of the field with the team and clinch good results. Is that realistic? I don’t know yet. But it definitely is my goal.”

The calendar covers three continents and again encompasses ten events, each featuring three sprint races, starting with the race at Marrakesh in Morocco next weekend. For the first time, a maximum of four race cars per manufacturer will be battling for success. The operational crews working on the cars will be limited to ten people per two race cars this year. Practice time in the first free practice session will increase by 50 percent to 45 minutes. For the first time, points will be awarded to the top five drivers not only in the second but also in the first qualifying session. The first qualifying will continue to determine the grid for race one, the second session for race three. In the second race, the top ten from the second qualifying will start from a reversed grid. The points-classification for all three rounds, which now begins with 25 points for a victory and no longer rewards only the top ten but the top 15 drivers, has been standardized. Titles in the WTCR – FIA World Touring Car Cup are awarded to the best drivers and teams, but not to the manufacturers. For the first time, the circuit at Sepang in Malaysia will host the finale of the racing series in December. Eurosport will provide comprehensive television coverage of the series in Europe. In 2018, 66 million viewers watched the broadcasts in Europe. The cumulative airtime of Eurosport alone amounted to 212 hours. This year, the series will be broadcast in 204 countries worldwide.

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The **Audi Group**, with its brands Audi, Ducati and Lamborghini, is one of the most successful manufacturers of automobiles and motorcycles in the premium segment. It is present in more than 100 markets worldwide and produces at 18 locations in 13 countries. 100 percent subsidiaries of AUDI AG include Audi Sport GmbH (Neckarsulm), Automobili Lamborghini S.p.A. (Sant’Agata Bolognese, Italy) and Ducati Motor Holding S.p.A. (Bologna, Italy).

In 2018, the Audi Group delivered to customers about 1.812 million automobiles of the Audi brand, 5,750 sports cars of the Lamborghini brand and 53,004 motorcycles of the Ducati brand. In the 2017 fiscal year, AUDI AG achieved total revenue of €60.1 billion and an operating profit of €5.1 billion. At present, approximately 90,000 people work for the company all over the world, more than 60,000 of them in Germany. Audi focuses on sustainable products and technologies for the future of mobility.

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