

Dream weekend for Audi customers at Imola

- Team WRT wins GT World Challenge Europe opener
- Customers on top of European GT2 and GT4 standings
- Another title success for Audi Sport in China

Neuburg a. d. Donau, April 4, 2022 – Audi Sport customer racing experienced a strong start in the European SRO racing series with its customer teams. Within the total of 112 GT race cars in three classes, no fewer than 25 Audi R8 LMS were on the grids at Imola. While Team WRT won the GT3 endurance race, LP Racing and PK Carsport shared the victories in the GT2 European Series. Team Fullmotorsport and its drivers lead the Am standings in the GT4 European Series. Another title success in China rounds off the track record.

Audi R8 LMS GT3

Victory in Imola: Kelvin van der Linde, Dries Vanthoor and Charles Weerts managed a convincing season opener in the Fanatec GT World Challenge powered by AWS Endurance Cup. The three Audi Sport drivers had secured grid position one at Imola by setting the fastest time in practice. Charles Weerts led the race for the first eight laps before losing a position in a chicane. This put Chris Mies in the lead for Saintéloc Racing in another Audi. When Kelvin van der Linde took over the R8 LMS from his Belgian driver colleague Weerts, he moved into the lead. In the final third of the race, Dries Vanthoor extended the lead for the number 32 Audi to 6.2 seconds by the end of the three-hour race. Team Tresor by Car Collection missed out on a podium place by only 0.361 seconds, while motorcycle world champion Valentino Rossi, making his debut for Team WRT, finished 17th in the field of 52 entries together with Audi Sport drivers Nico Müller and Frédéric Vervisch. The caution period with the jostling of all participants during the driver change had caused confusing conditions in the pit lane. Rossi had missed his pit spot after a good run and was forced to put in another lap.

Another title in China: Audi Sport customer racing Asia recorded an additional GT3 title success. The driver pairing of Cheng Congfu/Anthony Liu has been confirmed as China GT champions after the season finale of the 2021 season, originally scheduled for early 2022, was cancelled. The two Chinese gained an unassailable points lead in the drivers standings with two victories and two second places in the past season. The FAW-VW Audi Racing Team, which entered the Audi R8 LMS GT3 of the two champions, also won the team classification of the racing series. Second place in the drivers standings also went to an Audi customer team: David Pun and his fellow competitor, who competes under the pseudonym “Rio,” are runners-up with Team X Works.

Audi R8 LMS GT2

Convincing debuts: The first two races of the 2022 GT2 European Series were dominated by three newcomers with Audi. Henry Hassid, who drove the Audi R8 LMS GT2 for the first time and

competed as a solo driver, was third at the beginning of the first race at Imola. After the mandatory pit stop, the experienced Frenchman improved with strong lap times and overtook the leading Porsche seven minutes before the end of the race. In the end, the Audi privateer from Team LP Racing won by 5.2 seconds. As an amateur driver, he finished ahead of the best Pro-Am driver pairings. Third place went to last year's champion team High Class Racing, whose drivers Aurelijus Rusteika/Michael Vergers in the Audi R8 LMS GT2 finished third ahead of two other Audi cars. In the second race, Nicolas Saelens and Stienes Longin from Team PK Carsport prevailed. They, too, are contesting their first season in the Audi R8 LMS GT2. Longin took the lead from pole position. During the pit stops, the Belgian squad temporarily lost first place to High Class Racing. However, 15 minutes before the end of the race Nicolas Saelens passed the Audi of Aurelijus Rusteika to win by 5.797 seconds. A third Audi driver team completed the podium: Peter Guelinckx and Bert Longin, also competing for PK Carsport, crossed the finish line 3.1 seconds behind the Danish team High Class Racing. Rusteika/Vergers lead the Pro-Am table by one point ahead of Saelens/S. Longin and ten points ahead of Guelinckx/B. Longin.

Audi R8 LMS GT4

Leading the table after the opener: Audi's customer teams recorded their first successes at the GT4 European Series opener at Imola. Last year's champions Grégory Guilvert/Fabien Michal achieved their best result of the weekend with third overall in the second race. In the process, the Frenchmen from the Saintéloc Racing team were the second-fastest Pro-Am squad. Frenchmen Michael Blanchemain/Christophe Hamon won the Am classification in both races with Team Fullmotorsport in another Audi. This puts the team and driver at the top of the amateur standings. Erwan Bastard/Roe Meyuhas in Saintéloc Racing's Audi R8 LMS GT4 were the second-best Silver Cup driver pairing in both the first and second races, finishing fourth overall. They are currently second in the standings out of twelve driver pairings in their class.

Coming up next week

08-10/04 Oschersleben (D), round 1, GTC Race

08-10/04 Oschersleben (D), round 1, Spezial Tourenwagen Trophy

08-10/04 Fuji (J), round 1, TCR Japan

08-10/04 Hungaroring (H), round 1, Eset Cup

08-10/04 Hungaroring (H), round 1, TCR Eastern Europe

09/04 Nürburgring (D), round 2, Nürburgring Langstrecken-Serie

09/04 Hampton Downs (NZ), New Zealand Endurance Championship

10/04 Mugello (I), round 1, Coppa Italia Turismo

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