



**Communications Motorsport**

Jürgen Pippig  
Telephone: +49 (0)841 89 34200  
E-mail: [juergen.pippig@audi.de](mailto:juergen.pippig@audi.de)  
[www.audi-motorsport.info](http://www.audi-motorsport.info)

Eva-Maria Veith  
Telephone: +49 (0)841 89 33922  
E-mail: [eva-maria.veith@audi.de](mailto:eva-maria.veith@audi.de)

## **A new era begins for Audi at Sebring**

- **Premiere of the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC**
- **Le Mans winning Audi R18 TDI modified for season opener**
- **First run for new signing Loïc Duval**

**Ingolstadt, March 9, 2012 – The 12-hour race at Sebring (U.S. state of Florida) on March 17 is shaped by major developments. For Audi, the new FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) is ringing in a completely new era. The brand with the four rings last won a world championship title in 1984 – then in rallying. At the same time, Audi has the chance of clinching its tenth overall victory on the 60th anniversary of the classic endurance race.**

Audi is starting into its most important sports car season so far. For the first time, the brand with the four rings will be battling to clinch a world champion's title in road course racing. Audi has been successfully competing in sports car races since 1999 and has won many series, including the American Le Mans Series on nine occasions. This year, for the first time since 1992, the FIA is again awarding a world champion's title for Le Mans prototypes, the race cars that currently feature the most sophisticated technology of all.

The technical development at Audi Sport in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm is running at full stretch. No less than three different versions of the R18 LMP1 race car will be fielded during the course of the season. The Audi R18 e-tron quattro and Audi R18 ultra cars unveiled at the end of February are currently subjected to an extensive testing program and will be making their racing debut at Spa-Francorchamps (Belgium) at the beginning of May. At the world championship season opener at Sebring, Audi Sport Team Joest will rely once more on the R18 TDI that was victorious at Le Mans last year.

Effective immediately, new rules will reduce the engine output of the diesel-powered vehicles by around seven percent. To achieve this, the size of the air restrictors will be reduced from a diameter of 47.4 to 45.8 millimeters. The charging pressure drops from 3,000 to 2,800 millibar. The fuel tank capacity has



been reduced as well. At a pit stop, the Audi R18 TDI can be filled with a maximum of 60 instead of the previous 65 liters of diesel fuel. In addition, it has to take 15 kilograms of ballast on board. The ballast compensates for the fact that the complex aerodynamic modifications of the fenders, which are prescribed as of 2012, have not been implemented on the R18 TDI but will only be made on the successor cars. Surprising but true: On its farewell, the R18 TDI will be experiencing a premiere as the closed-wheel sports car has never before competed in a 12-hour race at Sebring. The engineers, though, can draw on valuable historical data gathered with the Audi R18 TDI on many kilometers of testing on the famous race track in Florida.

### **Acid test for “man and machine”**

The challenging 12-hour classic on the old airfield complex at Sebring stands for a notorious acid test at the season opener. The bumpy track consisting of tarmac and concrete slabs is rough on the race cars and the drivers' physical condition. Sweltering heat was often another challenge in the past. Plus, being a 12-hour race, the competition in Florida is the second-longest one on the 2012 WEC calendar. With currently 61 entries – 31 from the American Le Mans Series and 30 from the WEC – the race will demand maximum concentration. Heavy traffic on a track that is slightly less than six kilometers long harbors the risk of body contact and accidents while lapping. For Audi, the 60th running of the race marks an anniversary as well. For the tenth time since 2000 a race car emblazoned with the four rings will have the chance of clinching victory. On achieving its ninth success in 2009 with Dindo Capello/Tom Kristensen/Allan McNish, Audi set a distance record that has remained unbeaten to date. The trio covered 2,280.5 kilometers in the Audi R15 TDI back then.

### **Several premieres in the driver line-up**

Whereas Audi Sport Team Joest fielded two cars at each of the past runs at Sebring, the squad is now putting three R18 TDI vehicles on the grid. Car number “1” is shared by Marcel Fässler/André Lotterer/Benoît Tréluyer (CH/D/F), with each of the three Le Mans winners from last year experiencing a Sebring premiere. Fässler has never before started from the Sebring grid in a sports prototype. André Lotterer and Benoît Tréluyer have never raced at Sebring before at all but know the track from tests. Car number “2” is shared by Dindo Capello/Tom Kristensen/Allan McNish (I/DK/GB). Kristensen, with five victories under his belt, is the record holder, Capello has won the endurance race four times, and McNish three times. Car number “3” will be driven by Timo Bernhard (D) and Romain Dumas (F), who jointly mounted the



winners' podium as early as in 2008. They will be sharing their R18 TDI with Audi's new signing Loïc Duval (F). The Frenchman is bringing a fitting "inaugural gift" to the squad. He was celebrated as a winner at the 12-hour race at Sebring last year. The nine drivers combined thus boast as many as 15 individual Sebring successes.

### **Topics of the weekend**

- Will the diesel-powered vehicles still be competitive with the new rules?
- What will be the impact of the 15 kilograms of weight handicap on the cars with last year's specifications like the Audi R18 TDI have to compete with at Sebring?
- Who will be Audi's strongest challenger at Sebring?

### **Quotes by the officials**

**Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport):** "Sebring is just around the corner; we've completed our preparations. It'll be a grand and no doubt thrilling inaugural event of the new WEC. The entire fields of the WEC and the American Le Mans Series will be competing together. So, the field of entrants will be made up of more than 60 cars. For the fans and for motorsport, this is a tremendous beginning of a world championship. For those who are driving there and wanting to take their cars across the finish line unharmed, this is a pretty complex and strenuous mission. We're running with three cars, which also serves to get the team to gel again at an early stage of the year. It'll be difficult to get through such a race without any collisions. You need to stay clear of all trouble while maintaining a good pace, which is always important at Sebring. Only then will you have a chance of being at the very top in the end. Last year we had a quick car but, unfortunately, weren't successful. Obviously, we want to make up for that this year and clinch Audi's tenth victory on this historically important race track."

**Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Team Joest):** "This is the first world championship round for all of us. For the first time, we're running with three cars at Sebring, which will be a great challenge. Naturally, we're happy that the season will open there and we'll be competing with the modified 2011-spec model. Things are continuing the way we experienced them last year at Atlanta – with an incredibly full field of more than 60 cars. You've got to get through without any problems and mistakes. If you do, then you'll have good chances of taking places at the front. Our tasks are clear. We need to get into a rhythm for the full season and score as many championship points as possible."



## **Facts and quotes by the Audi drivers**

### **Marcel Fässler (35/CH), Audi R18 TDI #1 (Audi Sport Team Joest)**

- Last year's Le Mans winner has never driven a sports prototype at Sebring before
- He is sharing the Audi R18 TDI with his fellow Le Mans winners

"We're in for a thrilling race because the situation will be a bit tight for everyone with more than 60 cars on the track. Of course I'm expecting for us to be able to set the pace at the front of the field. I'm personally pleased to be able to battle for overall victory in an LMP car for the first time at Sebring. I'm also hoping for us to have the necessary bit of racing luck to do so."

### **André Lotterer (30/D), Audi R18 TDI #1 (Audi Sport Team Joest)**

- The German has never been on the Sebring grid before
  - Last year's Le Mans winning trio is competing together again for the first time
- "I'm really excited because the new world championship will no doubt be very interesting. Expectations are high. Naturally, we're driving to win. I've never contested this 12-hour race before. I've reeled off a large number of test kilometers at Sebring though. The track really suits me well. It is great fun and I enjoy driving there. That's why I'm really looking forward to the event."

### **Benoît Tréluyer (35/F), Audi R18 TDI #1 (Audi Sport Team Joest)**

- The Frenchman is starting his third season with Audi
- In 2011, he won Le Mans with Marcel Fässler and André Lotterer

"I'm very much looking forward to my run. For the first time I'll be racing on this track that I've only known from tests so far. This probably won't be an easy task but the atmosphere is excellent with a large crowd. I've heard a lot about this race – and now I'm finally part of it."

### **Dindo Capello (47/I), Audi R18 TDI #2 (Audi Sport Team Joest)**

- With four victories, is ranking in second place of the Sebring roll of honor
- In 2001, celebrated his first victory at the endurance classic in Florida

"At Sebring, the Audi brand and we drivers have seen many nice successes. I've personally won four times there. Naturally, another victory with Audi Sport Team Joest would be a great thing that I would truly enjoy. We last achieved that in 2009. That seems like a pretty long time ago. Our adrenaline level is rising again. A success at the 60th anniversary of this endurance race that is really significant in the United States would be particularly nice and important."

### **Tom Kristensen (44/DK), Audi R18 TDI #2 (Audi Sport Team Joest)**

- No other driver has been more successful at Sebring than the five-time winner



- On the debut of new Audi sports prototypes at Sebring he clinched victory in 2000, 2006 and 2009

“The 2012 season is starting with a nice big race – the Sebring 12 Hours. In all these years the circuit has remained almost unchanged. The track’s character, the bumps, the tarmac – almost everything is the way it used to be in the past. A legendary circuit plus more than 60 entrants on the anniversary event: The season could hardly be off to a better – or tougher – start.”

**Allan McNish (42/GB), Audi R18 TDI #2 (Audi Sport Team Joest)**

- Was part of Audi’s last winning team at Sebring in 2009
- Was on the podium six times between 2000 and 2009

“This year, Sebring stands for something really special. The new world championship is attracting a lot of attention. And, as always, Sebring is a tough race. For the many fans it is a nice season opener. The atmosphere and passion there are unique. For Audi, this race is linked to a large number of nice successes. Hopefully, we’ll be able to continue this list with the R18 TDI. This is an unusual feeling. We fielded the car for almost a whole season, but not at Sebring. Normally, our race cars are making their debut there but this time it’ll be the last run of the previous version of the car. After our test in December, I’m sure that the R18 TDI will be strong.”

**Timo Bernhard (31/D), Audi R18 TDI #3 (Audi Sport Team Joest)**

- Was the overall winner at Sebring four years ago
- Will be running with Loïc Duval as his new team-mate

“I’m very much looking forward to Sebring. I drove there for the first time in 2001. That was also my first endurance race and I’ve got many fond memories of this track. With Romain Dumas I managed to clinch overall victory there in 2008. Last year, our pace was good but we had two punctures which cost us any chance of victory. This year, I’m traveling there with high expectations. Sebring is always a great opener, a challenging race track and a superb event. I’m happy to be part of it again.”

**Romain Dumas (34/F), Audi R18 TDI #3 (Audi Sport Team Joest)**

- Won at Sebring in 2008 together with Timo Bernhard
- The 2010 Le Mans winner is experiencing his fourth season with Audi

“Sebring is one of the nicest races of the year. It’s also a very difficult one – in 2012 more than 60 cars will be in the field. You’ve got to stay on track and avoid problems. I think the outcome will really only be decided in the final hour of the race. Timo (Bernhard) and I won in 2008, Loïc (Duval) last year. The three of us have a good chance for victory.”



**Loïc Duval (29/F), Audi R18 TDI #3 (Audi Sport Team Joest)**

- The Frenchman aims to repeat his 2011 Sebring victory
- He is the only new signing to compete in Audi's driver line-up

"This is a special season opener for me. I'm running for Audi for the first time, which has been a dream of mine for quite some time. The inaugural race of the World Endurance Championship at Sebring marks the beginning of a new era. And for me personally the return to Florida is very special too as I won the race last year together with two team-mates. At Audi, I'm competing together with Timo Bernhard and Romain Dumas and am eager to see how well we'll gel. One thing is certain: In my first few weeks I noticed that the team spirit at Audi is outstanding."

**The Audi drivers at Sebring**

**Timo Bernhard (D):** \* Feb 24, 1981 in Homburg (D); residence: Dittweiler (D); married to Katharina; height 1.73 m; weight: 61 kg; Audi driver since 2009; Sebring victories: 1.

**Dindo Capello (I):** \* Jun 17, 1964 in Asti (I); residence: Canelli (I); married to Elisabetta, one son (Giacomo); height: 1.72 m; weight: 66 kg; Audi driver since 1994; Sebring victories: 4.

**Romain Dumas (F):** \*Dec 14, 1977 in Alès (F); residence: Basel (CH); single; height: 1.74 m; weight: 60 kg; Audi driver since 2009; Sebring victories: 1.

**Loïc Duval (F):** \*Jun 12, 1982 in Chartres (F); residence: Tokyo (J); single; height: 1.78 m; weight: 70 kg; Audi driver since 2012; Sebring victories: 1.

**Marcel Fässler (CH):** \*May 27, 1976 in Einsiedeln (CH); residence: Gross (CH); married to Isabel, four daughters (Shana, Elin, Yael and Delia); height 1.78 m; weight 78 kg; Audi driver since 2008; Sebring victories: –

**Tom Kristensen (DK):** \*Jul 07, 1967 in Hobro (DK); residence: Monaco (MC); single (partner: Hanne), two sons (Oliver and Oswald) and one daughter (Carla Marlou); height: 1.74 m; weight: 72 kg; Audi driver since 2000, Sebring victories: 5.

**André Lotterer (D):** \*Nov 19, 1981 in Duisburg (D); residence: Tokyo (J); single; height 1.84 m; weight 74 kg; Audi driver since 2010; Sebring victories: –



**Allan McNish (GB):** \*Dec 29, 1969 in Dumfries (GB); residence: Monaco (MC); married to Kelly, one son (Finlay), one daughter (Charlotte Amelie); height: 1.65 m; weight: 58 kg; Audi driver in 2000, since 2004; Sebring victories: 3.

**Benoît Tréluyer (F):** \*Dec 07, 1976 in Alençon (F); residence: Gordes (F); married to Melanie, 1 son (Jules); height 1.78 m; weight 68 kg; Audi driver since 2010; Sebring victories: –

#### **All winners of the Sebring 12 Hours (since 2000)**

- 2000 Frank Biela/Tom Kristensen/Emanuele Pirro (Audi)**
- 2001 Dindo Capello/Laurent Aiello/Michele Alboreto (Audi)**
- 2002 Dindo Capello/Johnny Herbert/Christian Pescatori (Audi)**
- 2003 Frank Biela/Philipp Peter/Marco Werner (Audi)**
- 2004 Frank Biela/Pierre Kaffer/Allan McNish (Audi)**
- 2005 Tom Kristensen/JJ Lehto/Marco Werner (Audi)**
- 2006 Dindo Capello/Tom Kristensen/Allan McNish (Audi)**
- 2007 Frank Biela/Emanuele Pirro/Marco Werner (Audi)**
- 2008 Timo Bernhard/Romain Dumas/Emmanuel Collard (Porsche)
- 2009 Dindo Capello/Tom Kristensen/Allan McNish (Audi)**
- 2010 Anthony Davidson/Marc Gené/Alexander Wurz (Peugeot)
- 2011 Loïc Duval/Nicolas Lapierre/Olivier Panis (Peugeot)

#### **Track info**

Track length: 5.954 km

Race duration: 12 hours

Pole position 2011: Stéphane Sarrazin, Peugeot 908, 1m 46.571s = 201.128 km/h  
(March 18, 2011)

Fastest lap 2011: Alexander Wurz, Peugeot 908, 1m 48.141s = 198.208 km/h  
(March 19, 2011)

#### **Marcel Fässler about Sebring**

“Compared with a modern European race track Sebring is a relic from the 1960s. This gives the track a lot of character. The concrete slabs of the old airfield are lined up with clearly notable joints that are offset quite a bit in certain places. Not least due to this fact the track has an incredible number of bumps. The first and final bends are regarded as courage testers. You can't see into the first turn – the track width there is reduced from about 20 to only eight meters. At the end of the turn,



you've got to watch out for heavy bumps. They can be tricky, particularly in the dark. Generally speaking, there's not much lighting on the track but fortunately we've got LED lights at Audi. They helps us a great deal and I wouldn't want to do it without them anymore. The trackside atmosphere is unique. The Turn 10 Club is famous. If you should retire near Turn 10 it's pretty difficult to get back to the pits. The loyal fan club there really likes to hang on to the drivers for a long time."

**Schedule (local times; CET - 5 hours)**

**Thursday, March 15**

10:00-11:00	Free practice
14:50-15:50	Free practice
19:35-21:20	Night practice

**Friday, March 16**

09:55-10:55	Free practice
15:20-15:35	Qualifying (GT vehicles)
15:35-15:50	Qualifying (GT vehicles)
15:55-16:10	Qualifying (LMPC/LMP2 vehicles)
16:10-16:25	Qualifying (LMP1 vehicles)

**Saturday, March 17**

08:00-08:25	Warm-up
10:30-22:30	Race (12 hours)

- End -



The Audi Group delivered 1,302,659 cars of the Audi brand to customers in 2011. In 2011 the Company posted revenue of €44.1 billion and an operating profit of €5.3 billion. Audi produces vehicles in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Changchun (China) and Brussels (Belgium). The Audi Q7 is built in Bratislava (Slovakia). In July 2010, CKD production of the Audi Q5 was added to the existing Audi A4 and A6 manufacturing operations in Aurangabad (India). At the Brussels plant, production of the Audi A1 has been running since May 2010, while production of the new A1 Sportback began in 2012. The Audi Q3 has been built in Martorell (Spain) since June 2011. The Company is active in more than 100 markets worldwide. AUDI AG's wholly owned subsidiaries include AUDI HUNGARIA MOTOR Kft., Automobili Lamborghini S.p.A. in Sant'Agata Bolognese (Italy), AUDI BRUSSELS S.A./N.V. in Brussels (Belgium) and quattro GmbH in Neckarsulm. Audi currently employs around 64,000 people worldwide, including around 48,000 in Germany. Between 2012 and 2016 the brand with the four rings is planning to invest a total of €13 billion – mainly in new products and the extension of production capacities – in order to sustain the Company's technological lead embodied in its "Vorsprung durch Technik" slogan. Audi is currently expanding its site in Győr (Hungary) and will start production in Foshan (China) in late 2013.

Audi has long been fulfilling its social responsibility on many levels – with the aim of making the future worth living for generations to come. The basis for Audi's lasting success is therefore formed by environmental protection, the conservation of resources, international competitiveness and a forward-looking human resources policy. One example of AUDI AG's commitment to environmental issues is the Audi Environmental Foundation. Under the heading of "Audi balanced mobility," the Company is directing its activities toward a major goal – comprehensive CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral mobility.