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## **With Audi ultra on pole at Le Mans**

- **First pole position for Audi at Le Mans since 2006**
- **Front row is firmly in Audi's hands**
- **Audi R18 TDI also impresses with consistency**

**Ingolstadt/Le Mans, June 2011 – The front row of the grid at the 79th edition of the famous 24 Hours of Le Mans belongs to Audi. In one of the most thrilling qualifying events in recent years the new Audi R18 TDI and the company's ultra-lightweight technology prevailed. Benoît Tréluyer set a time of 3m 25.738s and clinched the top grid position for Audi. His French team-mate Romain Dumas was merely 0.061 seconds slower.**

For Audi, this marks the sixth pole position at Le Mans in total and the first since 2006 when the brand with the four rings achieved the first victory of a diesel-powered vehicle at the world's most famous endurance race. Although Audi Sport Team Joest concentrated on preparing for the race again on Thursday night, the three Audi R18 TDI cars set the pace in the two final qualifying sessions.

Benoît Tréluyer's performance was particularly impressive. The Frenchman clinched the pole position 30 minutes before midnight on the 21st lap of a race simulation on used tires – also thanks to the full LED headlights of the R18 TDI which ensure optimal illumination of the track at night. The competition despite making several attempts to do so tried in vain to beat Tréluyer's fastest time in the final phase of the captivating qualifying in which the fastest six cars were running within just six tenths of a second.

This was the first pole position at Le Mans for Tréluyer, who together with Marcel Fässler and André Lotterer, will start from the grid in the number "2" Audi R18 TDI.

In the Audi R18 TDI trimmed for uncompromising lightweight design Timo Bernhard, Romain Dumas and Mike Rockenfeller clinched the front row as well. The car designated as number "1" had been slightly damaged in the first qualifying session on Wednesday night.



The crew of car number “3” on the other hand is in for a lot of work. While trying to push forward onto the two front rows of the grid from fifth place Le Mans record winner Tom Kristensen slid against the track barrier in the “Tertre Rouge” section. Despite extensive damage the R18 TDI driven by Dindo Capello, Tom Kristensen and Allan McNish can be repaired before the race. The single-component carbon fiber monocoque remained intact in the impact.

The 79th edition of the 24 Hours of Le Mans will be started on Saturday at 3 p.m. by FIA President Jean Todt. Audi has the chance to secure its tenth Le Mans victory. In view of the extremely narrow time gaps between the front runners it will be more important than ever to deliver a zero-mistake performance in the race.

### **Quotes after qualifying**

**Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport):** “The front of the field is incredibly close together at these 24 Hours of Le Mans. That doesn’t surprise me though but makes me all the happier that we’ve managed putting two of our Audi R18 TDI cars on the front row. That’s the nicest way to say thank you to the squad for their work and commitment during the past few months and also this week. Of course we know that the pole position at Le Mans means nothing yet. But our cars have been very quick on the long-runs as well. I believe that we’ve got a very good base for the race.”

**Marcel Fässler (Audi R18 TDI #2):** “Clinching the pole position at Le Mans is a fantastic experience. Media interest is huge. The pole also demonstrates the outstanding performance capability of the Audi R18 TDI. Obviously, we’ve been doing a good job during the winter. We three drivers did our job too: All three of us were running fast and reliable. That’s a great start into the weekend – and of course a good starting base for the race.”

**André Lotterer (Audi R18 TDI #2):** “Qualifying was really good fun. You could say that it was a combination of pleasure and purpose. In the night sessions we mainly tested the tires to find out how they would perform on the long runs. At the same time the car was very quick. My team-mate Benoît Tréluyer delivered a really good lap and clinched pole in the process. I was able to have some fun at the end of the third qualifying session too. The pole position is great but no reason to become euphoric. Our main focus was not on clinching it but on completing our test program in a concentrated manner. We managed to do this. The 24 Hours of Le Mans are long, so the pole is just a very small thing.”



**Benoît Tréluyer (Audi R18 TDI #2):** “I am very happy. I just really realize now that it is just fantastic for me. I was born so close to here and the 24 Hours is such a challenge and I was not even thinking about the pole position and then I did and it is just fantastic. I’m so happy about the car, about the job by the mechanics, engineers and it’s just such a nice present to them for all the work they have done up to now. We will just try and make it to the end now. The best spot on the grid is not that important it’s always better to get it of course but honestly what I would like to do is to be on the top of the podium at the end of the race. That is the most important thing.”

**Timo Bernhard (Audi R18 TDI #1):** “Qualifying was mainly focused on set-up work and preparing for the race. We did a good job of completing our program and checked off our list item by item. That in itself makes us feel very satisfied. Being on the front row at Le Mans is fantastic. That not just one but two Audi cars are on it is positive for the whole squad. As far as our car is concerned, we never had a really free lap and were too often stuck in traffic to go on a serious chase for times. But that wasn’t our main goal. Instead we prepared our car well for the race and all three of us have been able to gather a lot of driving time and confidence. All in all it’s been a successful qualifying event.”

**Romain Dumas (Audi R18 TDI #1):** “That was a great qualifying. We improved the car a lot, which is a very important point for a 24 hour race. The car was quick but unfortunately I didn’t manage to get a perfect lap. The first row for Audi – that is very nice and shows clearly that we are competitive. We were fast with new tires and old tires and that is a good sign for the race. Nevertheless there are still a few things to improve and that’s what we will work on from now on.”

**Mike Rockenfeller (Audi R18 TDI #1):** “I think we really tried a lot of things and constantly improved the car. In the end we can be satisfied. On Wednesday we were a bit unfortunate when Romain (Dumas) had an accident in which he was not at fault. A car was standing across the track in front of him. That caused us to lose a bit of time. Nevertheless, we reeled off a great program on the whole. We’re well prepared for the race at Le Mans. Now we’ve got to see what happens. Being on position two is okay. That means you don’t start in all the commotion. It’s a good starting base.”

**Dindo Capello (Audi R18 TDI #3):** “It’s great that Audi is back on the pole position at Le Mans – it is a good feeling – and congratulations go to Ben. He did a great job to set his lap time. It came during the end of a long run, not even trying to qualify which makes it very impressive. Tom was trying very hard on his last lap and



something happened but this kind of incident can happen. Fortunately tomorrow is a free day and we have time to fix everything and be ready for the race. We will be strong in the race.”

**Tom Kristensen (Audi R18 TDI #3):** “Congratulations to the teams of the two sister cars and to Audi on clinching the front row. Our car, too, was fantastic in both qualifying sessions today and had the potential to be far at the front. At the beginning of the night session I had a lot of traffic and therefore tried another fast lap – but unfortunately all three sectors never fit together perfectly. I’m sorry that the guys have a lot of work to do on my car now after my accident and I can already promise now that Allan (McNish), Dindo (Capello) and I will give everything in the race to give them a nice reward for their great work.”

**Allan McNish (Audi R18 TDI #3):** “From a development for the race point of view, the car was improved a lot and I now feel very confident with the R18 TDI. We were able to push in every situation. Obviously it’s unfortunate and going to be hard work for the guys to repair after the incident at the end but these things happen. It’s part of motor racing. It’s part of pushing. But what really bodes well is that there are six cars covered by around half a second at the front of the grid. That means that we have got a fantastic race ahead.”

**Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Team Joest):** “It goes without saying that clinching the pole position at Le Mans is a great thing. But actually I’m even more pleased with the fact that we continually developed the cars further throughout the weekend. All three Audi R18 TDI are good race cars. That’s been shown by the long runs. That’s the most important part about it and the thing we wanted to achieve. And then, if on top of that, the qualifying session results in achieving fast times and securing the front row without really having made a major effort to do so but just grabbing the opportunity and using a little less diesel fuel in the tank and running on new tires then that’s obviously a great thing. If you consider that Benoît Tréluyer’s pole position was clinched at the end of stint then that’s further proof of how well we’ve set up the cars for the race.”



## Qualifying results

- 1 Fässler/Lotterer/Tréluyer (Audi R18 TDI) 3m 25.738s
- 2 Bernhard/Dumas/Rockenfeller (Audi R18 TDI) 3m 25.799s
- 3 Lamy/Bourdais/Pagenaud (Peugeot) 3m 26.010s
- 4 Montagny/Sarrazin/Minassian (Peugeot) 3m 26.156s
- 5 Capello/Kristensen/McNish (Audi R18 TDI) 3m 26.272s
- 6 Gene/Wurz/Davidson (Peugeot) 3m 26.272s
- 7 Lapierre/Duval/Panis (Peugeot) 3m 30.084s
- 8 Jani/Prost/Bleekemolen (Lola-Toyota) 3m 32.883s
- 9 Collard/Tinseau/Jousse (Pescarolo-Judd) 3m 33.066s
- 10 Belicchi/Boullion/Smith (Lola-Toyota) 3m 34.573s

The Audi Group sold around 1,092,400 cars of the Audi brand in 2010. The Company posted revenue of €35.4 billion and an operating profit of €3.3 billion in 2010. Audi produces vehicles in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Changchun (China) and Brussels (Belgium). Aurangabad in India saw the start of CKD production of the Audi A6 at the end of 2007, of the Audi A4 in early October 2008 and of the Audi Q5 in July 2010. Production of the new Audi A1 has been running at the Brussels plant since May 2010. The Company is active in more than 100 markets worldwide. AUDI AG's wholly owned subsidiaries include AUDI HUNGARIA MOTOR Kft., Automobili Lamborghini Holding S.p.A. in Sant'Agata Bolognese (Italy) and quattro GmbH in Neckarsulm. Audi currently employs around 60,000 people worldwide, including around 46,600 in Germany. Between 2011 and 2015 the brand with the four rings is planning to invest around €11 billion, mainly in new products, in order to sustain the Company's technological lead embodied in its "Vorsprung durch Technik" slogan. By 2015, Audi plans to increase the number of models in its portfolio to 42.

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 newly established Audi Environmental Foundation.