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## **Victory in Malaysia thwarted by tire failure**

- **Frank Biela/Marcel Fässler/Marco Werner are the runners-up at Sepang**
- **Audi R8 LMS was the most reliable vehicle in extreme temperatures**
- **Customer sport race car led the race up to 18 minutes before the end**

**Ingolstadt/Sepang, September 17, 2011 – In extremely tough conditions at the 12-hour Malaysia Merdeka Endurance Race at Sepang the Audi R8 LMS proved its endurance racing qualities yet again. Technically, the production-derived customer sport race car was running with absolute perfection. After the Bathurst 12 Hours, the Spa 24 Hours and Zolder 24 Hours the fourth endurance race victory of the Audi R8 LMS was practically within reach. However, a tire failure thwarted the victory of Team WRT (Belgian Audi Club) by a very narrow margin.**

In the heat of the night: At peak temperatures of 35 degrees centigrade technical problems in the field were the rule, but no so in the case of the Audi R8 LMS. However, the vehicle designated as car number 1 was lacking the necessary racing luck to achieve victory. A tire failure at the left rear wheel required an additional pit stop just a few minutes before the end. After 12 hours of driving and 1,779.303 kilometers Frank Biela/Marcel Fässler/Marco Werner had to admit defeat by 70.489 seconds.

The second vehicle of the WRT team had perfect chances for a podium place for a long time as well. Up to the race's midpoint Seiji Ara/Darryl O'Young/Alex Yoong were running on position two as the best Audi drivers. When the car was about to lap another vehicle shortly before the end of the seventh racing hour another contender failed to notice the white-blue race car and heavily hit it. A broken swivel mount required the whole front left suspension to be exchanged. With a gap of 15 laps the Asian driver trio resumed the race and ultimately took fifth place.

Almost at the same time the third Audi R8 LMS in the field suffered a setback as well. Alexandre Imperatori/Jeffrey Lee/Aaron Lim in the car of the customer team Pauian Archiland absolute racing were running in sixth place. They lost more than 90 minutes due to clutch failure since the proven module did not withstand an



accidental start in second gear after a pit stop. In the end the trio still improved to finish in the top ten.

Whereas the last major endurance race of the year was held at Sepang the season for the Audi R8 LMS is not over yet. In no less than four championships customer teams are currently running in front with the Audi R8 LMS: Mark Eddy in Australia, Bert Longin/Xavier Maassen in Belgium, Greg Franchi in the Blancpain Endurance Series and Marco Bonanomi/Andrea Sonvico in Italy. In the Portuguese Taca Cup and in Japan two Audi customer teams have already been determined as the winners this year.

### **Quotes after the race**

**Frank Biela (Audi Sport performance cars R8 LMS #1):** “We were a bit unfortunate today. The only tire failure that has arguably occurred in the top part of the field today was the one on our car. We caught it just before the end. That’s racing. The race is only over after 12 hours, and not after 11:40. But it’s been great to take part in this event again. It was very hard for the drivers and the material. But that’s the special attraction of this race.”

**Marcel Fässler (Audi Sport performance cars R8 LMS #1):** “The tire blowout has been following me since Le Mans. In France we were lucky but here at Sepang it was really unfortunate. I had to drive a complete lap. I think that otherwise I could have easily managed to keep our advantage. I didn’t even risk anything but just kept driving my rhythm. Then the tire quit without any advance notice. Incredible! The team, my team-mates and the car were very good. We would have certainly deserved victory. Even after a drive-through penalty at the beginning of the race we pushed forward again. We also had the quickest pit stop in the field – in other words everything you need to take victory. It wasn’t meant to be.”

**Marco Werner (Audi Sport performance cars R8 LMS #1):** “For a long time it was a pretty good race, as is typical for Audi. We drove good stints and the car was reliable as usual. It looked like an Audi victory but it’s not over before the checkered flag comes down. We’ve got to be satisfied with that today.”

**Seiji Ara (MediaCorp Audi R8 LMS #2):** “We finished fifth today. Unfortunately we were a bit unlucky in this race. Still: The Audi R8 LMS was very good and absolutely reliable. We were consistent and the race was fun. I want to thank the team and my team-mates.”



**Darryl O'Young (MediaCorp Audi R8 LMS #2):** "In an endurance race anything can happen. At Bathurst in February we had that bit of necessary luck and won with the R8 LMS. This weekend we were among the front runners. We were in front of our team-mates and there was only a small gap between us and the leaders. But then there was the accident on lapping. That's what makes these races so difficult. The whole team is naturally disappointed. And then the leading Audi had a tire failure just before the end to top things off. Being so close to victory and then losing after all is difficult of course. WRT is a fantastic team. It was a real pleasure. And the R8 LMS was very easy to drive. My thanks go to everyone in the team and to quattro GmbH for the support."

**Alex Yoong (MediaCorp Audi R8 LMS #2):** "Our team is very professional and the support is outstanding. We only had a short time to get to know each other and yet it was like being in a large family. Everyone was working for the same goal. I wasn't able to do anything when a backbencher hit my car. He was penalized but that didn't help me in any way. We lost half an hour. The tire failure on car number one so shortly before the end was a heart-breaking moment. But that's how motorsport can be too."

**Vincent Vosse (Team Director WRT):** "An endurance race is always a compromise of speed, experience, teamwork and the technical reliability of the car. And a bit of luck is part of it also. And that's exactly what we were lacking here. We didn't have the slightest technical problem with the cars. But just a few minutes before the end we had the tire failure. That's a bitter pill. But we must be fair and admit that both Mercedes were very quick and also had their problems. But even though it's very difficult for us, we've got to accept the outcome of the race."

### **Race results**

- 1 Taniguchi/Yanagida/Ang (Mercedes) 321 laps in 12h 01m 57.624s
- 2 Biela/Fässler/Werner (Audi R8 LMS) + 1m 10.489s
- 3 Kataoka/Hairuman/Schneider (Mercedes) – 6 laps
- 4 Fung/Jones/Asai (Lamborghini) – 11 laps
- 5 Ara/O'Young/Yoong (Audi R8 LMS) – 14 laps
- 6 Yu/Li/Johansson (Ford) – 37 laps
- 7 D'Silva/Fahrizal/Geekie (Aston Martin) – 44 laps
- 8 Boon/Lek/Soh (Honda) – 47 laps
- 9 Choong/Koon/Sing (Honda) – 48 laps
- 10 Lee/Imperator/Lim (Audi R8 LMS) – 52 laps



- End -

The Audi Group delivered around 1,092,400 cars of the Audi brand to customers in 2010. The Company posted revenue of €35.4 billion and an operating profit of €3.3 billion in 2010. In the first half of 2011, the Audi Group sold 652,970 vehicles bearing the four rings worldwide and achieved record figures in terms of revenue (€21.5 billion) and operating profit (€2.5 billion). 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 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 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 more than €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. Under the heading of "Audi balanced mobility," the Company is directing its activities toward a major goal - comprehensive CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral mobility.