



Communications Motorsport

Virginia Brusch

Tel: +49 841 89 41753

E-mail: virginia.brusch@audi.de

www.audi-mediacyenter.com

Audi R8 LMS on pole at Spa

- **Frank Stippler sets best time before 24-hour race**
- **Thrilling race to be expected due to close gaps**
- **Audi is best in six brands among the top ten**

Ingolstadt/Spa, July 24, 2015 – Frank Stippler only needed an advantage of 17 thousandths of a second. This was the margin by which the 40-year-old professional driver from Audi Sport Team WRT secured the best time in the decisive Superpole shootout for the Spa 24 Hours. His team-mate Laurens Vanthoor (B) achieved the sixth-best time.

The crowd at Spa can look forward to a thrilling 24-hour race. The qualifying and the Superpole shootout sessions already showed a highly competitive field. Six of the eleven marques managed the leap into the top ten on the grid, with only 36 hundredths of a second separating this group of front runners.

“It’s great to be first,” said Frank Stippler. “Achieving this result was difficult. In qualifying on Thursday, we were struggling with the balance of our car for a long time. At the last minute, we made the right decisions. This was the set-up we entered the top-20 qualifying session today with as well. On fresh tires, the new Audi R8 LMS was the best car I’ve ever had. The good balance on a single lap was the step in the right direction of being fast over the long run in the race too.”

The teams will be facing the next major task on Saturday. Rainy weather has been forecast, which requires particularly sure instincts for the set-up, tire choice and driving at the limit.

“We’re delighted about Frank’s best time,” said Romolo Liebchen, Head of Audi Sport customer racing. “It’s great that the new Audi R8 LMS did so well immediately in qualifying. But now we’re facing the much bigger task. At the beginning of the race, we’re expecting a lot of rain and have hardly any experience with these tires on a wet track. The teams have impeccably prepared the cars and installed all the parts for the race, so the major work has been completed. That’s a good base.”



The second-best Audi driver in the field was last year's winner Laurens Vanthoor. In sixth place, he was short by 0.282 seconds of his team-mate Frank Stippler's result. The two Audi R8 LMS cars of Audi Sport Team Phoenix participated in the Superpole shootout as well. Nicki Thiim (DK) in the number '5' car was not happy with the balance of his race car and achieved grid position 12. André Lotterer (D) in car number '6' did not find a clear lap and had to settle for 14th place.

In addition, six of the previous generation Audi R8 LMS ultra cars are competing in the Spa 24 Hours. Robin Frijns was the best driver of one of these. The Dutchman achieved position 24 in car number '3' for the Belgian Audi Club Team WRT. In the number '35' Audi of Saintéloc, Edward Sandström (S) took position 28. Frédéric Vervisch (B) in the number '75' ISR Audi, following the night qualifying session, was in 32nd place with his lap time of 2m 19.857s. Pieter Schothorst (NL) trailed him in the number '4' Audi of Team WRT in 36th place. At the same time, the Dutchman achieved 16th place in the Pro-Am category, trailed in 45th position by Team Parker Racing in car number '24.' Callum Macleod (GB) completed a lap on the circuit in 2m 20.921s, which made him the second-best driver in the Am category. Eleventh place in this class went to the Saintéloc Audi number '36' driven by Philippe Haezebrouck (F).

The race will start on Saturday at 16.30. The organizer offers live streaming on www.24hoursofspa.com/live. Eurosport will start its TV coverage at 18.00.

Qualifying results

- 1 Frank Stippler (Audi R8 LMS #2) 2m 18.130s
- 2 Kevin Estre (McLaren #58) 2m 18.147s
- 3 Andrea Piccini (Ferrari #11) 2m 18.176s
- 4 Alvaro Parente (McLaren #59) 2m 18.254s
- 5 Maxime Soulet (Bentley #8) 2m 18.350s
- 6 Laurens Vanthoor (Audi R8 LMS #1) 2m 18.412s
- 7 Bernd Schneider (Mercedes #18) 2m 18.427s
- 8 Nick Catsburg (BMW #46) 2m 18.451s
- 9 Vincent Abril (Bentley #84) 2m 18.482s
- 10 Steven Kane (Bentley #7) 2m 18.492s
- 12 Nicki Thiim (Audi R8 LMS #5) 2m 19.123s
- ...
- 14 André Lotterer (Audi R8 LMS #6) 2m 19.262s

- End -



In 2014, the Audi Group delivered approximately 1,741,100 cars of the Audi brand to its customers. The company achieved revenue of €53.8 billion and an operating profit of €5.15 billion in 2014. Audi operates globally in more than 100 markets and has production facilities in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Brussels (Belgium), Bratislava (Slovakia), Martorell (Spain), Kaluga (Russia), Aurangabad (India), Changchun and Foshan (China) as well as Jakarta (Indonesia). The brand with the Four Rings will start producing cars in Curitiba (Brazil) this year and in San José Chiapa (Mexico) in 2016. Wholly owned subsidiaries of AUDI AG include quattro GmbH (Neckarsulm), Automobili Lamborghini S.p.A. (Sant'Agata Bolognese, Italy) and sports motorcycle manufacturer Ducati Motor Holding S.p.A. (Bologna, Italy). The company currently employs approximately 80,000 people worldwide, thereof around 58,000 in Germany. Total investment of about €24 billion is planned from 2015 to 2019 – primarily in new products and sustainable technologies. Audi is committed to its corporate responsibility and has anchored the principle of sustainability for its products and processes in its strategy. The long-term goal is CO₂-neutral mobility.