



Communications Motorsport

Jürgen Pippig
Tel: +49 (0)841 89 34200
E-mail: juergen.pippig@audi.de
www.audi-motorsport.info

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

Audi R18 e-tron quattro sets the pace

- **André Lotterer sets fastest time in first qualifying at Le Mans**
- **Both diesel hybrid cars from Audi provisionally on front row**
- **All four Audi R18 in top five**

Ingolstadt/Le Mans, June 14, 2012 – After the first qualifying session for the 80th running of the Le Mans 24 Hours a car with hybrid drive is at the front of the field for the first time in the history of the endurance classic: the new Audi R18 e-tron quattro.

Last year's winner André Lotterer in the diesel hybrid designated as car number "1" set a time of 3m 25.453s in the first qualifying session shortly after midnight, beating last year's pole position time by 285 thousandths of a second. The result of Le Mans record winner Tom Kristensen, who posted the second-fastest time at the wheel of the number "2" R18, caused both diesel hybrid sports cars from AUDI AG to provisionally occupy the front row of the grid. After the first qualifying session, the two R18 ultra cars are on positions three (car number "3"/Loïc Duval) and five (car number "4"/Mike Rockenfeller).

As usual, on the first practice day Audi Sport Team Joest concentrated on preparing for the race, tire tests and fine-tuning the cars based on the data gathered on the test day. As early as in free practice, André Lotterer – at 3m 25.163s – was clearly below the pole position time set last year. This best mark was not achieved in qualifying at night in cooler temperatures and on a more slippery track.

All twelve Audi racers completed the mandatory laps at night which are prescribed for qualifying. The four Audi R18 cars were running without any technical problems and reeled off a total of 330 laps. Before the final qualifying session on Thursday night, the cars will be completely prepared again from scratch and fitted with the engines and components intended for the race. The ultimate decision of the grid positions will be made on Thursday night from 1900 to 2100 hrs and from 2200 to 2400 hrs.



Last year, Benoît Tréluyer clinched the top spot on the grid for Audi 30 minutes before the end of the final qualifying session on Thursday night. Audi has so far started from the pole position six times at Le Mans and has won the French endurance classic as many as ten times since 2000.

“It was incredibly difficult to find a free lap,” said Mike Rockenfeller, who drove at Le Mans for the first time again after his serious accident a year ago and lost more than a second behind a slower GT car on his fastest lap. “Of course that was a shame – but it’s a lot more important that our car felt very good in the end and was comfortable to drive. That’s what counts at Le Mans.”

“On the whole, we had a very productive day,” said Head of Audi Motorsport Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich. “Finding a good set-up for the unusually cool temperatures in the night session wasn’t easy because the grip level on the track was pretty low. In the end, we managed that quite well on new tires. I do think, though, that even faster times will be driven tomorrow. But we’re fully concentrating on the race anyway because the pole position is not of decisive importance for the outcome of the race at Le Mans.”

– 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. Subject to a positive decision by the responsible competition authorities, the Italian sports motorcycle manufacturer Ducati Motor Holding S.p.A. will also belong to the Audi Group. 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 and in Mexico in 2016.

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. Within the context of “Vorsprung durch Technik,” which extends far beyond its products, the Company is directing its activities toward a major goal – comprehensive CO₂-neutral mobility.

