



Communications Motorsport

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

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

24h Spa: Two Audi R8 LMS in the top ten

- **Rain causes turbulent qualifying at Spa-Francorchamps**
- **Grid only decided just before midnight**
- **Mattias Ekström fastest in the rain and best Audi driver**

Ingolstadt/Spa, July 29, 2011 – Qualifying for the 24-hour race at Spa-Francorchamps (Belgium) provided a foretaste of what the spectators could well expect on Saturday and Sunday: a fascinating exchange of blows between the world’s best GT3 sportscars in which the result is completely unpredictable.

As is so often the case at Spa-Francorchamps the fickle Ardennes weather played a decisive role during Thursday’s qualifying. Rain showers repeatedly swept across the circuit. Rain tires were de rigueur during the first of two qualifying sessions. In the third and final session the track dried out in the closing minutes.

With 62 cars representing 13 different brands an extremely close fight developed for the best grid positions just before midnight around the 7.004 kilometer long circuit. Qualifying was interrupted twice by the red flag in the hectic closing stages. In the end, the drivers at the front were the luckiest in heavy traffic on the rapidly drying track who found a clear lap.

After the Audi R8 LMS had dictated the pace with the fastest lap on a dry track during free practice in the morning and again in first qualifying on the wet track, the Audi drivers were unlucky in the crucial final minutes of qualifying. Filipe Albuquerque (Audi Sport Team WRT #32) spun off into the barriers when the circuit was still wet. In the end he had to sit and watch as he tumbled from second to 43rd position. Team mate Mattias Ekström (Audi Sport Team WRT #33), who had recorded the fastest time in the rain, jumped from the midfield to seventh in a last gasp effort and was the fastest Audi driver as a result. Mike Rockenfeller (Audi Sport Team Phoenix #98) and Marc Basseng (Audi Sport Team Phoenix #99) held fourth and seventh before the final red flag, they were unlucky in traffic in the final seven minutes after the restart and must be satisfied with tenth and 13th grid positions.



“It goes without saying that the end of qualifying wasn’t to our taste,” explained Head of Audi Motorsport Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich. “You needed plenty of luck and this is something we definitely lacked. Furthermore, our position in the pits was a disadvantage today because after the red flags we had too many cars in front of us. However, the grid positions for a 24-hour race are not so critical. It’s important that collected a lot of experience today and saw that our R8 LMS sportscars handle well and are fast on both a dry and wet track. Both of our teams will do their utmost to ensure that things run better in the race than they did in the final minutes of qualifying.”

The three Audi R8 LMS fielded by customer team United Autosports start the race from 30, 35 and 52 on the grid. The 63rd running of the Spa 24 Hours starts on Saturday at 4 p.m. local time. Sport1 broadcasts seven hours live from Spa, Motors TV 12.5 hours. Audi fans can follow a non-stop live stream of the race on www.audi.tv on Saturday from 3 p.m. (CEST).

The starting grid at Spa

- 1 Martin/Leinders/Hennerici (BMW) 2m 24.488s
- 2 Goossens/Heylen/Soulet (Porsche) 2m 24.735s
- 3 Roda/Giammaria/Ruberti (Porsche) 2m 26.713s
- 4 Hayek/Kox/Merten (Lamborghini) 2m 26.807s
- 5 Westbrook/Menzel/Stursberg/Riegel (Porsche) 2m 26.952s
- 6 van Splunteren/Miller/Sougnéz/de Crem (Porsche) 2m 27.195s
- 7 Ekström/Franchi/Scheider (Audi R8 LMS) 2m 27.842s
- 8 Gerber/Griffin/Cadei/Cioci (Ferrari) 2m 28.262s
- 9 Parisy/Vannelet/Haezebrouck/Vignall (Mercedes) 2m 28.355s
- 10 Fässler/Piccini/Rockenfeller (Audi R8 LMS) 2m 28.573s
- ...
- 13 Basseng/Haase/Stippler (Audi R8 LMS) 2m 29.250s
- 30 Dean/Brown/Herbert/Johansson (Audi R8 LMS) 2m 34.216s
- 35 Patterson/Bell/Cheever/Blundell (Audi R8 LMS) 2m 35.543s
- 43 Albuquerque/Longin/Ortelli (Audi R8 LMS) 2m 38.997s
- 52 Luyendyk/Li/Meins/Richard (Audi R8 LMS) 2m 44.720s



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.