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Audi 1-2-3-4 victory at Spa on premiere

- **Audi R18 ultra and R18 e-tron quattro strong and reliable**
- **Solid debuts by Marc Gené, Marco Bonanomi and Oliver Jarvis**
- **Second win of the season for Audi in World Endurance Championship WEC**

Ingolstadt/Spa, May 5, 2012 – Audi delivered a thrilling premiere of two new vehicle models: Romain Dumas/Loïc Duval/Marc Gené won the Spa 6 Hours, the second round of the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC, in an open battle of the vehicle concepts. Crossing the finish line behind the Audi R18 ultra of the trio were last year’s Le Mans winners Marcel Fässler/André Lotterer/Benoît Tréluyer. They had dominated the race in the early phase with the Audi R18 e-tron quattro, the first diesel hybrid sports car in history. In the end, they had to admit defeat though. The other two Audi driver teams completed the perfect 1-2-3-4 victory of the brand.

The successful racing debut of the Audi R18 ultra and the R18 e-tron quattro marked an important milestone for Audi. In their first competition, the two vehicle concepts, in addition to their reliability, demonstrated a very balanced overall performance. The sporting results confirmed a basic agenda set by Audi – the decision in favor of two vehicle concepts – right on the cars’ first race. Major technical advantages of individual concepts can be offset by the LMP sports prototype regulations in a way that allows a thrilling competition to unfold – even though this question will have to be answered anew on each of the race tracks under highly different general conditions.

On the wet track at Spa-Francorchamps the two hybrid sports cars initially dominated the action. André Lotterer in the number “1” R18 e-tron quattro took the lead from Tom Kristensen in the number “2” hybrid sister car after only a few laps. Lotterer gained an almost one-minute advantage over the best conventionally powered Audi R18 ultra, car number “3” driven by Marc Gené. At the end of the race’s first hour, two factors caused a preliminary decision. On a drying track, Marc Gené at the first pit stop was the only Audi to switch to slicks while the other drivers



received intermediates. Consequently, Audi's new Spanish signing was up to four seconds quicker than the rest on the 7.004-kilometer track. At the same time, the number "2" Audi R18 e-tron quattro was forced to have the hood exchanged due to a defect on the front lighting system. Tom Kristensen lost almost a minute in the process.

Thanks to the bold tire choice Marc Gené and Loïc Duval converted a gap of around one minute into an advantage during the course of 37 race laps. On lap 63, Duval took the lead – and car number "3" would not relinquish it again through to the finish. Gené, who is standing in for the injured Timo Bernhard as a reserve driver, thus managed a brilliant debut at Audi. After his successes in 2008 and 2011, the Spaniard is celebrating his third sports car victory at Spa.

Following behind Marcel Fässler/André Lotterer/Benoît Tréluyer in second place were Marco Bonanomi/Oliver Jarvis in the second Audi R18 ultra. Both finished their sports car debut in the Audi factory team with a podium place.

Capello/Kristensen/McNish had to settle for an unfortunate fourth place but are not leaving Spa empty-handed. Allan McNish achieved the best time in qualifying on Friday and in the World Endurance Championship standings the Sebring winners are now ranking as the runners-up with 41 points. The new front runners are Romain Dumas and Loïc Duval with 43 points.

With the 1-2-3-4 victory at Spa, four reliably working race cars, a solid driver line-up and an efficiently operating Audi Sport Team Joest, Audi managed a successful dress rehearsal for the Le Mans 24 Hours. The endurance classic will be held for the 80th time on June 16 and 17. Audi is aiming for its eleventh overall victory there.

Quotes after the race

Dieter Gass (Head of Racing Commitments): "We're very happy with this result. On the whole, it couldn't have gone any better, even though the situation became a bit unpredictable toward the end. We suffered punctures on two cars because obviously after the numerous accidents some sharp debris was on the track. Technically, the cars ran without any problems throughout the six hours. That was an important step in our preparation for Le Mans. I want to thank the squad after a very tough preparation period. This is the nicest reward one could wish for."



Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Team Joest): “We celebrated a 1-2-3-4 victory and learned a lot with the four cars and different tire strategies. Our four cars finished without any technical problems. Audi’s decision to opt for two concepts proved to be right. The R18 e-tron quattro is a strong car but the R18 ultra, too, has certain advantages. But there’ll be quite a few more things coming with the R18 e-tron quattro in the future. This was the first race with the hybrid car that ultimately finished in second and fourth place. ‘Well done’ to the winners Romain Dumas, Loïc Duval and Marc Gené and to Oliver Jarvis and Marco Bonanomi too, who drove their first races without making the slightest mistake. It was a good dress rehearsal for Le Mans. I want to thank the squad in these tough and very busy days.”

Romain Dumas (Audi R18 ultra #3): “We had a perfect race. My team-mates and our squad showed a brilliant performance. Our strategy was right on the mark and our fuel consumption was low. That paid off. That way, we increased our advantage. The tires were very good, that’s why I opted not to change tires in the end. That was another reason for our success.”

Loïc Duval (Audi R18 ultra #3): “Today, we experienced a surprise. This was only my second race with Audi but already my first victory. As always, there wasn’t a single problem when I’m sitting in an Audi. The conditions were very difficult in the beginning but the car was fantastic. We had no problems whatsoever. It’s a nice result for Audi to finish on positions one, two, three and four. I’m very happy to be on the very top of the podium.”

Marc Gené (Audi R18 ultra #3): “That was incredible. More was not possible today. Life is full of surprises. On my debut with Audi I clinched my third personal victory at Spa. It was an honest win in difficult conditions. As a driver team, we were well matched; the engineers, the team and the car were perfect. I never believed in taking victory. My goal had been a podium finish.”

Marcel Fässler (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #1): “Sincere congratulations to Audi and car number “3” on taking victory. They did a perfect job and made their decisions at exactly the right moment. We had the pace for winning. A key point in time was a safety car period that separated us from the cars in front and caused us to lose ground from a 15 to a 50 second gap. It was difficult to make up such a gap. After my pit stop a wheel locked once when I hit the brakes. Afterward there were heavy vibrations and I was no longer in contention for victory. I secured second place in order to score important points for the World Championship. To avoid a puncture I had new wheels fitted just to be on the safe side.”



André Lotterer (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #1): “A fantastic race for Audi with a 1-2-3-4 victory. When I was sitting in the car at the beginning of the race in the rain I particularly enjoyed the technology of the R18 e-tron quattro. Even though the technology is brand new it functioned superbly. Unfortunately, we didn’t keep the lead but we’re still in a learning phase. On the whole, though, it was a nice beginning before the really big challenge, the Le Mans 24 Hours.”

Benoît Tréluyer (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #1): “Second place on the debut of the hybrid vehicle is a good result. The car was running absolutely perfectly – a good sign for the future. Our Audi R18 e-tron quattro was really very good in the rain. When track was drying off and I was in the cockpit the car developed a tendency to understeer. That cost us a lot of time in the battle with car number “3.” But we’re only at the beginning with this new concept.”

Marco Bonanomi (Audi R18 ultra #4): “It was really a great race. This was my first one in an Audi sports prototype, so I can’t expect any more than this. Yesterday, we were second in qualifying and today we finished in third place. The race was very difficult. In the beginning it was pretty wet and then the tarmac dried off more and more. Oliver and I were very quick in all conditions. The pit crew did tremendous stops. Unfortunately, we struck by misfortune during the first safety car period and lost one lap at the red lights at the end of the pit lane.”

Oliver Jarvis (Audi R18 ultra #4): “A great day. The most important thing was to not make any mistakes and to complete as many kilometers as possible. We may be inexperienced but the pace was there. Now the wish remains to finish on the podium at Le Mans as well – maybe we’ll even move up a bit more.”

Dindo Capello (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #2): “A tremendous result on the whole. For the first time, Audi occupied the top four places. Sincere congratulations to the winners, but I’m hoping that it won’t be too long before an Audi R18 e-tron quattro wins for the first time. Audi did a superb job of competing here with four cars and clinching a 1-2-3-4 victory. In our car, my task was to drive three stints with the tires to test them for Le Mans. But after my last stop the tires heavily degraded and I had increasingly heavy understeer – which caused me to lose more and more speed. This phenomenon increased further in traffic. When I was driving alone it was okay. I think that the cause is not to be found in the tires but in our set-up.”

Tom Kristensen (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #2): “This was an outstanding race for Audi with four new cars. Unfortunately, it didn’t go optimally for our driver team.



But particularly in the rain our performance was remarkable. Things were going well on a dry track too but a few minor things caused us to lose ground. We had to change the front hood because the left headlight wasn't working. Then we received a stop-and-go penalty. Our tire strategy was relatively conservative. But on the way to the finish we gathered a lot of valuable data and findings. 'Well done' to the three cars in front of us on the podium. Coming up next, in June, will be the pre-test for the Le Mans 24 Hours. We've been looking forward to the big race two weeks later for a long time."

Allan McNish (Audi R18 e-tron quattro #2): "A very sincere 'well done' to our victorious team-mates. They were very good today. Spa is always unpredictable and so the weather today was critical again. It was also clear that we're experiencing a learning curve with the R18 e-tron quattro and at the moment we're just at the beginning of it. We've still got to improve balance and thus the consistency of the tires. Two or three minor changes in the race didn't help us either. But that's the way it goes sometimes. Today was totally different from yesterday when we managed to set the fastest time in qualifying."

Race results

- 1 Dumas/Duval/Gené (Audi R18 ultra), 160 laps in 6h 00.22m708s
- 2 Fässler/Lotterer/Tréluyer (Audi R18 e-tron quattro) + 46.801s
- 3 Bonanomi/Jarvis (Audi R18 ultra) – 1 lap
- 4 Capello/Kristensen/McNish (Audi R18 e-tron quattro) – 1 lap
- 5 Prost/Jani/Heidfeld (Lola-Toyota) – 4 laps
- 6 Belicchi/Primat (Lola-Toyota) – 5 laps
- 7 Leventis/Watts/Kane (HPD-Honda) – 6 laps
- 8 Dolan/Hancock (Zytek-Nissan) – 9 laps
- 9 Martin/Kerr/Graves (Oreca-Nissan) – 9 laps
- 10 Firth/Hughes/Hartley (Oreca-Nissan) – 9 laps

– 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.