

Communication Motorsport

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Audi at LMS début on second row of the grid

- **Allan McNish third in qualifying at Barcelona**
- **“Birthday child” Alexandre Prémat on position six**
- **Start of the race broadcast live on Eurosport**

Ingolstadt/Barcelona – In their first running in the European Le Mans Series the two Audi R10 TDI prototypes fielded by Audi Sport Team Joest will start the 1000-kilometre race at Barcelona (Spain) on Sunday from the second and third rows. Quickest Audi driver in Saturday’s qualifying was Allan McNish on position three. Alexandre Prémat, on his 26th birthday, set the sixth-best time.

At its Le Mans Series début Audi Sport Team Joest on Friday and Saturday concentrated primarily on setup work for the five- to six-hour race. Almost 50 cars will start to the round at the “Circuit de Catalunya” on Sunday. Therefore, a car is required, which is comfortable and safe to drive and which enables easy overtaking.

The current ALMS Champion Allan McNish managed setting his fastest time as early as on the first flying qualifying lap making optimum use of tyre performance. Alexandre Prémat achieved his best time after a setup change only towards the end of the 20-minute qualifying, on tyres that were heavily worn by that time.

On the Circuit de Catalunya both R10 TDI cars have so far shown a tendency towards “understeer”, in other words, they slightly push when cornering.



The race at Barcelona is scheduled to start at 11:35 a.m., local time on Sunday. Eurosport will air live coverage of the starting phase from 11:15 to 12:00 and a summary report from 11:00 to 11:30 p.m.

Quotes after qualifying at Barcelona

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “Our first qualifying session in the LMS did not go completely according to our expectations. We’re struggling with understeer here, which has been following us through all the practice sessions. We expect the car to have less understeer as the track builds up grip – and that should be the case tomorrow. With a few adjustments we’re going to make with the setup, we should have a decent racing car. And we shouldn’t forget that the race is run over a 1000-kilometre distance.”

Dindo Capello (Audi R10 TDI #1): “The gap to the pole position is pretty big – bigger than expected. We already saw at Sebring that we need to increase our speed a bit. But the race is long, and in an endurance race reliability is still a crucial factor. And, so far, this has always been a major strength of Audi Sport. I’m counting on that tomorrow as well.”

Allan McNish (Audi R10 TDI #1): “We know from experience that the Audi R10 TDI is a car that is better in the race than in qualifying. That’s why I’m confident as far as the race is concerned. This morning, handling was not as good as on Friday. For the qualifying practice, we made some minor modifications, and then it was better. The track is very rough on the tyres, so the time has to be set straight on the first lap. Unfortunately, I had to overtake a slower car in Turn 1, and then two more on that lap. This cost me two, three tenths, but certainly not the 1.3 seconds we were lacking to Peugeot’s pole time.”

Alexandre Prémat (Audi R10 TDI #2): “This was my first qualifying in the LMS – and definitely not an easy one for me. The car was difficult to drive. Before the qualifying practice, we also tried a few things in order to learn more. We need to continue working on the car. I’m sure that, in the end, we can be running in front despite starting from position six.”

Mike Rockenfeller (Audi R10 TDI #2): “We’re sixth on the grid. That’s not what we expected. But it doesn’t mean anything, because it’s such a long race. We’re still struggling with the setup. But I’m sure we’ll be able to analyse and fix that for the race. I’m still as optimistic as before.”



Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Team Joest): "It's as difficult as we thought it would be. We knew before that the competition is quick and has an experience advantage in this series. We need to catch up a bit. With the setup, we're not yet completely where we want to be. With car #1, we're already heading in the right direction. With nearly 50 cars on the track, it's particularly important to have a car with good balance and good drivability. The pure lap time will probably not be quite as crucial in the race."

The starting grid at Barcelona

- 1 Lamy/Sarrazin (Peugeot) 1m 31.875s
- 2 Gene/Minassian (Peugeot) 1m 32.454s
- 3 Capello/McNish (Audi R10 TDI) 1m 33.250s
- 4 Charouz/Mücke (Lola-Aston Martin) 1m 33.734s
- 5 Verstappen/van Merksteijn (Porsche) 1m 34.422s
- 6 Prémat/Rockenfeller (Audi R10 TDI) 1m 34.671s
- 7 Panis/Lapierre (Courage Oreca-Judd) 1m 35.078s
- 8 Boullion/Collard (Pescarolo-Judd) 1m 35.641s
- 9 Pompidou/Belicchi/Zacchia (Lola) 1m 35.797s
- 10 Lammers/Theys/Lienhard (Porsche) 1m 36.156s

Photographs and information available at www.audi-motorsport.info

AUDI AG sold a total of 964,151 cars in 2007 and thus achieved its twelfth consecutive record year. With revenue of €33,617 million and profit before tax of €2,915 million, the company attained its best figures ever. Audi produces vehicles in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Changchun (China) and Brussels (Belgium). At the end of 2007, production of the Audi A6 started in Aurangabad, India. The company is active in more than 100 markets worldwide. AUDI AG's wholly owned subsidiaries include Automobili Lamborghini Holding S.p.A. in Sant'Agata Bolognese, Italy, and quattro GmbH in Neckarsulm. Audi employs about 54,000 people worldwide, including 45,000 in Germany. The brand with the four rings invests more than €2 billion each year in order to sustain the company's technological lead embodied in its "Vorsprung durch Technik" slogan. Audi plans to nearly double the number of models in its portfolio by 2015, from the 25 currently on offer to 40.

