

Detroit, 31 August 2007

Motorsport

Audi leads the LM P1 category again

- **ALMS début on the Detroit “street” circuit**
- **Both Audi diesel sportscars on the fourth row of the grid**
- **Narrow “Belle Isle” track will make overtaking difficult**

As the best cars of the LM P1 category, the two Audi R10 TDI sportscars start the tenth round of the American Le Mans Series in Detroit (US state of Michigan) from the fourth row of the grid. Allan McNish (Scotland) secured the class pole position in the “king class” of the sports prototypes with a mere 0.050 seconds gap in front of his team mate Marco Werner (Germany).

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For all four Audi “works” drivers, the “downtown” track located on a parkland island in the Detroit River is new territory – the “Belle Isle Detroit Grand Prix” being a new addition to the ALMS calendar. After St. Petersburg, Long Beach and Houston, it is the fourth and final street circuit for the Audi R10 TDI this season. For the Audi team, it is a “home” race as well, because the main Audi of America office is just 30 miles away in Auburn Hills. In two practice sessions on Friday, the Audi drivers had the opportunity to learn the track, but on the bumpy and twisty circuit within sight of the city of Detroit, they could not match the speed of the lighter cars of the LM P2 category.

The race at Detroit starts Saturday at 3:15 p.m. local time (21:15 p.m. in Germany) with a distance of 2:45 hours.

Quotes after qualifying

Allan McNish (Audi R10 TDI #1): “It will be difficult for Audi to achieve outright success in the race with both R10 TDI sportscars starting from the fourth row. This tight, slow ‘street’ circuit does not suit our diesel engine

Audi which was designed for tracks like Le Mans, featuring long straights and fast corners. Marco and I got the best out of our car in qualifying. There was nothing more to come from either of us – we're a mere 0.050secs apart."

Dindo Capello (Audi R10 TDI #1): "Detroit is definitely an LM P2 race track with only two of these cars behind us on the grid. Allan could have done no more in qualifying. Both Audi are around two seconds slower than the pole-position time and that is a big gap. We can only hope that we are closer to the LM P2 cars in the race and that we can also achieve another LM P1 class victory for our championship aspirations."

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Marco Werner (Audi R10 TDI #2): "Qualifying was disappointing as we are two seconds behind the fastest car. The track is very difficult because it has a lot of bumps and our R10 TDI does not like this aspect at all. We drive with a high risk, many drivers made mistakes. I spun in qualifying and some drivers have already touched the walls. The race will be hard as overtaking on this narrow track will be particularly difficult."

Emanuele Pirro (Audi R10 TDI #2): "It's nice to be in Detroit in the home of Audi America. Unfortunately the circuit is not ideal for our Audi and it is very difficult to match the pace of the lighter LM P2 class cars. But I think both of the Audis did the best job they could and minimized the gap in qualifying as much as possible."

Dave Maraj (Team Director Audi Sport North America): "Allan and Marco tried very hard, as did the entire Audi team, in attempting to reduce the gap to the lighter LM P2 cars in practice and ultimately qualifying but there is a limit to how much you can close up to those cars and we reached it. We've tried everything, but our cars could not go any faster – they just don't suit this track. Normally the lap times between us and LM P2 cars close a little in the race and we must hope that this occurs again. Coping with traffic and keeping out of trouble will also play a significant part of the race."

The starting grid at Detroit

- 1 Briscoe/Maassen (Porsche) 1m 13.357s
- 2 Bernhard/Dumas (Porsche) 1m 13.603s
- 3 Herta/Franchitti (Acura/Honda) 1m 13.768s
- 4 Smith/Dyson (Acura/Honda) 1m 13.983s
- 5 Brabham/Johansson (Acura/Honda) 1m 14.010s
- 6 Fernandez/Diaz (Acura/Honda) 1m 14.450s
- 7 McNish/Capello (Audi R10 TDI) 1m 15.320s (1st LM P1)
- 8 Werner/Pirro (Audi R10 TDI) 1m 15.370s (2nd LM P1)
- 9 Wallace/Leitzinger (Porsche) 1m 15.639s
- 10 Graf/Pickett (Lola-AER) 1m 18.016s (3rd LM P1)

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