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## **Audi R10 TDI starts from pole position at Sebring**

- **Qualifying abandoned following accident**
- **Starting grid based on times from free practice sessions**
- **Audi R10 TDI first and third on the grid**

**Ingolstadt/Sebring – An Audi R10 TDI will start from the top spot of the starting grid in the 12 Hours of Sebring (US state of Florida) for the third time in a row. Thursday’s qualifying session had to be stopped after a few minutes due to an accident. The starting grid will thus be based on the results of the three free practice sessions. Allan McNish’s fastest time in Thursday morning’s practice secured Audi the pole position.**

With a 1m 43.195s, the Scotsman at the wheel of the number 1 Audi R10 TDI beat last year’s pole time by 1.779 seconds. This is a hint how much the world’s fastest sports cars have been developed over the previous twelve months.

This is also the case for the Peugeot 908, which will line up on the front row of the grid on Saturday at 10:05 a.m. local time (15:05 p.m. in Germany) next to the Audi of Dindo Capello, Tom Kristensen and Allan McNish. The second Audi R10 TDI with the German trio Lucas Luhr/Mike Rockenfeller/Marco Werner will start from third place.

Since the beginning of the Sebring week on Monday, the diesel-powered sports cars from Audi and Peugeot have been setting the pace alternating at the top of the time sheets. Their fastest times on Thursday were just 78 thousandths of a second apart which means that the spectators may expect an especially thrilling



sports car race in which also the lighter LM P2 cars from Acura/Honda and Porsche have the chance of overall victory.

Audi is undefeated at Sebring since 2000 and starts for a ninth time in a row from pole position. In a 12-hour long race, however, apart from speed also consistency and reliability are decisive. That's why Audi Sport Team Joest worked especially intensely on the race-setup of the two new R10 TDI cars which race for the first time in their latest technical configuration.

While it was unusually cool at Sebring at the beginning of the week, for race day temperatures up to 31 degrees Celsius have been predicted – in combination with the bumpy track this makes up an extreme test for men and material.

#### **Quotes after the qualifying at Sebring**

**Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport):** "Qualifying was extremely short due to the accident. Not everybody was able to show its potential. That's why the decision to use the times from the free practice sessions for the starting grid is okay. The forces are almost like we expected them to be. Peugeot is fast, but we have a very good car for the race and thus a good base for Saturday."

**Dindo Capello (Audi R10 TDI #1):** "We worked a lot since Monday on the car and have gradually improved it. We tried to make the car as easy as possible to drive as Sebring is such a difficult race and we have to get the car to handle consistently and easy for the driver. We are going in the right direction and know that Audi is well prepared. It is likely to be a classic endurance race and really interesting for the spectators."

**Tom Kristensen (Audi R10 TDI #1):** "It's going to be a great race with a lot of manufacturers challenging us – a real dog-fight. We know our friends from France are very fast with the closed car while the LM P2 cars have a bigger petrol tank. If the race goes green for 12 hours they will have to stop three times less than us. So in that sense it's going to be very exciting."

**Allan McNish (Audi R10 TDI #1):** "It proved once more you have to be on it all of the time and be consistently fast in every session. This prepares you for every eventuality. Personally I don't think it was right to cancel qualifying but we'll start from pole-position and aim to stay in front in the race."



**Lucas Luhr (Audi R10 TDI #2):** "I'm very happy with the week so far. We've been among the fastest in all the sessions. It's important to have a car for the race with which you come good through traffic – which means: you can drive any line. That's what we are working on."

**Mike Rockenfeller (Audi R10 TDI #2):** "I did my first laps here only on Wednesday and felt comfortable immediately. Third position on the grid is okay. I'm looking forward to the race. We want to show and will show that the best cars are coming from Ingolstadt."

**Marco Werner (Audi R10 TDI #2):** "Of course we'd prefer to have both cars on the front row instead of starting third. But at Sebring it is always of great importance to work for the race. I hope that our time comes on Saturday. The race has always been Audi's strong point."

**Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Team Joest):** "So far this has been a typical Sebring week. Track conditions keep changing so quickly that you are always following the changes with your work. Generally we have achieved quite a good basis – especially with car number one. On the second car we still have to do some fine-tuning for the race."



### **The starting grid at Sebring**

- 1 Capello/Kristensen/McNish (Audi R10 TDI), 1m 43.195s
- 2 Minassian/Sarrazin/Lamy (Peugeot), 1m 44.271s
- 3 Luhr/Rockenfeller/Werner (Audi R10 TDI), 1m 45.090s
- 4 Dumas/Bernhard/Collard (Porsche), 1m 45.220s
- 5 Maassen/Long/Briscoe (Porsche), 1m 45.999s
- 6 Fernandez/Diaz (Acura/Honda), 1m 46.029s
- 7 Franchitti/Leitzinger/Lally (Porsche), 1m 46.348s
- 8 Herta/Fittipaldi/Andretti (Acura/Honda), 1m 46.632s
- 9 Field/Field/Berry (Lola), 1m 47.358s
- 10 Smith/Dyson (Porsche), 1m 47.567s

**Photographs and information can be obtained at [www.audi-motorsport.info](http://www.audi-motorsport.info)**