



Communications

Audi Sport customer racing

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Audi teams ready for WTCR – FIA World Touring Car Cup premiere

- **Six drivers from two teams rely on Audi RS 3 LMS**
- **Inaugural season of WTCR – FIA World Touring Car Cup with ten rounds**

Barcelona/Neuburg a. d. Donau, March 29, 2018 – For Audi Sport customer racing it is a premiere in a new series and also the continuation of a touring car racing tradition from years ago: For the first time since 1995, a production-based touring car bearing the four rings is battling again for a global FIA title. In Morocco, the inaugural season of the WTCR – FIA World Touring Car Cup will kick off on April 6 to 8, with six Audi RS 3 LMS cars on the grid. This Thursday, the Audi teams are completing their pre-season preparations with an official test day at Barcelona.

Audi Sport driver legend Frank Biela and the Audi A4 quattro were the last winners of an FIA World Touring Car Cup. On October 15, 1995, the German professional driver and his marque secured victory in the drivers' and manufacturers' classifications on the circuit at Le Castellet, France. Now the marque will be battling to defend the title because the FIA has not sanctioned such a world cup since then.

An official test day this Thursday, March 29, completes the pre-season preparations of the Audi teams. Two squads with a total of six drivers will be contesting the races in the Audi RS 3 LMS in 2018. Audi Sport Leopard Lukoil Team relies on the Frenchman Jean-Karl Vernay and the Scotsman Gordon Shedden, Audi Sport Team Comtoy on the Belgian Frédéric Vervisch. All three Audi Sport campaigners are successful pros who have previously clinched motorsport titles in diverse categories. Vernay in 2017 won the TCR International Series plus four other titles in his career, Gordon Shedden was British Touring Car Champion three times. Frédéric Vervisch has scored a title in both Formula 3 and Belcar and been driving Audi's GT3 sports cars for several years. Three privateer drivers from Team Comtoy Racing complement Audi's lineup. The Belgian Denis Dupont and the two Frenchmen Nathanaël Berthon and Aurélien Panis look back on experience and success in various motorsport classes as well.

Both racing teams are young, ambitious and hail from Belgium. Team Audi Sport Leopard Lukoil is backed by Vincent Vosse's WRT team that was formed in 2009. With the Audi R8 LMS it has won ten drivers' titles, numerous other classifications and six 24-hour races, plus two international TCR titles with Volkswagen. Jean-Michel Baert's Comtoy Racing team has only



been active in motorsport since 2016, clinched third position in the TCR International Series with the best Audi privateer driver last year and in winter won the Trophée Andros ice racing series with an Audi A1 quattro. “In terms of drivers and teams we’ve fulfilled all our wishes this way,” says Chris Reinke, Head of Audi Sport customer racing. “We’re facing a thrilling racing season on four continents where we’ll be battling for World Cup titles in drivers’ and teams’ classifications. We’re delivering gripping and original touring car racing with wheel-to-wheel duels of the kind the fans love.”

This season features ten events. The opener in Morocco will be one of four city street races. At Vila Real, Portugal, at Wuhan, China, and in the finale in Macau, the drivers will again be battling for hundredths of a second in narrow street canyons. The longest track is on the calendar in May, at the Nürburgring. Around the 24-hour race, the drivers will cover the 25-kilometer combination of the Grand Prix circuit and the Nordschleife. Challenging tracks in Hungary, the Netherlands, Argentina, China and Japan complete the demanding calendar. Per weekend, the drivers will be contesting three races.

All six drivers rely on the Audi RS 3 LMS. The touring car with power output of up to 257 kW (350 hp) is Audi Sport customer racing’s entry-level model. Audi has delivered more than 130 of these race cars to customers around the world since the end of 2016. 55 race wins and five championship titles were scored right in its first season. In the 2018 FIA WTCR season, all six Audi RS 3 LMS cars are equipped with sequential six-speed transmissions. Competitors of the Audi RS 3 LMS include products from six renowned volume brands from Germany, France, Italy, Japan, Korea and Spain.

Audi Sport customer racing teams and drivers

Audi Sport Leopard Lukoil Team

#52 Gordon Shedden (GB), born February 15, 1979 in Edinburgh (GB), residing in Auchterarder (GB), BTCC Champion 2012, 2015, 2016

#69 Jean-Karl Vernay (F), born October 31, 1987 in Villeurbanne (F), residing in Luxembourg (L), 1st in Formula Campus 2005, 1st in IndyLights 2010, 1st in ILMC LMP2 2011, 1st in Porsche Carrera Cup France 2012, 1st in TCR International Series 2017

Audi Sport Team Comtoy

#22 Frédéric Vervisch (B), born August 10, 1986 in Roeselare (B), residing in Harelbeke (B), 1st in ATS Formula 3 Cup 2008, 1st in Belcar 2017

Comtoy Racing

#23 Nathanaël Berthon (F), born July 1, 1989 in Beaumont (F), residing in Clermont-Ferrand (F), 1st in Formula Renault France 2009, 1st in Trophée Andros Électrique 2014/15, 1st in Trophée Andros 2016/17



#20 Denis Dupont (B), born January 4, 1993 in Braine-l'Alleud (B), residing in Braine-le-Château (B), NASCAR Whelen Euro Series 2014, 1st in Magny-Cours 24 Hours 2016, TCR Benelux 2016 and 2017

#21 Aurélien Panis (F), born October 29, 1994 in St.-Martin-d'Hères (F), residing in Claix (F), Formula Renault 2012–2014, Formula Renault 3.5 2015, TCR International Series 2017, 1st in Trophée Andros Électrique 2017/18

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The Audi Group, with its brands Audi, Ducati and Lamborghini, is one of the most successful manufacturers of automobiles and motorcycles in the premium segment. It is present in more than 100 markets worldwide and produces at 16 locations in twelve countries. 100 percent subsidiaries of AUDI AG include Audi Sport GmbH (Neckarsulm), Automobili Lamborghini S.p.A. (Sant'Agata Bolognese, Italy) and Ducati Motor Holding S.p.A. (Bologna, Italy).

In 2017, the Audi Group delivered to customers about 1.878 million automobiles of the Audi brand, 3,815 sports cars of the Lamborghini brand and 55,900 motorcycles of the Ducati brand. In the 2017 fiscal year, AUDI AG achieved total revenue of €60.1 billion and an operating profit of €5.1 billion. At present, approximately 90,000 people work for the company all over the world, more than 60,000 of them in Germany. Audi focuses on sustainable products and technologies for the future of mobility.