



## Communications Motorsport

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## Le Mans début for new Audi R15 TDI

- **Audi continues to back efficiency and innovation**
- **New aerodynamics and logical lightweight construction**
- **More compact TDI engine and new vehicle power supply**

**Ingolstadt/Le Mans – Logical lightweight construction, downsizing, efficiency and the best possible aerodynamics – the same subjects which currently occupy the brains of the automobile industry development departments are also key elements in the 24 Hours of Le Mans held for the 77<sup>th</sup> time on the weekend of June 13/14.**

In the world's most famous endurance race it is, in addition to speed, also more a question of reliability and efficiency – and to set trends afterwards. Audi has used Le Mans since 1999 to test technical innovations under racing conditions and has, in the process, repeatedly set milestones thanks to its technology leadership. In this way, the Audi R8 successfully introduced gasoline direct-injection TFSI, with the Audi R10 TDI in 2006 a diesel powered car won for the first time in the history of the race.

The Audi R8 and Audi R10 TDI have one thing in common: Both were victorious on their Le Mans débuts. Audi Sport Team Joest now aims to continue this phenomenal trend with the new Audi R15 TDI in Audi's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. A ninth victory – with only eleven participations – would see Audi draw level with Ferrari in the French endurance classic's all-time winners list. Only Porsche has achieved more victories in its long Le Mans history.

The R15 TDI is packed with technical innovations. Among them a more compact, more efficient V10 TDI engine, logical lightweight construction, a totally new aerodynamic concept never before seen on a Le Mans sportscar and a novel



vehicle power supply system using for the first time a lithium ion battery as used in hybrid vehicles of the next generation. It is lighter than a conventional battery and instead of supplying the more common twelve volts usually found in production cars, it supplies 15.2 volts. As a result of the higher power, electric consumers such as the starter motor can be designed to be smaller and lighter and thus increase the efficiency.

### **Logical lightweight design and construction**

In general the Audi R15 TDI was trimmed logically for lightweight construction. The minimum weight of 900 kilograms originally stipulated by the regulations was significantly undercut through complex and intricate measures in order to facilitate the best possible weight distribution. That the Automobile Club de l'Ouest (ACO) ordered the minimum weight to be increased by 30 kilograms for diesel cars at short notice before the race hit the Audi Sport technicians hard. As a result, the R15 TDI was robbed of one decisive advantage.

To fit the additional 30 kilograms in the aerodynamically refined car several R15 TDI components had to be modified and their durability checked in extra endurance tests. The green light for the final version was thus only given following a successful 30-hour test at Le Castellet at the end of May – less than three weeks before the race. A few days later, on May 29, the roll-out was made at a test track close to Ingolstadt for the three newly built-up race cars with the chassis numbers 104 (start number “1”), 105 (start number “2”) and 101 (start number “3”).

The new Audi R15 TDI demonstrated its potential in March on its victorious race début at Sebring (USA). Many details have been optimized on the diesel racing sportscar for Le Mans since then. Improved cockpit cooling also numbers among the modifications.

### **Aerodynamic Cd optimized**

Furthermore, an aerodynamic version designed for efficiency is used for the first time at Le Mans. While the R15 TDI still races with maximum downforce, a more favorable Cd value for the long straights at Le Mans is of prime importance. The R15 TDI nevertheless generates more downforce than its predecessor model the



R10 TDI thanks to its innovative aerodynamic concept incorporating the uncompromising implementation of air-flow through the car.

### **Key factor tire wear**

A very decisive factor during the 77<sup>th</sup> running of the 24 Hours of Le Mans will be the lowest possible tire wear. Since only two, instead of the previously allowed four mechanics, can change tires during pit stops the standing time in the pit almost doubles. Therefore it will depend more than ever on being able to drive for as long as possible on the same set of tires without losing too much performance.

The six-hour free practice session on Wednesday evening and Thursday evening's four-hour qualifying session are therefore of particular importance. Because there was no additional test day for the first time before the race, Audi Sport Team Joest will use both days efficiently to find the optimum car set-up and to find the best tire choice for the race. Indeed, grid positions in a 24-hour race are of secondary importance for the final result.

Last year's winners Dindo Capello (Italy), Tom Kristensen (Denmark) and Allan McNish (Scotland) drive the Audi R15 TDI with car number "1". The three Germans Lucas Luhr, Mike Rockenfeller and Marco Werner share car number "2". Sharing driving duties in the R15 TDI with car number "3" are Timo Bernhard (Germany) and the two Frenchmen Romain Dumas and Alexandre Prémat.

As well as by their car numbers, the three Audi R15 TDI can be distinguished by the different additional colors yellow (car #1) red (car #2) and black (car #3).

Some of the team has been in Le Mans since Wednesday (June 3). The three Audi R15 TDI cars arrived in the paddock on Friday. The public technical scrutineering in the Le Mans town center is staged on Monday (June 8), practice begins on Wednesday evening. The start is scheduled on Saturday (June 13) at 3:00 p.m. Eurosport broadcasts almost the entire race "live".

### **Quotes before the 2009 Le Mans 24 Hours**

**Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport):** "The target is clear: We want to carry on where we left off in the previous years and continue our winning streak at Le Mans. We have a new car, the Audi R15 TDI, and were successful



immediately with this car in its first race at Sebring. We know, however, that our competitors have improved in many aspects compared to the previous years and therefore expect possibly the toughest Le Mans race that we have ever contested. It's a shame that we have to start with 30 kilograms more than we did at Sebring, particularly as weight optimization was an essential development target with the R15 TDI. We had to change quite a lot on the car because of the extra weight and complete additional endurance tests."

**Dindo Capello (Audi R15 TDI #1):** "It was good to have completed so many kilometers with the R15 TDI during the last test at Le Castellet. I think we are well prepared from both the driving and technical points of view. Obviously it will be a hard race since the competition is even stronger than last year. To win we have to be even better than in 2008 – no easy task. Le Mans has always been the most important race of the year for Audi, but this time it's even more important. Audi even stopped its ALMS and LMS involvements to be able to develop the new R15 TDI for Le Mans. This shows how important the race is for the brand. We have to be completely focused on the task in hand and produce a perfect team performance."

**Tom Kristensen (Audi R15 TDI #1):** "We had a fantastic race with the new Audi R15 TDI against strong competition at Sebring in March. We've been working hard ever since, but have also been given 30 kilograms additional weight. We had to extend our test program because of this – one reason was to be absolutely sure we were on the safe side despite the higher weight. Another was obviously to optimize the car so that we could run as long as possible on a single set of tires despite the weight. Last year's race was a genuine classic. Our lap times were not the quickest, but we won thanks to good team work and efficiency. We hope to close this performance gap with the R15 TDI. We want to exert pressure on the Peugeot team, which also never rests, just like Aston Martin and the other opponents. We are well prepared. I'm really looking forward to competing in the world's greatest and fastest long-distance race and to be in the thick of the tough competition. I think we can expect a fantastic race."

**Allan McNish (Audi R15 TDI #1):** "Le Mans is the world's greatest sports car race. It was fantastic that I was able to win it again last year – especially as we had battled with Peugeot for 23 hours and 45 minutes. I'm fully aware that the competition is getting stronger and stronger and that as defending champions we are the hunted ones. I believe that this race will be even tougher than 2008."



Peugeot is looking for revenge, Aston Martin aims to show what they are capable of and we at Audi want to continue our amazing winning streak. I expect a sprint race for 24 hours, during which absolutely every one, no matter whether mechanic, engineer or driver, must do a perfect, mistake-free job so that we have a chance of winning. There was no test day at Le Mans this year, which means we'll only see the genuine relative strengths on Thursday evening in qualifying."

**Lucas Luhr (Audi R15 TDI #2):** "It's an honor for me and I'm absolutely delighted to be a part of the Audi Le Mans squad for a third year. Unfortunately, the first two races were not quite so successful. Nevertheless, it gave us a lot of food for thought and we learnt a lot. I hope that we'll be able to fight for victory in the third year – even though we haven't driven at Le Mans in this driver combination before. However, I drove in this line-up the last two years at Sebring. They say that Sebring is the dress rehearsal for Le Mans. In this respect nothing totally new awaits us. I'm confident of being able to get a good result as a part of this driver combination. The Audi R15 TDI is entirely new and starts for the first time at Le Mans. We tested extensively over the winter, even though the weather didn't play ball. There is an element of the unknown with a completely new car. However, I believe that Audi Sport and Team Joest have that absolutely in control. Whoever knows Audi knows just how high the demands are."

**Mike Rockenfeller (Audi R15 TDI #2):** "Marco Werner, Lucas Luhr and I drive together at Le Mans. We already competed in this combination at Sebring and were also pretty good – even though we weren't as successful as we'd hoped to be. We are well prepared for Le Mans. This is now my third year with Audi at Le Mans and I'm really looking forward to it. We made an enormous step forward with the new R15 TDI. Nevertheless, we have to survive the challenge of Le Mans. I'm highly motivated and our target must be to win. We want to extract the maximum for Audi."

**Marco Werner (Audi R15 TDI #2):** "I've already driven with Mike Rockenfeller and Lucas Luhr in 2008 and also this year at Sebring. We are already quite a well-rehearsed team. Winning the American Le Mans Series last year united Lucas and I. We are a fabulous team. I'm looking forward to Le Mans, and we are all delighted with the new car. We know that everything is in its infancy. Our tests were plagued by bad weather. Personally I wasn't able to try much till now. Except for Sebring I only drove the car in the rain, so there are a few question



marks. But everybody knows how Audi works and that the team prepared something perfect.”

**Timo Bernhard (Audi R15 TDI #3):** “It’s a great honor for me to compete for Audi at Le Mans. I’ve already competed three times with a GT car at Le Mans. I took class victory on my debut in 2002. The race is fascinating. For me it is one of the world’s top three motorsport events and is the sports car race par excellence. I’ve been driving the Porsche RS Spyder for the last three years in America and won the American Le Mans Series twice. This brought me a lot of experience. I’m happy to be able to use it at Le Mans. It’s always been my dream to fight for overall victory at Le Mans. Firstly I’d like to thank Audi and Porsche for this opportunity. I won’t underestimate the task at hand. It’s anything but easy. Obviously I’d like to finish on the podium.”

**Romain Dumas (Audi R15 TDI #3):** “I’ve been given a great chance this year. I’m delighted to have been signed by Audi. I’ve been driving at Le Mans since 2001. I raced for Pescarolo in an LMP1 car in the last two years. But I’ve never sat in a car with a real chance of winning. I was third two years ago. We knew that Audi would be unbeatable before the start. As a race driver you obviously always want to fight for overall victory. After last year’s race I said that I must do everything possible to sit in a car capable of winning in 2009. Now I’m one of the lucky ones who have such a chance. However, a 24-hour race is long. I hope that the Audi R15 TDI takes overall victory. If our car should succeed then it’s even better. To compete for such a team at Le Mans as a Frenchman is already a great event, from which I will hopefully benefit.”

**Alexandre Prémat (Audi R15 TDI #3):** “My third start at Le Mans is coming up. I’m very impatient. It’ll be a fantastic week and it is one of the world’s greatest races. I drive with two new team mates Timo Bernhard and Romain Dumas, which means I share the cockpit with a second Frenchman. It’s great, I’m sure we’ll savor this adventure. We have ambitious goals just like in the previous two years: We want to win the 24 Hours of Le Mans, this time with the new R15 TDI. An extraordinary car which provides us everything with which to achieve our goal. We’ll do everything for this. It would be fantastic if Timo and Romain, who came from Porsche, scored a super result together with me. Although the race lasts 24-hours it has become a real sprint race. It was extremely difficult last year in the fight with Peugeot.”



**Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Team Joest):** “The pre-event program was strenuous with several endurance runs, among other things, to the modified weight limit. Time was short, but we are well prepared and also confident as far as our new car is concerned. However, we’ll only know at the earliest on Wednesday evening exactly where we stand as we haven’t met our competitors since Sebring. There’s a lot of new things at Le Mans this year, including the pit stops during which only two mechanics can change tires. We thought about the best way to approach it and have also practiced what we devised. We also don’t know what the others will do here, I hope and believe, however, that we will retain the small advantage that we had in the past. The missing test day is of course very serious. The information which you usually collect there will be missing. Therefore, it’ll be all the more important to schedule Wednesday properly. It’ll be a difficult day. To do your homework correctly can be race-decisive here.”

### **The Le Mans schedule**

#### **Monday, June 8**

14:30 – 15:45          Technical scrutineering for Audi R15 TDI #1, #2, #3

#### **Wednesday, June 10**

18:00 – 24:00          Free practice

#### **Thursday, June 11**

19:00 – 21:00          Qualifying 1

22:00 – 24:00          Qualifying 2

#### **Saturday, June 13**

08:30 – 09:15          Warm up

15:00                      Start

#### **Sunday, June 14**

15:00                      Start

### **Media appointments**

#### **Tuesday, June 9**

14:00                      Meet the Audi Team (Audi Team & Media Hospitality)



**Wednesday, June 10**

14:00 Meet the Audi Team (Audi Team & Media Hospitality)

**Thursday, June 11**

11:00 ACO Press Conference

14:00 Meet the Audi Team (Audi Team & Media Hospitality)

**Friday, June 12**

14:00 Audi Press Conference  
(Audi Racing Arena Parc du Raccordment)

**Sunday, June 14**

Approx. 15:30 ACO Press Conference

**TV broadcast times**

**Wednesday, June 10**

18:00 – 19:00 Eurosport 2

19:15 – 24:00 Eurosport 2

20:35 – 20:50 Eurosport

**Thursday, June 11**

19:00 – 21:00 Eurosport 2

20:35 – 20:45 Eurosport

22:00 – 24:00 Eurosport

**Friday, June 12**

22:35 – 22:45 Eurosport

**Saturday, June 13**

08:30 – 09:15 Eurosport

14:30 – 15:30 Eurosport

15:30 – 19:00 Eurosport 2

17:10 – 17:15 Eurosport

17:55 – 18:00 Eurosport

19:00 – 20:30 Eurosport

20:30 – 22:30 Eurosport 2





21:55 – 22:00          Eurosport  
22:30 – 24:00          Eurosport

**Sunday, June 14**

00:00 – 11:00          Eurosport  
11:00 – 13:15          Eurosport 2  
12:05 – 12:15          Eurosport  
13:15 – 15:15          Eurosport

**Note for editorial staff:**

The Audi Press Conference is held on Friday, June 12 at 2:00 p.m. at the Audi Racing Arena in Parc du Raccordement. On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday the Audi factory drivers and key personnel from Audi Sport Team Joest are available for interviews between 2:00 and 3:00 p.m. during a “Meet the Audi Team” in the Audi Team & Media Hospitality in the paddock. A PDF version of the Audi Media Info booklet about the 24 Hours of Le Mans 2009 can be downloaded from the Internet at [www.audi-motorsport.info](http://www.audi-motorsport.info).

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

AUDI AG sold a total of 1,003,469 cars in 2008 and thus achieved its 13th consecutive record year. The Company posted new record figures with revenue of €34.2 billion and profit before tax of €3.2 billion. Audi produces vehicles in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Changchun (China) and Brussels (Belgium). Aurangabad in India saw the start of CKD production of the Audi A6 at the end of 2007 and of the Audi A4 in early October 2008. 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 currently employs around 58,000 people worldwide, including 46,500 in Germany. The brand with the four rings invests around €2 billion each year in order to sustain the company’s technological lead embodied in its “Vorsprung durch Technik” slogan. Audi plans to significantly increase the number of models in its portfolio by 2015 to 40. The AUDI brand celebrates its 100th birthday in 2009. The company was founded by August Horch in Zwickau on July 16, 1909; he named it AUDI after the Latin translation of his surname (“hark!”).