

Ingolstadt, 27 March 2007

Motorsport

New challenge for the Audi R10 TDI

- **Diesel sports car to contest its first race on a street course**
- **Second round of American Le Mans Series in St. Petersburg**
- **Audi confirms US commitment with TDI Power**

It has won the 24 Hours of Le Mans, the 12 Hours at Sebring twice, the American Le Mans Series, and it has not been beaten since its debut in March 2006. But now, the 650-hp Audi R10 TDI is facing a new challenge and perhaps its most difficult task ever: On Saturday (31 March) the revolutionary diesel sportscar has to contest its first race on a temporary street course in the city of St. Petersburg (Florida).

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The LM P1 prototype was developed for the circuit at Le Mans, which is one of the world's fastest tracks featuring long straights and quick corners. The average speed per lap at Le Mans is more than 230 kph, while the medium speed in St. Petersburg is expected to be less than 160 kph.

The roughly 150 kilogram lighter Acura/Honda and Porsche LM P2 sports cars which, due to a change of rules, are allowed to compete in the American Le Mans Series with more engine power than at Le Mans, were already nearly equal to the Audi R10 TDI in the Sebring season opener on account of the regulations. On the slower street courses, such as St. Petersburg, their benefit from the 150 kilogram weight advantage in the LM P2 class will even be greater, as it affects acceleration, cornering speeds, braking distances and fuel consumption considerably.

Still worse for Audi, the Audi R10 TDI – as a diesel sports car – has to compete with a fuel tank that has been reduced by ten percent: instead of 90 litres, the fuel tank contains no more than 81 litres in 2007. At Sebring, this restriction already resulted in the Audi drivers having to refuel up to five laps earlier than the LM P2 cars – despite the low consumption figures of the diesel engine. In St. Petersburg, the situation will be similar.

Despite these serious handicaps AUDI AG decided to continue its commitment in the American Le Mans Series to give as many American spectators as possible the opportunity to witness the revolutionary Audi R10 TDI on the race track. After all, the “whispering revolution”, as fans are calling the R10 TDI because of its quiet diesel engine, heralds a major diesel campaign by Audi in the United States.

The city race in St. Petersburg on Florida’s Gulf coast will be staged in conjunction with the North American IndyCar Series. For the teams of the American Le Mans Series, it will be a two-day event. Before qualifying on Friday afternoon, the teams will have only two 60-minute free practice sessions. The race will start late in the afternoon on Saturday, at 5:05 p.m. local time (11:05 p.m. in Germany), and continue into the hours of dusk.

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For Audi Sport, St. Petersburg is by no means unknown territory: In 1988 St. Petersburg provided the venue for the finale of the TransAm Series, in which Audi triumphed with the 200 quattro. That race in St. Petersburg was won by two-time World Rally Champion Walter Röhrl. It was Audi’s last appearance in the TransAm Series before – in 1989 – Audi changed to the IMSA GTO Series due to a change in the regulations.

Quotes before the race in St. Petersburg

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “The diesel racing commitment in the American Le Mans Series is important for promoting diesel engines in America. That’s why we decided to continue competing in the American Le Mans Series. We know, however, that in view of the current technical regulations, it will be very difficult for us being successful in the upcoming races. Audi is accepting this challenge nevertheless. We’ve had some positive discussions with the management of this racing series concerning the future developments of the rules.”

Dindo Capello (Audi R10 TDI #1): “Generally, I like city circuits, Houston – with the R8 – was a great race for us last year. But we know that street courses are not optimally suited for our Audi R10 TDI. It was developed for long straights and quick corners like the track at Le Mans.

For me, the lighter LM P2 cars are the favourites in St. Petersburg. But we want to win the championship. This means that we also have to be competitive on circuits that are less suitable for our car.”

Allan McNish (Audi R10 TDI #1): “None of us has been in St. Petersburg before – apart, unfortunately, from some of the Acura/Honda drivers who know the track from having raced IndyCars there. But with a sports car, St. Petersburg is new territory for them as well. A street circuit brings in a lot of factors we normally don’t see. You have to drive even more precisely because the walls are unforgiving. Apart from this, the car has to be able to handle the bumps and different road surfaces. So far we’ve always managed doing a pretty good job of setting up the R10 TDI for various circuits – this is also proved by our 100-percent record of success. But I’m convinced that the LM P2 cars – thanks to their weight advantage and the engine power they’re allowed to use at the moment – will occupy the front row of the grid, and perhaps the second as well. The 150 kilograms of weight difference are particularly notable when braking and cornering in hairpins.”

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Emanuele Pirro (Audi R10 TDI #2): “I’m very much looking forward to St. Petersburg. Sebring was a great race and showed us the strength and high level of the competition. As a racer I’m really excited about this – even though we’ll be having a difficult time on a city circuit like the one in St. Petersburg. At Sebring, 50 percent of our focus was still on preparing for Le Mans. From now on, we can concentrate on the championship 100 percent. That’s exactly what we’re going to do, and we’re going to give our best to score as many points as possible.”

Marco Werner (Audi R10 TDI #2): “Actually, I like city circuits, and I’m looking forward to racing on one again. With the Audi R8, I was very successful on city circuits in 2003 and in Monaco I won in Formula 3. Such tracks suit me well. But looking back on Sebring and analysing the R10 TDI’s advantages, I realise that we’ll be having extreme difficulties in the future, particularly on city circuits.”

Dave Maraj (Team Director Audi Sport North America): “At Sebring, we saw how fast the new LM P2 cars are. They’re lighter and thus very

agile. Acura/Honda impressed me in particular. They were competitive straight away. They'll be giving us a hard time in St. Petersburg.”

The schedule in St. Petersburg

Friday, 30 March

08:15 – 09:15	Practice 1
13:10 – 14:10	Practice 2
14:50 – 15:10	Qualifying (LM P1 / LM P2)

Saturday, 31 March

11:50 – 12:15	Warm-up
17:05 – 19:50	Race

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Photographs, sound bites and additional information available on the Internet:
www.audi-motorsport.info (accreditation necessary)

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