



“We have a convincing basis”

- **Nathanaël Berthon: “I’m already very taken with it”**
- **Frédéric Vervisch: “The engineers have developed a first-class product”**

Neuburg a. d. Donau, March 26, 2021 – Audi Sport drivers Nathanaël Berthon and Frédéric Vervisch are developing the new Audi RS 3 LMS together with the engineers from Audi Sport customer racing. In this interview, they report on the progress made.

Nathanaël Berthon, welcome to Audi Sport. You’ve been familiar with our brand’s products from customer racing for years, and now you’re an Audi Sport driver for the first time. A big step for you?

Nathanaël Berthon: I’ve been racing internationally for a long time but it’s something else again to drive for an automobile manufacturer. It feels fantastic to be part of the Audi family. Audi has been very successful in motorsport for many years and I’m proud to be part of the Audi family now. With the new RS 3 LMS we have a wonderful new car. I’m extremely motivated and very much looking forward to the 2021 season.

Following the world premiere of the Audi RS 3 LMS, an intensive test program has now begun. How did you start the development phase?

Frédéric Vervisch: For any driver, it’s something special to accompany a new race car from the very first hour. Even when I drove the first kilometers in Castellolí, the car felt great. Already our first steps make me feel confident. Audi’s engineers have developed a first-class product that stands out for its high quality even at this early stage. And we’re learning more with every day we spend on the track.

Nathanaël Berthon: The car is good right from the start. It’s fast and gives clear feedback. The gearshift works with a very short reaction time, yet the gear changes remain smooth. As a driver, you immediately feel very comfortable in the cockpit. The car is even easier to drive than its predecessor. The somewhat more central seating position also results in a larger field of vision. I am already very enthusiastic.

Frédéric Vervisch, for you the program from the summer means a return to the WTCR – FIA World Touring Car Cup. What do you expect after a year’s break?

Frédéric Vervisch: It’s nice to return to the FIA WTCR after 2018 and 2019 together with Audi Sport and Jean-Michel Baert’s Comtoy Racing team. I think that I can accelerate the development of our new race car with my experience. I’m contesting the program in parallel with my GT3 races and hope to be able to do something with the new RS 3 LMS against strong competition.

Nathanaël Berthon, you clinched your first victory in the FIA WTCR last year with the Audi RS 3 LMS. Now you’re competing with the new car. What are your plans?



Nathanaël Berthon: As far as our new car is concerned, I'm absolutely confident. We'd set ourselves a big workload for Vallelunga and worked through it. In the process, I reeled off a lot of kilometers in a short time, which helps me a lot. In many areas we're now validating exactly what matters in the battle for a championship. As far as I'm concerned, we can start soon. And then we'll race straight away on the Nürburgring Nordschleife in June. I already like it from my races in 2018 and 2020, but I still have to get to know it better. One thing I already know is that the track will certainly suit our new car.

Frédéric Vervisch, on the one hand you have to develop the new RS 3 LMS for the FIA WTCR according to your wishes, but on the other hand the car also has to be easy to handle for privateers all over the world. What can the customer teams look forward to?

Frédéric Vervisch: We develop the car as thoroughly as possible to provide customers with a good product. The model has to be versatile, both in terms of tracks and championships around the globe, but also in terms of individual wishes regarding set-up and driving behavior. What I can already say today: A lot has changed compared to the predecessor. The electronics are new, as are the ergonomics with a better seating position. Cooling is more efficient, and the gear changes of the new transmission are fantastic. And the mechanics can also rejoice: Thanks to our new kinematic options, they can work much more accurately in a shorter time during set-up. We have a convincing basis.

Nathanaël Berthon, how far are you with your preparations for the season after the tests so far?

Nathanaël Berthon: We are all highly motivated and have worked long hours at every test. We understand the car better and better and at the same time know what still needs to be done. In Aragon, we recently sorted out the chassis and dampers further. I feel we have a good car, even if there's still a lot of work ahead of us before the season starts.



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