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Motorsport

Audi R10 continues to improve

- **Fastest time at the “Sebring Winter Test”**
- **R10 already almost as quick as the Audi R8**
- **400 test laps on three days**

Testing at Sebring (Florida), the new Audi R10 proved that the ambitious target of AUDI AG to fight for the overall victory at the Le Mans 24 Hours with a diesel-powered sports car is not unrealistic. Dindo Capello and Frank Biela, driving the two R10 prototypes, set the fastest times at the official “Winter Test” of the American Le Mans Series (ALMS) on the last of the three days – helped also by the lower ambient temperature compared to the two previous days.

AUDI AG
Kommunikation
85045 Ingolstadt
www.audi.com

With his best time of 1m 47.308s, Dindo Capello beat the track record which was set in 2002, and was less than a second slower than the fastest lap time of the car’s successful predecessor, the R8 set during tyre testing last winter. Frank Biela achieved a personal best of 1m 48.284s after completing a different test programme.

“I felt at home in the R10 after two laps,” said Capello who drove the new diesel sports car for the first time at Sebring. “The R10 has the typical DNA of Audi. After the bad season in the DTM, it was important for me to show that I’m still fast and hungry. I know, however, that the conditions were perfect today. The track had a lot of grip and temperatures were low. At Sebring, conditions keep changing all the time. Therefore, the results are difficult to judge – especially as our strongest competitors did not run anymore on the last day.”

Lap times were anyway less important for Audi Sport’s development team compared to the fact that the infant diesel sports car showed no serious weak points also during its third test. Despite this, the Audi drivers were not able to turn as many laps as hoped for during the first two days: On Monday, a minor modification to the suspension of the R10 was necessary. Following a puncture on Dindo Capello’s car, both new Audis remained in the pits on Tuesday afternoon. A damaged electronic cable cost Frank Biela almost the entire Tuesday morning. On

Wednesday, however, the two Audi R10 cars ran almost trouble-free and completed 262 of the total of 400 test laps (2,380 kilometres).

“We had a few small problems which cost us time,” said Frank Biela who, in spite of this, was still positive about the test: “We worked through a lot of the things we wanted to. Therefore we can be satisfied. We came to Sebring in order to uncover teething troubles with the R10. That’s exactly what we did.”

Communication Motorsport

Telefon +49 (0)841 89 34200, Telefax +49 (0)841 89 38617

E-Mail motorsport-media@audi.de

**Photographs, sound bites and other information can be found in the Internet at:
www.audi-motorsport.info (accreditation required)**

AUDI AG
Kommunikation
85045 Ingolstadt
www.audi.com