



Press Release

PIRELLI-EQUIPPED AUDI ON POLE FOR SPA 24 HOURS

Spa-Francorchamps, July 24, 2015 – Former Spa 24 Hours winner Frank Stippler from Germany has qualified his Audi Sport Team WRT R8 LMS Ultra on pole position for tomorrow's round the clock race, just 0.017s ahead of the Von Ryan Racing McLaren 650S GT3 driven by Kevin Estre.

With a Ferrari in third and a Bentley in fifth, four manufacturers have filled the top six places on the grid for the latest round of the Blancpain GT Series, underlining the close competition and sheer variety of the championship. In the top 10, six manufacturers are represented in total – all making the most of the same Pirelli tyres.

Once again, the 25-minute superpole session was completely dry at Spa, enabling Pirelli's DHC slick tyres to be used. The entire 57-car field uses exactly the same compound for Spa (which is a hard compound with a low working range) but in different sizes to suit all the different cars that take part. For the most part, these are exactly the same manufacturers to whom Pirelli supplies road car tyres as original equipment, underlining the links between competition and Pirelli's Ultra High Performance product for everyday use.

The superpole session was for the top 20 qualifiers from last night's qualifying sessions, which combine times set in daylight and in darkness. The top 20 all had to complete two flying laps with a nominated driver within the 25-minute superpole session this afternoon, from 16:10-16:35. These times formed the top 20 on the grid.

The field was incredibly closely matched, with Stippler setting his fastest time of 2m18.130s towards the end of the session. He came under threat from a number of other drivers, but still managed to put himself in the best possible position to try and emulate his 2012 triumph at Spa.

Stippler said: "It was an honour to be among the frontrunners here at Spa, but really this pole position is just a small step in a 24-hour race. The big test comes tomorrow."

Pirelli's senior engineer Matteo Braga commented: "We saw that our endurance racing product was also able to demonstrate its ultimate performance within a very short space of time during the superpole session. The biggest challenge for the teams in this session is extracting the best possible performance from the tyre in just two laps. Consequently the cars use a specific set-up for qualifying, which will be different to that used in the race, where the focus is on endurance and reliability, without compromising performance."

The Spa 24 Hours gets underway at 16:30 tomorrow, with a 20-minute warm-up taking place from 09:00.

Please visit Pirelli's social media channels, including @pirellisport on Twitter for updates throughout the race.