**Hankook opens the 2018 motorsport season with the 24H of Dubai: First customer outing for the new Audi R8 LMS for the GT4 class**

**Come the second week of January 2018, the waiting will finally be over for motorsport fans. The endurance season traditionally kicks off with the Hankook 24H Dubai (11th to 13th January). The 24-hour classic in the United Arab Emirates also forms the first round of the 24H Series powered by Hankook, which the premium tyre maker has supplied as exclusive tyre partner and title sponsor since 2014. The new Audi R8 LMS for the GT4 class will be run by customer teams for the first time in Dubai. The renowned 24H Series comprises a total of nine rounds on different continents, including four 24-hour races, four 12-hour races, and the 24H Proto Series.**

***Neu-Isenburg/Germany, 10th January 2018*** – In the spring of 2017, the Ingolstadt-based automobile manufacturer launched the new Audi R8 LMS GT4 at the International Auto Show in New York. A racing car that bridges the gap between GT3 and TCR, and is strongly based on Audi’s road-going sports car, the Audi R8 Coupé V10. The new racing car from Audi Sport is now set for its first outing in the hands of customer teams at the opening round of the 24H Series powered by Hankook in Dubai.

“The Audi R8 LMS GT4 is particularly geared to production-based motor racing. It is derived directly from the road-worthy Audi R8 Coupé V10. It is very powerful and offers a high degree of safety,” says head of Audi Sport Customer Racing, Chris Reinke. “We are very happy to be able to offer another model in our customer sport programme, and are now very much looking forward to competing in the 24H Series with our latest racing car, together with our DTM tyre partner Hankook.”

As well as the new Audi R8 LMS GT4, other GT4 cars like the BMW M4 GT4, Ginetta G55 GT4 Evo 2017, McLaren 570S GT4, and the Mercedes-AMG GT R SP-X will also roll into action in Dubai in the ever-popular class among customer racing outfits. The latter of these cars made its first appearance at the 24H race at the Circuit of the Americas in Austin, Texas, in November 2017 – also on Hankook tyres. Meanwhile, the BMW made its race debut on Hankook tyres in the 24H race at the Nürburgring in 2017. It goes without saying that the top protagonists will also gather at the Hankook 24H Dubai. Among those battling it out for victory will be such powerhouses as the Audi R8 LMS GT3, Chevrolet Corvette C6-ZR1, Ford GT3 Lambda, Lamborghini Huracán GT3, Mercedes-AMG GT3, Porsche 991 GT3 R, and Renault RS01 GT3.

Premium tyre maker Hankook began its preparations for the season-opener in the Arabian Gulf last November. About 10,000 race tyres, including a good 7,000 slicks and more than 2,500 wet tyres, were shipped to Dubai in 20 containers. The exclusive tyre partner will be represented by roughly 50 employees at the Dubai Autodrome, in order to provide all the teams with a perfect service around the clock. The 5.9-kilometre Dubai Autodrome is one of the most modern circuits in the world and, with its long, asphalted run-off zones, is regarded as one of the safest racetracks.

Motorsport Director Europe, Manfred Sandbichler, is also full of expectation ahead of the 24H Series event in Dubai: “As in previous years, top brands like Audi, BMW, Lamborghini, Mercedes-Benz and Porsche will all be in action at the 24-hour highlight in the desert. As usual, our wealth of experience in the field of endurance racing will allow us to offer optimal support for the wide range of car types and manufacturers. In doing so, we will once again demonstrate the performance of our premium products.”

The tyre fitters will work in three shifts on five assembly lines. The Hankook race engineers will be available at all times for any questions the teams may have regarding the tyres and car set-up. As at all rounds of the 24H Series powered by Hankook, Hankook will provide a standard premium compound for all tyre sizes at the season-opener in Dubai. In doing so, the tyre maker guarantees optimal equal opportunity throughout the starting field, whilst at the same time ensuring the highest possible performance.

All motorsport fans can follow the race live from Dubai in a 24-hour livestream at the Hankook Mediacenter: <https://www.hankooktire-mediacenter.com/index.php?id=endurance-race-2018>

**About Hankook**

Hankook Tire is one of the global top 5 companies in the mass production of tyres and manufactures innovative, award winning radial tyres of proven superior quality for passenger cars, light trucks, SUVs, RVs, trucks, and buses as well as motorsports (circuit racing/rallies).

Aspiring to bring consumers the utmost excellence in product quality, technological excellence and driving satisfaction, Hankook Tire continuously invests in research and development maintaining five R&D centres and eight production facilities around the world. Bespoke tyre solutions for the European markets as well as European Original Equipment according to the requirements of leading premium car manufacturers, are developed in the company’s regional Technical Centre in Hanover/Germany. Production for the European region is taking place in the state-of-the-art manufacturing site in Rácalmás/Hungary which was inaugurated in June 2007 and is continuously being expanded. Currently more than 3,000 employees produce up to 19 million tyres a year for passenger cars, SUVs and light trucks.

Hankook Tire’s European headquarters are located in Neu-Isenburg near Frankfurt am Main in Germany. The manufacturer operates further branches in Germany, UK, France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Hungary, Czech Republic, Russia, Turkey, Sweden and Poland. Hankook products are sold directly through regional distributors in other local markets. Hankook Tire employs more than 22,000 people worldwide and are selling their products in over 180 countries. Internationally leading car manufacturers rely on tyres made by Hankook for their original equipment. Approximately 30 percent of the company's global sales are generated within the European and CIS-Region. Hankook Tire has been represented in the renowned Dow Jones Sustainability Index World (DJSI World) since 2016.

For more information please visit [www.hankooktire-mediacenter.com](http://www.hankooktire-mediacenter.com) or [www.hankooktire.com](http://www.hankooktire.com)

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