

Brands Hatch, 09 June 2007

## Motorsport

# Audi A4 DTM is quickest car at Brands Hatch

- **Mattias Ekström sets best time in qualifying**
- **Fourth place on the grid despite additional weight**
- **Alexandre Prémat quickest Audi driver again**

Audi driver Mattias Ekström has good chances of winning back the lead in the DTM standings at Brands Hatch (Great Britain). Despite carrying an additional 21 kilograms of weight imposed as a result of previous exploits, the Swede in his Red Bull Audi A4 DTM will start from fourth place on the grid on Sunday – the same position from which Ekström won the race at Brands Hatch last year.

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Whereas the leader of the standings, Paul di Resta (Mercedes), did not get beyond 15th place on the grid, Mattias Ekström in the second section of the qualifying was clocked at 42.597 seconds, thus setting the fastest lap so far of the whole weekend – a time that remained unequalled in the third qualifying section as well. However, as the driver of Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline did not manage to achieve his own best time again in the third and final qualifying, he dropped from first to fourth place.

The quickest Audi driver in qualifying, for the second time in a row, was the Frenchman Alexandre Prémat, who in an A4 from last year fielded by Audi Sport Team Phoenix, clinched third place. The 25-year-old driver missed the first row on the grid by merely 92 thousandths of a second.

His team-mate Christian Abt and Martin Tomczyk also managed to make it into the top eight. While Abt secured fifth place on the grid, Tomczyk in the Druids hairpin slid into a tyre wall and will start the race on Sunday from position eight.

Markus Winkelhock in his second event for Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline finished in ninth place, being merely 35 thousandths of a second short of qualifying for the last section.

For Lucas Luhr, the outcome of the qualifying practice was disappointing: After setting a best time in free practice in the morning (42.600 seconds), which would have been enough to clinch the pole position in the afternoon, the German had to settle with eleventh place on the grid.

The race at Brands Hatch covers a distance of 83 laps. The start is scheduled for 1 p.m. local time (2 p.m. in Germany) on Sunday. ARD will broadcast live from England on “Das Erste” starting at 1:45 p.m.

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## Quotes after qualifying

**Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport):** “I’m very happy for Alexandre (Prémat), who again showed a strong performance in qualifying. Two cars on the second row are a good starting base for the race. I’m also satisfied with the performance of our 2007-spec Audi A4 DTM cars. Considering the higher weight, we achieved a good result. Perhaps Mattias (Ekström) could have been further towards the front, but due to Martin’s (Tomeczyk) accident he wasn’t able to finish his lap. It’s too bad for Martin as well, who probably had the potential for setting a similarly good time as his team colleague.”

**Alexandre Prémat (Audi Bank Audi A4 DTM #17)**

**3rd place, 42.868 / 42.760 / 42.784s**

“I’m absolutely satisfied to have made it all the way into the third qualifying session and to finish in third place in the end. Now we need to drive a good race from the second row. We’ll continue working in order to be well set for tomorrow.”

**Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #3)**

**4th place, 42.816 / 42.597 / 42.798s**

“In view of the high weight, fourth place is definitely a good result. After I was the quickest driver in the second qualifying and my A4 was perfect, I thought we’d be able to clinch pole. But, unfortunately, the car suddenly

started understeering in the final section. We have to analyse why that happened. Last year, I won after starting from fourth place. It'll be a hot race."

**Christian Abt (Playboy Audi A4 DTM #16)**

**5th place, 43.076 / 42.749 / 42.952s**

"The car was running really well, the set-up was very good. Third and fifth place are great for the team but we could have been a little bit faster – maybe taking places three and four. Unfortunately, Jamie Green got in my way. His action was not fair."

**Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #4)**

**8th place, 42.922 / 42.700 / 2m56.774s**

"Up to the third section the qualifying went very well. On the last outing, the first turn was perfect, I was able to see that on the display in the cockpit. But when braking into the second corner, the front right-hand wheel locked. Unfortunately, at Brands Hatch the run-off zones towards the tyre walls are very short. On another circuit nothing would have happened."

**Markus Winkelhock (Siemens Audi A4 DTM #7)**

**9th place, 43.007 / 42.795s**

"The qualifying wasn't bad at all. Our goal had been to make it into the final session, and I missed that by three hundredths. Nevertheless, I can be happy with a place among the top ten. On Friday, I still had problems adjusting to the car and the circuit. Today, things were going well straight from the start."

**Lucas Luhr (Philips Audi A4 DTM #12)**

**11th place, 42.860 / 42.869s**

"The result turned out to be as close as we'd expected. But the set-up of my car was anything but good, in fact, it kept getting worse. It can't be that we are always running in front in the free practice sessions but when it counts all the others are getting faster and we're the only ones who can't improve. We need to change that for the future."

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**Timo Scheider (Gebrauchtwagen:plus/Top Service Audi A4 DTM #8)**  
**12th place, 43.032 / 42.920s**

“That was a disaster. In the morning we had a good car that we put together for the qualifying to the best of our knowledge. But it didn’t work out at all. I don’t know if the temperature had a part in this. The grip level was gone. The result is disappointing.”

**Mike Rockenfeller (S line Audi A4 DTM #11)**  
**14th place, 43.015 / 43.048s**

“I was the slowest driver of a 2006-spec Audi. I was not satisfied at all with the handling of the car. With Christian (Abt) and Alexandre (Prémat) you could see that better results are possible. I’m very frustrated because position 15 is not the place from which I’d like to start.”

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**Adam Carroll (Audi A4 DTM #20)**  
**16th place, 43.188s**

“I’m absolutely disappointed. After the good tests on Friday I really thought that we’d make it into the final qualifying session. Unfortunately, I’m struggling with the car’s balance every time the temperatures rise, and I can’t improve any more then. The car felt as though it wasn’t the same any more as in the morning. Nevertheless, I’m hoping for a good race.”

**Vanina Ickx (Audi A4 DTM #21)**  
**20th place, 43.618s**

“Unfortunately, the car didn’t feel the same in qualifying any more as it had in the morning’s free practice. There were big differences between the tyre sets. I wasn’t able to reproduce the time from the morning, which is really too bad.”

**Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Director Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline):**

“Basically, we can be satisfied with the result, even though you always wish for more. We used the car’s full potential. The qualifying gives us reason to hope for a good race.”

**Ernst Moser (Team Director Audi Sport Team Phoenix):** “The great result of our team speaks for itself. That was really hard work in a tight qualifying. Places three and five are a nice reward for the team. This is what

we'd been working to achieve for a long time. Now we need it on the track tomorrow. ”

**Arno Zensen (Team Director Audi Sport Team Rosberg):** “Of course I'm disappointed because I was sure that we'd make it into the final qualifying with both cars. We will analyse everything in detail.”

## **The starting grid at Brands Hatch**

- 1 Mika Häkkinen (Mercedes), 42.660s
- 2 Bruno Spengler (Mercedes), 42.692s
- 3 Alexandre Prémat (Audi Bank Audi A4 DTM), 42.784s
- 4 Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM), 42.798s
- 5 Christian Abt (Playboy Audi A4 DTM), 42.952s
- 6 Bernd Schneider (Mercedes), 42.953s
- 7 Jamie Green (Mercedes), 43.153s
- 8 Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM), 2m56.774s
- 9 Markus Winkelhock (Siemens Audi A4 DTM), 42.795s
- 10 Mathias Lauda (Mercedes), 42.848s
- 11 Lucas Luhr (Philips Audi A4 DTM), 42.869s
- 12 Timo Scheider (GW:plus/Top Service Audi A4 DTM), 49.920s
- 13 Gary Paffett (Mercedes), 43.015s
- 14 Mike Rockenfeller (S line Audi A4 DTM), 43.048s
- 15 Paul di Resta (Mercedes), 43.128s
- 16 Adam Carroll (Audi A4 DTM), 43.188s
- 17 Alexandros Margaritis (Mercedes), 43.299s
- 18 Susie Stoddart (Mercedes), 43.335s
- 19 Daniel la Rosa (Mercedes), 43.416s
- 20 Vanina Ickx (Audi A4 DTM), 43.618s

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