

Communications Motorsport

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Audi and Zandvoort: fondest memories

- **Amazing eight victories for Audi in Dutch DTM round**
- **Mattias Ekström DTM record winner on dune circuit**
- **All eight Audi drivers with personal Zandvoort highlights**

Ingolstadt, July 11, 2016 – If there's a particular DTM event all Audi drivers equally rave about, it's Zandvoort. The tradition-steeped circuit on the North Sea coast has been an integral element of the DTM since 2001 and is on the calendar this coming weekend (July 15–17).

If you ask the DTM drivers about their favorite track, the answer practically always is: "Zandvoort!" The 4.307-kilometer tarmac band in the dunes near Amsterdam is regarded as an old-school track that separates the wheat from the chaff. "There are many nice turns in great combinations, uphill and downhill sections, plus the track has a wonderful rhythm," Mattias Ekström enthuses. "What I like best are the turns you practically enter blindly – that's where you need a lot of confidence in your car."

Nobody has won in the Dutch DTM round more frequently than the Swede from Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline. Ekström has mounted the top of the podium there an amazing four times, most recently in 2014. The Zandvoort record winner's fondest memory is of the race in September 2002: "That's when I managed to score my first ever victory in the DTM and my teammate Laurent Aiello became DTM Champion."

It doesn't take the other Audi drivers long to recall their sweetest Zandvoort experiences either. "In my case, obviously, it was winning the title in 2013," says Mike Rockenfeller who, two years earlier, had celebrated his first DTM victory at Zandvoort as well. "I hope that, following the difficult start of the season, we'll be able to continue these successes this year."

Edoardo Mortara, Audi's best-placed driver at the moment with just two points separating him from leader of the standings Marco Wittmann (BMW), is a great fan of the dune circuit too. His best moment so far? "My victory in 2012."

Timo Scheider associates his first DTM pole position in the 2003 season with Zandvoort. Jamie Green, in 2004, won Sunday's race in the then Formula 3 Euro Series and, as a result, secured the champion's title early at Zandvoort.

Adrien Tambay, like Edoardo Mortara, likes to remember 2012: "That was my first year in the DTM and in fifth place I scored my first DTM points at Zandvoort – in difficult conditions because it suddenly started to rain in the race."

Miguel Molina's personal Zandvoort highlight dates to his debut season in the DTM as well. "In 2010, I managed my first leap into the top four in the single timed lap qualifying format used back then, was in contention for a podium for the first time and, in position five, achieved my best result in the DTM at that time."

Nico Müller, in his first DTM season in 2014, immediately battled for a podium at Zandvoort too. "Unfortunately, a safety car was subsequently deployed at the wrong time for me and ruined everything."

Müller is one of the protagonists in the current DTM season and most recently celebrated his first victory at the Norisring. "Once you've mounted the top of the podium, you definitely become addicted to more of the same." says the youngster from Switzerland. "I wouldn't mind things to immediately continue this way at Zandvoort."

Dieter Gass, Head of DTM at Audi Sport, can only agree with this: "Last year – not least due to the performance weights – we stayed below our expectations at Zandvoort. It would be great to recover our former strength. We've already won eight races there and always enjoy returning to Zandvoort. This is a 'real' race track that doesn't forgive many mistakes. The circuit poses a challenge to the drivers and the tires. Overtaking isn't easy, so qualifying is extremely important."

Joining the action for the first time will be the Audi Sport TT Cup that can be watched live on SPORT1+ and www.audimedia.tv. As usual, ARD will broadcast both DTM races live on "Das Erste" (Saturday starting at 17:45 CEST, Sunday starting at 13:30). Qualifying coverage will be aired on both days by Einsfestival (Saturday starting at 16:15, Sunday starting at 11:15). Live streaming from various perspectives will be provided at www.dtm.com/live. Tickets for visiting the race at the venue are available at www.audi-motorsport.com.

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