

Brands Hatch, 10 June 2007

Motorsport

Audi clinches double lead in the DTM

- **Runner-up Martin Tomczyk takes lead in the standings**
- **Mattias Ekström on podium at Brands Hatch as well**
- **First points for Alexandre Prémat and Christian Abt**

In a spectacular touring car race at Brands Hatch (England), Audi captured the double lead in the DTM: Martin Tomczyk and Mattias Ekström in the two Red Bull Audi A4 DTM cars fielded by Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline clinched places two and three although, due to previous exploits, they were driving the heaviest cars in the entire field. Today's result means that a fortnight from now, Audi will be travelling to their "home race" in Nuremberg as the front runners in the DTM. At the same time, the handicap weight will be reduced from 21 to merely seven kilograms.

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Despite the additional weight, the latest-generation Audi A4 DTM was the quickest car at Brands Hatch. In Saturday's qualifying, Mattias Ekström recorded the fastest lap, in the race his team colleague Martin Tomczyk did. After an accident in qualifying, the young German in an impressive performance and with a perfect team strategy fought to make up ground from eighth place on the grid to secure a second-place finish. After his second pit stop, the 25-year-old driver even caught up with front runner Bernd Schneider, but chose not to take any unnecessary risks. Finishing as the runner-up, he now leads the standings.

Mattias Ekström saw the chequered flag directly behind his teammate. The Swede drove a similarly strong race as Tomczyk, and during the 83 laps overtook both of the Mercedes drivers – Mika Häkkinen and Bruno Spengler – who had started in front of him. In the final stage of the race, Ekström attacked the subsequent winner Bernd Schneider but had to reduce the pressure when Martin Tomczyk returned to the track from the pitlane directly in front of him. In the overall standings, Ekström ranks merely two points behind Tomczyk.

Alexandre Prémat and Christian Abt from Audi Sport Team Phoenix, who finished in seventh and eighth place, respectively, were the best drivers of 2006-spec car. Both scored their first points of the season.

Lucas Luhr fought a hot duel with Oschersleben winner Gary Paffett and finished the race on the heels of the former DTM Champion in eleventh place. His teammate from Audi Sport Team Rosberg, Mike Rockenfeller, became the victim of a mass collision on the starting lap in which Timo Scheider and Markus Winkelhock (both of Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline) were involved as well. Both drivers were able to continue the race, albeit with damaged vehicles. Adam Carroll and Vanina Ickx from the Audi customer team Futurecom TME finished in positions 15 and 17.

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Quotes after the race

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “It was a thrilling race all the way to the end. The fighting at the front of the field was tough but absolutely fair. It wasn’t easy for us here because we clearly felt the additional weight in our 2007-spec cars on this circuit. That we managed to clinch podium positions with two of our boys in spite of this is a really fantastic result. I’m proud of the work done by the entire squad. The fact that we’ll be able to reduce additional weight despite having taken the lead in the standings is icing on the cake.”

Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #4)

2nd place, + 0.543s

“I’d like to dedicate this second place to my team, which did an incredible job – particularly after the accident in qualifying when the boys repaired the car, working late into the night. In the warm-up we had a minor problem, the crew had to work another two hours under time pressure. The strategy was perfect, and they gave me a perfect Audi to drive. After crossing the finish line I already sent a radio message telling the team I’ll never let go of them because they’re tops! I’m satisfied through and through. Today’s race was about the lead in the Championship, which is why I didn’t take any risks and didn’t attack Bernd Schneider. At Brands Hatch, overtaking is very risky.”

Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #3)**3rd place, + 1.255s**

“From the beginning, the fight with Mika Häkkinen and Bruno Spengler was very fair. After my first pit stop, Mika was running in front of me and I was right behind him. I really fought hard and overtook him. In the duel with Bruno, the second pit stop was the key. Third place is a really good result, and in the next race we’ll have a few kilos less on board.”

Alexandre Prémat (Audi Bank Audi A4 DTM #17)**7th place, + 26.825s**

“That was a nice race in the class of the 2006-spec cars. The 2007-spec cars were simply too fast. To follow them would have probably meant having to push the limit such that mistakes would have been more likely. I was playing it safe in order to finish the race. It’s great to have scored two points for Audi Sport Team Phoenix because my previous balance was zero. Christian (Abt), as well, collected a point for the team. Of course I’d have hoped for more after starting from third place. But the DTM is tough.”

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Christian Abt (Playboy Audi A4 DTM #16)**8th place, + 29.721s**

“The team has to be satisfied with places seven and eight. We made the best of the situation. A better result was not possible. It’s a shame because I did have higher hopes. The 2007-spec cars are getting faster and faster, and that means it’s becoming more difficult for us.”

Lucas Luhr (Philips Audi A4 DTM #12)**11th place, + 33.514s**

“My start was good because I was able to improve from eleventh to ninth place. Then I got stuck behind Jamie Green. We didn’t have a perfect strategy today and lost too much time during the pit stops. I crossed the finish line in the same position I’d started from. This situation has to get better next time.”

Timo Scheider (Gebrauchtwagen:plus/Top Service Audi A4 DTM #8)**13th place, - 1 lap**

“This was arguably the worst weekend in my DTM career so far. After my start, I gained one or two places. In front of turn two there was a traffic jam and a driver behind me hit me in the rear and pushed me into the car in front. After that, the car was not really drivable due to heavy vibrations. We tried to assess the extent of the damage from the pitlane wall during the safety car phase. As a result of the accident one of my tyres was slit as well. Consequently, we practically kept running on the second set forever.”

Markus Winkelhock (Siemens Audi A4 DTM #7)**14th place, - 1 lap**

“My start was okay, I got away pretty well and didn’t lose any positions. In the second corner, the car got turned around. The entire field passed me. The front of my car was damaged and as a result it was understeering heavily on fast sections. I ruined my front tyres within the space of just a few laps.”

Adam Carroll (Audi A4 DTM #20)**15th place, - 1 lap**

“A very long race! My start was very good but in the commotion in the second turn I was pushed off the track. I had to drive through the gravel trap and managed to get back to the track on my own. The pit stops went well, and I was able to keep a few Mercedes drivers behind me. Unfortunately, we received a drive-through penalty because I must have exited the pitlane too fast. At least, I did finish the race.”

Vanina Ickx (Audi A4 DTM #21)**17th place, - 6 laps**

“My car was damaged pretty heavily in the accident in turn two and was very difficult to drive afterwards. I had to pit once to have the damage repaired. Then I received a drive-through penalty because I drove through the pitlane too far.”

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Mike Rockenfeller (S line Audi A4 DTM #11)**Retired, lap 1 (accident)**

“This was a weekend to chalk up to experience. The qualifying was already a disappointment. At the start I stalled the engine. I still can’t understand why that happened, so we need to look at the data again. That was my first mistake. I was running behind the field and reached the second corner. In front of me there was a lot of smoke and a commotion, I could not see anything, went straight into the gravel trap and my race was over.”

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

“This was a fantastic weekend, where almost everything worked out perfectly. Martin (Tomczyk) drove an incredible race. But the strategy and the pit stops were great as well. I’m happy that we’ll be going to the Norisring with a little less weight. Things could not have gone any better for us.”

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Ernst Moser (Team Director Audi Sport Team Phoenix): “We started from positions three and five and finished in seventh and eighths – these results do not completely satisfy us. But we did score our first points, and we’ll continue to build on that. Our speed in the race was not good enough. Unfortunately, our cars were running in traffic too long today as well.”

Arno Zensen (Team Director Audi Sport Team Rosberg): “We can just close the books on the race at Brands Hatch and will fully concentrate on the Norisring now.”

The result at Brands Hatch

- 1 Bernd Schneider (Mercedes), 83 laps in 1h 05m 10.090s
- 2 Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM), + 0.543s
- 3 Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM), + 1.255s
- 4 Mika Häkkinen (Mercedes), + 6.182s
- 5 Bruno Spengler (Mercedes), + 6.477s
- 6 Jamie Green (Mercedes), + 22.485s
- 7 Alexandre Prémat (Audi Bank Audi A4 DTM), + 26.825s
- 8 Christian Abt (Playboy Audi A4 DTM), + 29.721s
- 9 Alexandros Margaritis (Mercedes), + 30.218s
- 10 Gary Paffett (Mercedes), + 32.953s
- 11 Lucas Luhr (Philips Audi A4 DTM), + 33.514s
- 12 Mathias Lauda (Mercedes), - 1 lap
- 13 Timo Scheider (GW:plus/Top Service Audi A4 DTM), - 1 lap
- 14 Markus Winkelhock (Siemens Audi A4 DTM), - 1 lap
- 15 Adam Carroll (Audi A4 DTM), - 1 lap
- 16 Susie Stoddart (Mercedes), - 1 lap
- 17 Vanina Ickx (Audi A4 DTM), - 6 laps

Not classified:

- Daniel la Rosa (Mercedes), - 1 lap
Paul di Resta (Mercedes), - 83 laps
Mike Rockenfeller (S line Audi A4 DTM), - 83 laps (accident)

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Photographs, sound bites and additional information available on the Internet:
www.audi-motorsport.info (accreditation necessary)

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