

Ingolstadt, 5 October 2007

Motorsport

Audi comes as leader to DTM finale

- **DTM title to be decided on 14 October at Hockenheim**
- **Audi driver Mattias Ekström is overall leader**
- **Martin Tomczyk also still in title race**

The points' situation going into the DTM finale on 14 October at Hockenheim could hardly be closer: With Mattias Ekström (Audi/44 points), Bruno Spengler (Mercedes/42 points) and Martin Tomczyk (Audi/40 points), three drivers are still fighting for the title in the most popular international touring car series – this has not been the case since the DTM made its comeback in the year 2000.

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For only the second time in history, drivers representing two automobile manufacturers still have championship aspirations going into the final round of the “new” DTM. Fans and media alike speculate over the various scenarios that could arise at Hockenheim after the prestigious duel between Audi and Mercedes-Benz escalated and Audi withdrew every car from the race in protest at Barcelona.

Fact is: Audi want to bring the title back to Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm. Audi has already clinched the championship twice – 1990 and 1991 – in the last race at Hockenheim. In 2002 and 2004, the championship went to Audi drivers before the final race. In 2005, Mattias Ekström arrived at the finale at Hockenheim with only a slim chance of retaining the title and had to settle for the runner-up spot at the chequered flag.

In spite of the double K.O. punch at Barcelona, Audi enters the decisive final weekend with advantages: Mattias Ekström heads for Hockenheim as the championship leader. This means that his closest rival, Bruno Spengler, is under pressure and must score points. The Mercedes driver can not afford a non-finish. With Martin Tomczyk in third place overall, Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline has a second title candidate in the race who is only four

points behind Mattias Ekström. Martin Tomczyk has been in impressive form recently and has previously been particularly strong at Hockenheim.

Last but not least, the Audi A4 DTM is considered the car to beat: Mattias Ekström and Martin Tomczyk scored a one-two at the season opener in April at Hockenheim. More recently Audi has claimed four successive pole positions and won two of the last three races. The no-score at Barcelona had at least one positive side-effect: The 2007 Mercedes' – this also includes Bruno Spengler – must compete at the finale with ten kilograms more ballast than the Audi A4 DTM from Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline.

For the Allgaeu based squad, Hockenheim is also about winning the Team Championship. Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline has a 14.5 point lead before the finale – a maximum of 18 points are on offer.

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The explosive title showdown has boosted the already excellent advanced ticket sales: Almost 60,000 tickets had been sold two weeks before the finale. 149,000 spectators were counted over the weekend last year – a DTM record even though the championship had already been decided.

Whoever is unable to follow the exciting showdown from trackside can nevertheless be in the thick of the action: German TV broadcasts qualifying and the race live and in full length from Hockenheim on "Das Erste".

Quotes before the DTM finale

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): "Barcelona is history for us. We would like to see an exciting and fair touring car finale at Hockenheim, and that the spectators are happy. I hope that we see a clean fight and that the champion is decided by fair means – in a way that we usually associate with touring car racing. We will give our all to bring the championship to Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm. This would be reward for the strong team performance that we have shown this year."

Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #3): "I'm looking forward to the finale at Hockenheim. I won the first race there at the start of the year. I

can hardly wait to return and to fight for the championship. It'll be a tough race."

Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #4): "Nothing is decided yet. The championship leaders are even closer together going into the last race. We can look forward to an exciting finale. We have the lead and, if we have things our way, want to finish first and second in the championship for Audi.

Tom Kristensen (Siemens Audi A4 DTM #7): "It'll be interesting to return to Hockenheim. The season started there and because of the accident, it couldn't have started any worse for me. My goal is to make a better job of it at the last race and help Audi to clinch the championship. I'm hoping that the grandstands are full, that the atmosphere is electric and a race as it should be."

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Timo Scheider (Gebrauchtwagen:plus/Top Service Audi A4 DTM #8): "We were extremely competitive at Hockenheim at the start of the year. We were just a few laps away from an Audi one-two-three. I'm optimistic, particularly as our cars are now ten kilograms lighter than at the opening race. I'm looking forward to a great finale."

Mike Rockenfeller (S line Audi A4 DTM #11): "I'm looking forward to Hockenheim – particularly as the grandstands are always packed-out there. It's really something special when you head into the Motodrom. I like the circuit and have won a lot of races there. I hope that I can sign-off for the winter with a good result."

Lucas Luhr (Philips Audi A4 DTM #12): "My DTM career began at Hockenheim at the start of the year. Both the team and I have learnt a lot since then which is why things should look relatively good at the finale. I hope that we can score a few points."

Christian Abt (Playboy Audi A4 DTM #16): "It'll be an emotional weekend for me because it is my last in the DTM. I'm already really looking forward to it. It would be great to bow out with a good result."

Alexandre Prémat (Audi Bank Audi A4 DTM #17): “I love the Hockenheim circuit and was very fast there during practice at the season opener. I was unlucky in qualifying and during the race. I’d like to forget these rather unfortunate events. The last race of the season is always a special one. I aim to give my all one final time for Audi, Team Phoenix and myself.”

Markus Winkelhock (Audi A4 DTM #20): “Hockenheim is one of my favourite race tracks and since I come from around Stuttgart, it also my ‘home’ race. I like the circuit. I was always quite successful there in Formula 3 and other racing series’.”

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Vanina Ickx (Audi A4 DTM #21): “I drove my first ever DTM race at Hockenheim. Now, two years later, I return to Hockenheim to finish the season. It will be a special weekend for me.”

Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Director Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline): “It couldn’t be more exciting at Hockenheim, particularly as three drivers are fighting for the title. I’m delighted that two of them are from our team. We’ll approach the job-in-hand meticulously and will be highly focused. We know that our Audi A4 is fast. We are happy to have the ten kilogram weight advantage. I believe the fans will see a fantastic race.”

Ernst Moser (Team Director Audi Sport Team Phoenix): “The Hockenheim finale means tens of thousands of spectators and a great atmosphere. We know from the first race that we have a good chance of beating Mercedes on their ‘home’ ground in Hockenheim. We’ll go to Hockenheim with what we’ve learnt during the season and hopefully wrap up the championship for Audi.”

Arno Zensen (Team Director Audi Sport Team Rosberg): “The finale at Hockenheim is always an amazing event played out in front of packed grandstands and a fantastic atmosphere after the chequered flag with the rockets and fireworks. It is certainly a great experience. We hope that we can reproduce the performance from Barcelona and that both drivers score points.”

The schedule at Hockenheim

Friday, 12 October

09:20 – 09:35	Roll-out
11:00 – 12:25	Test 1
14:30 – 15:55	Test 2

Saturday, 13 October

09:30 – 10:30	Free Practice
13:28 – 14:15	Qualifying

Sunday, 14 October

09:00 – 09:30	Warm-up
14:00	Race

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TV schedule

Saturday, 13 October

13:30 – 14:25	Das Erste (ARD), qualifying live
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Sunday, 14 October

13:45 – 15:30	Das Erste (ARD), race live
18:30 – 19:00	DSF, highlights

Point standings after 9 of 10 rounds

Drivers' Championship

1	Mattias Ekström	Red Bull Audi A4 DTM	44
2	Bruno Spengler	Mercedes	42
3	Martin Tomczyk	Red Bull Audi A4 DTM	40
4	Paul di Resta	Mercedes	31
5	Bernd Schneider	Mercedes	27.5
6	Jamie Green	Mercedes	24.5
7	Mika Häkkinen	Mercedes	22
8	Gary Paffett	Mercedes	20.5
9	Timo Scheider	GW:plus/Top Service Audi A4	17
10	Alexandros Margaritis	Mercedes	14
11	Alexandre Prémat	Audi Bank Audi A4 DTM	13
12	Mike Rockenfeller	S line Audi A4 DTM	11
13	Daniel la Rosa	Mercedes	10
14	Tom Kristensen	Siemens Audi A4 DTM	6
15	Mathias Lauda	Mercedes	4
16	Christian Abt	Playboy Audi A4 DTM	4
17	Lucas Luhr	Siemens Audi A4 DTM	1

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Team Championship

1	Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline	84
2	Originalteile/DaimlerChrysler Bank AMG Mercedes	69.5
3	Salzgitter/AMG Mercedes	46.5
4	stern/Laureus AMG Mercedes	34.5
5	TV-Spielfilm/JAWA.de AMG Mercedes	31
6	Audi Sport Team Abt	23
7	Audi Sport Team Phoenix	17
8	TrekStor/Trilux AMG Mercedes	14
9	Audi Sport Team Rosberg	12

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Photographs, sound bites and further information can be found in the Internet:
www.audi-motorsport.info (accreditation required)