

Hockenheim, 14 October 2007

Motorsport

Audi demonstrates strength at DTM finale

- **Three Audi A4 DTM cars on the top three grid positions**
- **First pole position for Tom Kristensen since his accident**
- **Audi goes into title fight with optimum prerequisites**

With an impressive qualifying performance Audi has worked out an optimum starting base for the DTM finale at the Hockenheimring. Tom Kristensen, Timo Scheider, Mattias Ekström and Martin Tomczyk secured grid positions one, two, three and five. This puts all four drivers from Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline in front of Bruno Spengler – the only Mercedes driver who might be able to snatch the 2007 DTM title from Audi on Sunday.

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After Audi had already set the pace in both tests on Friday and in the free practice session on Saturday morning, the strength of the Audi A4 DTM was again evident in qualifying. For the fifth time in a row – and thus in all five races of the season's second half – Audi clinched the best grid position. For the fourth time in the last five races as many as two A4 cars are starting from the front row.

Tom Kristensen, at 1m 32.862s, managed the fastest lap ever to have been driven in a DTM car at the Hockenheim Grand Prix circuit. That he beat Bruno Spengler's pole position time from the season opener by 1.5 seconds underlines the intensity of the continued development effort to which the Audi A4 DTM was subjected throughout the season. For the Dane, this was also the first pole position since his serious accident in the season-opening race at Hockenheim.

Before the finale, Mattias Ekström is leading the overall standings with 44 points, ahead of Bruno Spengler (42) and Martin Tomczyk (40). If the qualifying results were the race results, Matthias Ekström would be the DTM Champion.

Quotes after qualifying

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “Today even the minutest details were crucial. In the morning we worked out a very good basic set-up for all cars and were able to apply this quite well also. Only Martin (Tomczyk) wasn’t completely happy with the car. It’s very important to have four cars in front of Bruno Spengler. This line-up shows the quality of our team performance. I’m proud of the squad.”

Tom Kristensen (Siemens Audi A4 DTM #7)

1st place, 1m 32.862 s

“This is where my season started and, basically, ended as well, because I had to stop racing for half a year. Every week since my serious accident I’ve been feeling better. It’s nice that things are going as well again as I’d been wishing for earlier. The record lap at Hockenheim for a DTM racing car is something very special. That we are so much quicker than at the season opener is partly due to the fact that it’s a little cooler now and there’s more rubber on the track. But of course the technicians from Audi Sport and Team Abt have been busy during this whole time.”

Timo Scheider (Gebrauchtwagen:plus/Top Service Audi A4 DTM #8)

2nd place, 1m 32.939s

“A very good result for Audi! In the beginning, I was struggling a bit with grip. I wasn’t sure whether the changes we made since the free practice session were right. On the second trial we returned somewhat to the set-up from the free practice, which proved to be the right decision. Three Audi cars in front – things could hardly have gone any better than this. I’m eager to see the outcome tomorrow.”

Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #3)

3rd place, 1m 32.950s

“At first I had to fight quite a bit, as the car was not building up any grip. We made a minor change although I wasn’t sure at first whether that was a good choice. But the car was fantastic. I really enjoyed the last lap. But I was a bit too cautious in the penultimate turn, which probably cost me the

pole position. Congratulations to Tom (Kristensen) on clinching pole, which is nice for him after such a difficult year.”

Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #4)

5th place, 1m 33.191s

“So far so good. The overall situation isn’t bad. Personally, I’d been expecting a bit more, but I wasn’t able to achieve any more grip on those tyres. I won’t deny the fact that I’d have liked being in front of Mattias (Ekström) and Bruno (Spengler). At least I’m in front of Bruno, though. If nothing else, there are many Audi cars in front, and that’s the right starting base.”

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Alexandre Prémat (Audi Bank Audi A4 DTM #17)

11th place, 1m 34.196s

“It wasn’t bad, really. Eleventh place in a 2006-spec car is okay, because the 2007-spec cars were clearly quicker. I’m very happy about the 1-2-3 result for Audi. Now we’re wishing Audi all the best for Sunday!”

Mike Rockenfeller (S line Audi A4 DTM #11)

12th place, 1m 34.218s

“It’s disappointing to be twelfth because things were going better in free practice. On the last two sets of tyres I had heavy understeer. Maybe the undertray was damaged previously on the kerbs which you run pretty hard here. The car felt very strange. Unfortunately, that made it impossible to clock any better times.”

Markus Winkelhock (Audi A4 DTM #20)

13th place, 1m 34.446s

“The whole weekend was going pretty good. On Friday already as well as on Saturday in free practice with twelfth place. In the second qualifying section I was really good on my fastest lap in the first sector but in the second one I made a mistake. A better result would have been possible, even though we almost exploited the potential of a 2005-spec car to the max.”

Christian Abt (Playboy Audi A4 DTM #16)

15th place, 1m 34.538s

“It was close in qualifying. I’d have thought that I’d be making it into the next session. Alex Prémat is on position eleven, Mike Rockenfeller on twelve – that means my 15th place does seem realistic to me, as we’re not far apart from each other. Maybe on Sunday we’ll be better on the long run than Mercedes.”

Lucas Luhr (Philips Audi A4 DTM #12)

17th place, 1m 34.640s

“Of course 17th place on the grid is not satisfactory. But all 2006-spec cars were having a difficult time. It was getting consistently warmer towards qualifying. That didn’t suit us at all. That’s why the result was relatively poor.”

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Vanina Ickx (Audi A4 DTM #21)

20th place, 1m 35.910s

“It seems that I did my qualifying in free practice when I managed to set a better time... We used only two instead of the three sets of tyres we’d planned to use because we had radio transmission problems. My driving wasn’t all that good either, and track conditions clearly changed as temperatures were rising.”

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

“I’m overwhelmed by this fantastic team performance. What the drivers showed was a nothing less than a thriller. When you need them, you can count on all four of them. These are the positive prerequisites for tomorrow we’ve all been wishing for. The cards are looking good for us. Now we need to continue concentrating on driving a good race on Sunday.”

Ernst Moser (Team Director Audi Sport Team Phoenix): “We achieved optimum balance for our cars in the morning. In the afternoon, probably on account of the changed track conditions, we had too much understeer. That’s the reason why we didn’t make it into the top eight. It’s too bad that Christian (Abt) in his last qualifying missed the next round by such a narrow margin – he just wasn’t able to make optimum use of the potential.”

Arno Zensen (Team Director Audi Sport Team Rosberg): “A dream result for Audi – congratulations, three Audi cars in front of Bruno

Spengler, well done, absolutely! Unfortunately, it didn't work out quite as well with us. I'd been afraid before that we might be having problems with higher temperatures. We had pretty heavy understeer. I'm disappointed because I'd expected more."

The starting grid at Hockenheim

- 1 Tom Kristensen (Siemens Audi A4 DTM), 1m 32.862s
 - 2 Timo Scheider (GW:plus/Top Service Audi A4 DTM), 1m 32.939s
 - 3 Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM), 1m 32.950s
 - 4 Jamie Green (Mercedes), 1m 33.028s
 - 5 Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM), 1m 33.191s
 - 6 Bruno Spengler (Mercedes), 1m 33.273s
 - 7 Bernd Schneider (Mercedes), 1m 33.939s
 - 8 Gary Paffett (Mercedes), 1m 34.080s
 - 9 Alexandros Margaritis (Mercedes), 1m 34.081s
 - 10 Alexandre Prémat (Audi Bank Audi A4 DTM), 1m 34.196s
 - 11 Mike Rockenfeller (S line Audi A4 DTM), 1m 34.218s
 - 12 Markus Winkelhock (Audi A4 DTM), 1m 34.446s
 - 13 Christian Abt (Playboy Audi A4 DTM), 1m 34.538s
 - 14 Paul di Resta (Mercedes), 1m 34.587s
 - 15 Lucas Luhr (Philips Audi A4 DTM), 1m 34.640s
 - 16 Mathias Lauda (Mercedes), 1m 34.685s
 - 17 Susie Stoddart (Mercedes), 1m 34.723s
 - 18 Daniel la Rosa (Mercedes), 1m 34.192s *
 - 19 Vanina Ickx (Audi A4 DTM), 1m 35.910s
 - 20 Mika Häkkinen (Mercedes), 1m 34.478s *
- * moved to the rear of the grid by 10 places

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