

Audi driver Laurent Aiello third in DTM opener

DTM: 57,000 spectators witnessed the successful start of the new DTM season and the strong debut of the fourth generation Abt-Audi TT-R at Hockenheim. With third position defending champion Laurent Aiello successfully managed to finish on the podium. Mattias Ekström also finished in the points in eighth position. Both Audi Juniors were unlucky: After an excellent qualifying performance, Martin Tomczyk (21) had to be satisfied with twelfth place. The 19-year-old Peter Terting ended his DTM debut on the opening lap of the race after a spin.

The track and weather conditions during his debut in the Touring Car "Top Class" could hardly have been more difficult for the youngest DTM driver of all time. It started to rain Hockenheim punctually at the start in Hockenheim at 2 p.m. Even the most seasoned campaigners had difficulty keeping the touring cars, with over 450 hp running on slick tyres, on a circuit that was as slippery as ice. "I touched the damp kerbs, the car snapped out of line and I had no chance to correct and prevent the spin," said Terting who was forced to retire after touching a wall. "Obviously I'm very disappointed, but have learnt a terrific amount this weekend – that I will try to use to my advantage during the next race in Italy."

Martin Tomczyk, his team colleague in the S line Audi Junior Team, excelled in single lap qualifying ("Super Pole"), which was held for the first time, with a perfect lap and second on the grid. Initially, and as best Audi driver, he held third place during the tricky opening laps before having to make way for his team colleague Laurent Aiello. "I didn't take any risks in the rain," explained Tomczyk. His tactics seemed to work out: The 21-year-old was lying safely in fourth position before the first compulsory pit stop. However, there was a problem changing the left hand front wheel at both compulsory pit stops. "As a result, I lost many time and my chances of a better finish were over."

Defending champion Laurent Aiello impressed the spectators with exciting duels on the drying track. First of all he overcame Jean Alesi, his countryman, before hunting down the second placed Mercedes driver Marcel Fässler in the closing stages of the race. Fässler and Aiello took the chequered flag side-by-side and separated by a mere 0.290 seconds. "Our new car is quick and was very consistent in the race. We just need to get to know it a bit better to exploit the full potential," mentioned Aiello.