

Hockenheim, 8 April 2006

Motorsport

Audi driver Martin Tomczyk is back again

- **Tomczyk fastest Audi driver in qualifying**
- **Three Audi A4 DTM cars among the top eight**
- **Thrilling premiere of “shoot-out” qualifying**

Martin Tomczyk was the quickest Audi driver in the qualifying practice for the DTM season opener at Hockenheim. Tomczyk, who at age 24 is Audi's youngest factory driver, thus made an impressive comeback to the group of front runners in the most popular international touring car series after a less than perfect 2005 season. In the thrilling qualifying practice, which was staged in the new “shoot-out” format for the first time, the youngster from Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline showed strong nerves. In all three sections Tomczyk was the best Audi driver. After a best time in the first, and second place in the second section, the Bavarian ultimately claimed fourth place on the starting grid.

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His team-mate Mattias Ekström, who had clocked the best time in the morning's free practice session, will be going into the race, which is scheduled to start at 2:05 p.m. (local time) and broadcast live on TV from 1:45 p.m. by “Das Erste” on Sunday, from the third row. Following a misunderstanding during the second qualifying section, Heinz-Harald Frentzen and Tom Kristensen will be starting from positions eight and nine. Frank Stippler (Audi Sport Team Rosberg), finishing in eleventh place, was the quickest driver of an A4 from last year.

Quotes after Qualifying

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “That was an hour which passed at lightning speed and which was all about very quick responses. We'd been hoping for more. Yet it seems that we're having difficulties applying the really good results from the morning when outside temperatures are rising causing the grip level to change, because on Friday the situation was similar. The misunderstanding between Tom (Kristensen) and Heinz-Harald (Frentzen) was not good for the result of the Audi brand. We discussed this calmly, though, and

clarified the situation. In tomorrow's race we're going to try and make the best of this qualifying result."

Martin Tomczyk

Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #4

4th place, 1m 33.753s / 1m 33.541s / 1m 33.757s

"The qualifying was super. I'm happy to be the quickest Audi driver. Big compliments to my team: The car was really perfect to drive – in all three sessions it was like running on rails. Of course the icing on the cake would have been to clock the best time in the third session as well."

Mattias Ekström

Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #5

6th place, 1m 34.276s / 1m 33.777s / 1m 33.969s

"I really like the new qualifying format very much, it was pretty exciting. In the end, we weren't quite at the front. The car obviously had more grip than I thought – I suppose I wasn't fast enough. Sixth place the first time round is okay. And the points aren't awarded until tomorrow. We're well prepared. I'm looking forward to the race."

Heinz-Harald Frentzen

Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Veltins Audi A4 DTM #6

8th place, 1m 34.258s / 1m 33.694s / 6m 32.580s

"The new qualifying format is good – I think for the spectators, the DTM has now become even more interesting. Of course for us, the drivers, it's a thrilling situation, too. I'm sorry about the misunderstanding with Tom (Kristensen). Unfortunately the radio communications didn't work properly so that my team wasn't able to warn me."

Tom Kristensen

Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Siemens Audi A4 DTM #7

9th place, 1m 34.596 / 1m 34.036s

"In the qualifying practice, everything has to be perfect in terms of timing. In the second section we had planned to start on used tyres so the car would warm up in order to then make a quick pit stop. That worked according to plan and I was on a fast lap when I caught a white car that wouldn't move out of the way. To be

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eliminated that way was frustrating of course. But it wasn't intentional, it was a misunderstanding within the team."

Frank Stippler

Audi Sport Team Rosberg, S line Audi A4 DTM #15

11th place, 1m 34.478s / 1m 34.360s

"With the four sets of tyres I used I had inexplicable grip fluctuations. Now we need to find out the cause. Basically, I am not unhappy in comparison to Audi's other cars from last year, but altogether we're not as far up front as we'd like to be – so I look at the situation with mixed emotions."

Timo Scheider

Audi Sport Team Rosberg, Gebrauchtwagen plus Audi A4 DTM #16

13th place, 1m 34.487s / 1m 34.412s

"In essence, I'm relatively satisfied, though not with the place I achieved. In comparison with my colleagues in the 2005-spec car our performance is up to par again. We went for risk and rebuilt the whole car for the qualifying. That was the right decision. From this starting position we'll probably have chances to finish the race in the points."

Pierre Kaffer

Audi Sport Team Phoenix, Castrol Audi A4 DTM #14

14th place, 1m 34.491s / 1m 34.482s

"I was full of confidence for the qualifying. Things did go pretty well, too, and at times we were running in second place. Unfortunately a Mercedes driver was exiting the pit lane just when I was on my fast lap and slowed me down so I wasn't able to improve my time. The Phoenix team did a super job. It's a shame we didn't make it into the next qualifying session. But wait till next time – we'll be making it into the final round then, no doubt."

Christian Abt

Audi Sport Team Phoenix, Playboy Audi A4 DTM #12

15th place, 1m 34.746s

"I'm very disappointed about my qualifying result. My car suddenly had extreme understeer. We don't know yet what caused this. We now need to analyse this carefully."

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Olivier Tielemans**Futurecom TME, Futurecom Audi A4 DTM #19****19th place, 1m 36.000s**

“Actually, I’m pretty satisfied with my first DTM qualifying because it’s only my second day in the car. This weekend I needed to learn so much. I tried my best and am only one tenth of a second from the other 2004-spec cars in the field. For the beginning this isn’t so bad, especially considering that I’ve got less experience than the other drivers.”

Vanina Ickx**Futurecom TME, Original Zubehör Audi A4 DTM #20****20th place, 1m 36.318s**

“This wasn’t exactly a perfect day for me. Unfortunately in the free practice session I slipped off the track when we wanted to practice for the qualifying. So in the morning I wasn’t able to test how the car feels on new tyres. Consequently, we just had to go on a trial in the qualifying that didn’t go all that well. Everything is new, I’ve still got to learn a lot. Unfortunately, it wasn’t such a good start. Hopefully I’ll improve.”

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Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Director Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline): “The first qualifying of the season was very exciting. It was really a tricky situation, the cars were very close to each other. What is more, the track conditions changed. We had expected a bit more, but now we’ve got to live with this situation.”

Ernst Moser (Team Director Audi Sport Team Phoenix): “I’m rather disappointed because after our performance in the morning we should have been better. At times we had understeer with the car, another time our drivers encountered traffic. Everything was going against us. We thought we’d be getting at least one car into the top eight. Our result is sobering, because our actual performance certainly had the potential for more.”

Arno Zensen (Team Director Audi Sport Team Rosberg): “This was a pretty thrilling qualifying. In the first part we were very nervous of course, but things worked out well. In the second part we weren’t all that bad either. Considering it’s our first time, I’m satisfied. We learned a lot and still have to apply quite a few things to the track yet.”

The starting grid at Hockenheim

- 1 Jamie Green (Mercedes), 1m 33.473s
- 2 Bernd Schneider (Mercedes), 1m 33.557s
- 3 Bruno Spengler (Mercedes), 1m 33.650s
- 4 Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM), 1m 33.757s
- 5 Stefan Mücke (Mercedes), 1m 33.765s
- 6 Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM), 1m 33.969s
- 7 Mika Häkkinen (Mercedes), 1m 34.558s
- 8 Heinz-Harald Frentzen (Veltins Audi A4 DTM), 6m 32.580s
- 9 Tom Kristensen (Siemens Audi A4 DTM), 1m 34.036s
- 10 Daniel la Rosa (Mercedes), 1m 34.321s
- 11 Frank Stippler (S line Audi A4 DTM), 1m 34.360s
- 12 Alexandros Margaritis (Mercedes), 1m 34.401s
- 13 Timo Scheider (Audi Gebrauchtwagen:plus Audi A4 DTM), 1m 34.412s
- 14 Pierre Kaffer (Castrol Audi A4 DTM), 1m 34.482s
- 15 Christian Abt (Playboy Audi A4 DTM), 1m 34.746s
- 16 Jean Alesi (Mercedes), 1m 34.759s
- 17 Susie Stoddart (Mercedes), 1m 35.938s
- 18 Mathias Lauda (Mercedes), 1m 35.963s
- 19 Olivier Tielemans (Futurecom Audi A4 DTM), 1m 36.000s
- 20 Vanina Ickx (Original Zubehör Audi A4 DTM), 1m 36.318s

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