

Communication Motorsport

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Audi driver Mattias Ekström about Hockenheim

- Last year marked first Hockenheim victory for Mattias Ekström
- DTM title win at the same place in October
- Unusual atmosphere at the “Hockenheim pandemonium”

Ingolstadt – When DTM Champion Mattias Ekström returns to Hockenheim with Audi for the season opener on 13 April, this will evoke special memories. It is the venue where the Swede won the season-opening race last year and in the finale on the 4.574-kilometre circuit secured the title in one of the most thrilling races in the history of the DTM. The first race of the 2008 season will be broadcast live on “Das Erste” on Sunday, starting at 1:45 p.m. (local time).

After your victory at the 2007 season opener and the title win last year, does Hockenheim have a special meaning for you?

“Hockenheim is the circuit that evokes the strongest emotions. You come to the first race with butterflies in your stomach. Finally, you’re back on the track. And you ask yourself: ‘Where do I stand in comparison to the competition?’ The fact that you contest the finale there, as well, always makes Hockenheim a very special venue. Even though the circuit does not differ from others in a major way, it presents a historically interesting situation: those running in front at Hockenheim usually compete for the title as well.”

What are the special characteristics of this circuit?

“The circuit features a mix of slow and fast turns as well as short and very long corners. From a driver’s perspective, this is a nice variety on each lap, but you’ve got to be well sorted with your car.”

**Where can fans look forward to overtaking manoeuvres?**

"You can see overtaking attempts in various places now and then. But for me, there is only one corner that really lends itself to passing: the hairpin. There, the fans can witness some truly spectacular action year after year."

What effect does the enthusiasm of the audience have?

"At the last round, in October, 152,000 spectators came to Hockenheim. For the season opener, over 100,000 people have consistently come to watch our sport for many years. That's simply incredible. The fans put up banners, they spur on Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, or me personally, and flock to the paddock or the pit lane for the pitwalk in large numbers. There are three dates on the race schedule which are absolute highlights for me in terms of the audience: Hockenheim 1, the Norisring and Hockenheim 2."

Photographs and information available at www.audi-motorsport.info

AUDI AG sold a total of 964,151 cars in 2007 and thus achieved its twelfth consecutive record year. With revenue of €33,617 million and profit before tax of €2,915 million, the company attained its best figures ever. Audi produces vehicles in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Changchun (China) and Brussels (Belgium). At the end of 2007, production of the Audi A6 started in Aurangabad, India. The company is active in more than 100 markets worldwide. AUDI AG's wholly owned subsidiaries include Automobili Lamborghini Holding S.p.A. in Sant'Agata Bolognese, Italy, and quattro GmbH in Neckarsulm. Audi employs about 54,000 people worldwide, including 45,000 in Germany. The brand with the four rings invests more than €2 billion each year in order to sustain the company's technological lead embodied in its "Vorsprung durch Technik" slogan. Audi plans to nearly double the number of models in its portfolio by 2015, from the 25 currently on offer to 40.