

Presse-Information

Ingolstadt, 27 July 2003

Motorsport Newsletter 20/2003

Audi driver Mattias Ekström in the winner's circle

DTM: Of the six races of the 2003 DTM season that have taken place so far, six Audi drivers have placed in the top three. In Donington, Mattias Ekström's guest performance put him on the winner's platform for the third time. From the beginning of the race, the Swede was in third place but then lost two places during a bumpy start. "I did not have a good start. Thanks to the brilliant work of my crew, I was able to get my third place back", explained Ekström. The Abt-Audi mechanics sent him ahead of two cars with their lightning fast pit stops. In the final stretch of the race, the 25-year-old compensated for a 10-second lead on Bernd Schneider (Mercedes), who finished second, but in the end was unable to pass him. "It was such a shame, as soon as I was close enough for an attack they waved the checkered flag", recalled Ekström. With 23 points Ekström is on the sixth place overall, the best among his Audi teammates.

The sixth race of the DTM through the spectacular natural course filled with hills and valleys was a turbulent time that did not leave the Audi drivers unshorn. Christian Abt, Lauren Aiello and Martin Tomczyk suffered the most. Tomczyk was spun around a bit during a chaotic start and hit by another car. Already after one lap the Audi Junior was sentenced to spectating. "My car wouldn't go straight ahead anymore. And then that was it", said the aggravated driver from Rosenheim. Two laps later, after having received several blows to his Abt-Audi TT-R, Laurent Aiello experienced lasting damage to one of his tires. At that moment Christian Abt also had similar luck and was hit on the tail out in the grass after trying to execute an evasion maneuver.

Meanwhile, Aiello was able to battle until the 28th lap, but then the damages to his vehicle forced him to steer into the pit and give up. "That was so frustrating, because I had a fast car and would have really like to have fought against Mattias (Ekström) for the lead," explained Christian Abt.

With gladiator-like performances, Karl Wendlinger (15th place) and Audi Junior Peter Terting were able to finish. The 19-year old Terting was forced to work hard for his 14th place. Just after the middle of the race his Abt-Audi TT-R not only had failed brakes on one side, but the interior began to fill with smoke. "I began to cough, and my eyes began to water. I barely saw anything during the last five laps. But giving up was not an alternative," Terting added to the record.

Team manager Hans-Jürgen looked back upon the day's events in a positive light, despite the accidents. "We are closer to Mercedes. After a racing distance of approximately one hour, we were 1.6 seconds behind – I can live with that. Just as I can live with 6 drivers placing in six races. Our team is highly motivated. We'll deliver the next pieces of evidence to prove this at the Nürburgring."

Audi Motorsport in figures

Donington (GB), 6th race of DTM, 27 July 2003

1. Jean Alesi (Mercedes) 36 laps in 55:08.354 min.
2. Bernd Schneider (Mercedes) + 1.466 sec.

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3. Mattias Ekström (Abt-Audi TT-R) + 1.841 sec.

4. Marcel Fässler (Mercedes) + 4.497 sec.

5. Christijan Albers (Mercedes) + 5.459 sec.

6. Peter Dumbreck (Opel) + 24.430 sec.

7. Thomas Jäger (Mercedes) + 41.669 sec.

8. Timo Scheider (Opel) + 49.075 sec.

Ranking after 6 of 10 races: 1. Schneider, 43 points; 2. Albers, 40; 3. Fässler, 34; 4. Dumbreck, 26; 5. Alesi, 25; 6. Ekström, 23.

Next race: Nürburgring (D), 17 August

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