



## Press Information

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### **Audi driver Mattias Ekström on the podium**

**DTM:** Audi driver Mattias Ekström guaranteed the continuation of an impressive run for Team Abt Sportsline in the DTM at the EuroSpeedway Lausitz: At all four races of the 2003 season at least one Audi driver has stood on the winner's rostrum.

In the scorching heat and with 62,000 spectators as witness, Mattias Ekström fought hard for his third position. After having secured second place on the grid during single lap qualifying ("Super Pole") on Saturday, the Swede initially fell back to fourth position after the start. On the fourth lap he took advantage of a mistake by the Swiss Marcel Fässler driving an AMG-Mercedes and improved to third place, which he defended – apart from during the pit stop phase – to the chequered flag. During the entire second half of the race the Opel driver Timo Scheider was breathing down his neck. "I couldn't afford to make the smallest mistake," said a sweaty Ekström. "The race was incredibly tough in this heat and under Timo's pressure. However, I am very happy – third position at the EuroSpeedway is a good result for us."

The championship winning team from Kempten had travelled to the Lausitz region with subdued expectations. "The long straights don't particularly suit our car," explained Team Director Hans-Jürgen Abt. "The EuroSpeedway has always been a difficult circuit for us. We have however, finished this weekend relatively well."

Both Abt-Audi TT-R's of defending champion Laurent Aiello and Christian Abt were so badly damaged following accidents in testing on Friday that it was impossible to repair them before the race. Special permission allowed Aiello and Abt to swap to the cars of their team colleagues Martin Tomczyk and Peter Terting from the S line Audi Junior Team, who agreed to forgo the start. "Of course it hurt to sit and watch," said Audi Junior Tomczyk. "But Laurent has the most points and the best chances to win the championship. It was difficult to hand over my car, but I was happy to do it for the best interests of the team."

After swapping to the silver and red Abt-Audi TT-R of Martin Tomczyk, the defending DTM champion was rewarded with a point for eighth position, although Aiello stalled the engine during both pit stops therefore losing valuable time. Christian Abt occupied ninth place after a faultless drive, achieving the season's best result for a year old car in the 2003 DTM. Karl Wendlinger was thirteenth in the team's second old Audi.

"We weren't the fastest this weekend, but made the most of our chances," said Mattias Ekström after taking stock of the positive result. "I'm also very pleased for my team, as both pit stops were excellent."

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