



## Communications Motorsport

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## **Audi driver Timo Scheider remains title favorite**

- **From grid position 16 to sixth place in DTM debut at Dijon**
- **Seven-point lead before the finale at Hockenheim**
- **Tire punctures deprive Audi of possible victory**

**Ingolstadt/Dijon – At the turbulent DTM debut at Dijon-Prenois, France, Audi driver Timo Scheider kept his cool and scored three important points by finishing in sixth place. The title defender will start to the finale at the Hockenheimring on October 25 with a seven-point lead over Gary Paffett (Mercedes).**

This gives Scheider a cushion that is five points larger than the one he had a year ago when he secured his first DTM title by winning the race. This time, a fifth-place finish would even suffice for the 30-year-old in the event that Gary Paffett should win.

26,000 spectators (throughout the weekend) witnessed one of the most turbulent and curious DTM races of all time on the high-speed circuit of Dijon-Prenois at which tires played the crucial role. On the final laps many drivers had to drastically reduce their pace in order to finish the distance across the demanding track without risk. As a result, the first twelve vehicles crossed the finish line as a pack within just six seconds.

Audi was the front runner for the longest time at the DTM debut – in the form of the Red Bull Audi A4 DTM driven by Mattias Ekström. The Swede who had started from position four on the grid took the lead on lap 22 thanks to a good strategy of Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline and subsequently held up to the pressure exerted by Gary Paffett despite the fact that Ekström was simultaneously trying to save his left rear tire that was subjected to particularly



severe stress at Dijon. Nevertheless, the tire blew seven laps before the finish – and destroyed Ekström's dream of a third DTM title in the process. A particularly bitter pill: At the Hockenheim season opener a tire puncture just before the finish had also deprived Ekström of victory.

But the Swede was not the only one to suffer misfortune at Dijon. Timo Scheider, Martin Tomczyk, Oliver Jarvis and Tom Kristensen became victims of punctures as well. While Kristensen lost third place just before race end, Scheider was more fortunate despite the mishap: The leader of the standings was struck on lap 21, two turns before his first scheduled tire change. Consequently, Scheider's time loss was not as severe. However, his Audi A4 DTM lost important aerodynamics components in the area behind the defective tire.

Prior to the puncture, Scheider had pushed forward into the points from position 16 on the grid by delivering a fantastic start and a strong early phase. "That really wasn't bad on this difficult track," commented Scheider. "In the end, I focused strictly on trying to take the car around the circuit and across the finish line. It was like walking a tightrope, but I managed it. Now I'll be going to Hockenheim with a seven-point lead and ten kilograms less weight. That's okay."

Martin Tomczyk saved his tires in the final phase as well and thus took seventh place and two points across the finish line. Markus Winkelhock in tenth place was the best driver of a year-old A4.

"Of course that wasn't the result we'd been hoping for," said Head of Audi Motorsport Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich. "We knew that the track at Dijon would be critical for the tires, but thought we had the problem under control – there were no indications whatsoever even after the warm-up. But in the race we had a whole series of punctures, which is not helpful when you're fighting for the championship. After the first defect we tried to control the pace to get through the race – unfortunately, not all the drivers managed doing that."

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**Photographs and information available at [www.audi-motorsport.info](http://www.audi-motorsport.info)**



AUDI AG sold a total of 1,003,469 cars in 2008 and thus achieved its 13th consecutive record year. The Company posted new record figures with revenue of €34.2 billion and profit before tax of €3.2 billion. Audi produces vehicles in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Changchun (China) and Brussels (Belgium). Aurangabad in India saw the start of CKD production of the Audi A6 at the end of 2007 and of the Audi A4 in early October 2008. 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 currently employs around 58,000 people worldwide, including 46,500 in Germany. The brand with the four rings invests around €2 billion each year in order to sustain the company's technological lead embodied in its "Vorsprung durch Technik" slogan. Audi plans to significantly increase the number of models in its portfolio by 2015 to 42. The AUDI brand celebrates its 100th birthday in 2009. The company was founded by August Horch in Zwickau on July 16, 1909; he named it AUDI after the Latin translation of his surname ("hark!").