

Ingolstadt, 19 August 2005

Motorsport

Audi drivers especially motivated for Zandvoort

- **DTM race at the Dutch North Sea coastal town**
- **Last year's winner Ekström arrives as championship leader**
- **Zandvoort is Christian Abt's favourite circuit**

Audi factory driver Mattias Ekström reclaimed the DTM championship lead with a win at the Nürburgring. The Swede from Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline wants to increase his lead at Zandvoort. The signs for this are good: The demanding circuit on the Dutch North Sea coast really suited the Audi A4 DTM last season, and the young 27-year-old Swede's run of success on the circuit through the dunes is impressive: At Zandvoort, Ekström finished on the podium three times in succession, twice (2002 and 2004) on his favourite place – the very top step.

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Two of his team-mates also have good memories of the circuit lying almost 30 kilometres west of Amsterdam: Finishing second last year, Martin Tomczyk earned Audi a one-two victory. Tom Kristensen shone on his Zandvoort début by immediately setting the fastest time of the day. For Allan McNish, who competed in and won the 1000-kilometre race at Silverstone in an Audi R8 between the two DTM races at the Nürburgring and Zandvoort, the current circuit layout in Zandvoort is, in contrast, new territory.

At Audi Sport Team Joest, Christian Abt in particular is looking forward to the "away" race in the Netherlands: The man from Bavaria, currently the highest scoring German DTM driver, loves the course like no other, taking his only pole position in the DTM there in 2001 before narrowly missing victory in a photo finish after an unforgettable duel with Uwe Alzen. While his team-mates Frank Stippler and Pierre Kaffer already know the circuit from other racing series, the same applies for Rinaldo Capello as for Allan McNish: The Italian last drove at Zandvoort before the circuit layout was changed.

There is another reason for the Audi drivers to be successful in Zandvoort: On Saturday, Head of Audi Motorsport Dr Wolfgang Ullrich celebrates his 55th birthday. The best possible present for the Austrian would be another victory.

As usual, ARD broadcasts Qualifying (Saturday, 27 August from 2 p.m.) and the race (Sunday, 28 August from 1:45 p.m.) “live” from Zandvoort.

Quotes before the race at Zandvoort

Mattias Ekström (Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline #1): “Zandvoort is the circuit at which I have been most successful at in the DTM. Additionally, it is a little like a ‘home’ race for me since it’s not that far from Sweden to Holland. That’s why I really look forward to this race each time and think that we’ll be just as strong there as we were last year.”

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Martin Tomczyk (Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline #2): “It’s time I finished on the podium – preferably like last year when Mattias and I took a one-two. Zandvoort isn’t necessarily my favourite circuit but I’ve always been quite fast there previously.”

Tom Kristensen (Audi Sport Team Abt #5): “Zandvoort is a real handling circuit that requires a lot of commitment to drive. It has a lot of different corners, elevation changes and the barriers are close to the circuit. It’s demanding and the drivers enjoy it. The dunes remind me of my holidays on the west coast in Denmark. Even though I’m sure that my A4 will be fast, Zandvoort will definitely not be a holiday for me.”

Allan McNish (Audi Sport Team Abt #6): “The last time I was in Zandvoort was 1988 – still on the old circuit. I don’t know today’s circuit yet but it should be a good race for Audi looking at the layout from last year’s TV coverage. I myself have many Dutch friends, that’s why Zandvoort is something special.”

Christian Abt (Audi Sport Team Joest Racing #14): “Zandvoort is my absolute favourite circuit and, as a consequence, the highlight of the year for me. I’ve always been up at the front there. When everything slots into place a top-five position should also be possible with my year old A4. I want to score points regularly, since my season goal is to be the best German driver.”

Pierre Kaffer (Audi Sport Team Joest Racing #15): “Zandvoort is a fantastic circuit which I know from the Formula 3 Masters and from the Carrera Cup. I’m really intrigued as to how the track feels in a DTM car. You need plenty of downforce in the fast sections, which suits our Audi A4.”

Rinaldo Capello (Audi Sport Team Joest #18): “I was at Zandvoort with the Super Touring cars in 1994, however at that time it was still the short circuit. I don’t know the current circuit but I know from its characteristics that it should suit my Audi. We have finally found a good basic set-up allowing me to concentrate completely on learning the circuit.”

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Frank Stippler (Audi Sport Team Joest #19): “I’d like to continue the run of success I had during my one-make cup days with the DTM car. I’ve already won a few races in Zandvoort. The circuit is challenging and varied. I’ve heard that it isn’t so easy to set-up a DTM car for the track. From my own experience I know that it is important to be on the track at the right time, because sand often gets blown onto the circuit.”

Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Director Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline): “We have great memories of Zandvoort: We won the championship here in 2002 and, with the one-two last year, laid the foundation stone for the title. We’d like to repeat it again this year and give our boss a great birthday present. I have to get my revenge after he dedicated the Nürburgring victory to me while I was in hospital.”

Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Team Joest): “We hope that the weather at Zandvoort is better than it was at the Nürburgring – a race that we want to forget as quickly as possible. It would appear that when our year old cars qualify for Super Pole it doesn’t bring us much luck. That’s why we’re aiming to monopolise grid positions eleven to 14. Joking apart, based on last year’s data we know that the circuit suits our car.”

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “Obviously for my birthday I would like an equally good result like last year. I think that this wish could be fulfilled. Zandvoort is a very demanding circuit for which we should be well prepared.”

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**Photographs, sound bites and additional information to download at:
www.audi-motorsport.info (accreditation necessary)**

Note for editors:

It is not only Head of Audi Motorsport Dr Wolfgang Ullrich who has reason to celebrate in Zandvoort: Audi organises a “Beach Party” on Saturday evening to which all media representatives are cordially invited. Further information can be obtained for the Audi Team & Media Hospitality in the paddock.

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