

Nuremberg, 22 July 2006

## Motorsport

### Audi on third row in “home race”

- **Qualifying thriller at the Norisring**
- **Only 0.187 seconds separate the quickest six**
- **Ekström and Kristensen best Audi drivers in qualifying**

The Norisring continues to be a tricky place for the Audi A4 DTM: After two pole positions in a row at Oschersleben and Brands Hatch the best Audi will start from the third row at the “home race” in Nuremberg on Sunday. The fastest Audi driver in the qualifying thriller, which saw the best six cars finishing within merely 0.187 seconds of each other, was Brands Hatch winner Mattias Ekström. The Swede in the Red Bull Audi A4 DTM of Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline claimed the sixth-best time. The 2004 DTM Champion was lacking merely 29 thousandths for the second row.

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The runner-up in the Championship standings, Tom Kristensen, who had clinched the pole position at Nuremberg last year and, most recently, set the best time in qualifying on two occasions, will start from seventh position in his Siemens Audi A4 DTM. Alongside him will be Timo Scheider from Audi Sport Team Rosberg as the best driver of a 2005-spec A4.

Christian Abt in the Playboy Audi A4 DTM entered by Audi Sport Team Phoenix missed making it into the top eight by merely one thousandth of a second. Abt and Frank Stippler will tackle the race from the fifth row on the grid. Heinz-Harald Frentzen will be on grid position twelve.

The race on Sunday will give the Audi drivers 74 laps to improve their positions and offer the large turnout of Audi fans a good show despite this difficult starting base. The Norisring is known for turbulent races and, this time, the weather may be playing a crucial role as well: For Sunday afternoon, the weather forecast predicts thunderstorms as a result of the heat. The race will start at 5:35 p.m. (local time). ARD will broadcast the DTM season’s highlight live from Nuremberg on “Das Erste” following coverage of the Tour de France.

## Quotes after Qualifying

**Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport):** “The qualifying – as is typical for the Norisring – was very close. The top six is covered by just 0.187 seconds. Unfortunately, we didn’t manage to achieve truly consistent grip conditions with the cars. Oversteer, understeer – these were the comments made by all of our drivers. They gave everything, but a better result was simply not possible. Now we’re on the third and fourth row of the grid, the other cars follow in full force. This is a difficult starting base at the Norisring. We’re going to do everything within our means to have better cars tomorrow and to show the spectators a decent race with a good result for us.”

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### **Mattias Ekström**

**Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #5**

**6th place, 49.041 / 48.786 / 48.676s**

“Under the circumstances, I can be satisfied with this result, because we had difficulties finding a good balance in the beginning. But the end was good. Ultimately, I finished in sixth place – things could have been worse.”

### **Tom Kristensen**

**Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Siemens Audi A4 DTM #7**

**7th place, 48.982 / 48.721 / 48.717s**

“My fastest lap so far this weekend, I managed to do in the qualifying. That’s okay because on Friday and in the free practice session we had to resolve a couple of issues. In the qualifying we did come very close to the maximum, but that’s not enough. I’m only seventh. Tomorrow we need to work hard. Now we’re feeling – yet again – how important the points from Brands Hatch would have been.”

### **Timo Scheider**

**Audi Sport Team Rosberg, Gebrauchtwagen plus Audi A4 DTM #16**

**8th place, 48.944 / 48.730 / 48.925s**

“I’m of course basically satisfied with the result of being among the top eight. In both of the first two sections I was driving in traffic: Once I let Mattias (Ekström) pass, and once I caught Vanina (Ickx), who was on a fast lap herself. In the final section I was on the attack. Unfortunately, we didn’t manage to warm up the front tyres completely, which is why they locked several times.”

**Christian Abt****Audi Sport Team Phoenix, Playboy Audi A4 DTM #12****9th place, 48.928 / 48.787s**

“Needless to say it’s too bad having missed the top eight by just one thousandth. What makes me feel positive is the fact that we’ve got a really fast car. It works well, we’ve found all the bugs by now. I’m optimistic about Sunday. At the Norisring grid positions aren’t that critical – a lot can still happen in the race.”

**Frank Stippler****Audi Sport Team Rosberg, S line Audi A4 DTM #15****10th place, 48.914 / 48.789s**

“On the one hand I’m certainly satisfied. Tenth place means that Saturday ended on a positive note. On the other, though, it was a very close situation all the way up to the final lap of the top eight. I would have liked making it into that group. Yet, in the final analysis, it’s the positive impression that outweighs the negative.”

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**Heinz-Harald Frentzen****Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Veltins Audi A4 DTM #6****12th place, 48.982 / 48.949s**

“Here, it’s about tenths and hundredths. Things didn’t work out quite the way they should have, despite the fact that the car had a pretty good balance. I couldn’t have achieved a better result because I consistently clocked the same times. The long-run in the free practice session was very good but there’s still a bit of work to be done before Sunday. Generally speaking, I’m optimistic about the race.”

**Pierre Kaffer****Audi Sport Team Phoenix, Castrol Audi A4 DTM #14****14th place, 49.002 / 49.417s**

“Overall, my qualifying results are better than last year’s but I did hope for better than 14th place. We consistently improved the car, but in the second session we didn’t manage to move further ahead any more. The car was oversteering too much, and then I was obstructed on top of that. But in the race there are nice overtaking opportunities at the Norisring – with a good car, and we’ve definitely got one.”

**Martin Tomczyk****Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #4****16th place, 49.069s**

“Unfortunately, it’s the same every year that things don’t go according to plan for me at the Norisring. We had the wrong strategy. We didn’t go out early enough to manage a decent second trial. It was incredibly tight: In the first section, Mattias was barely quicker than I, in the end he made it into the final session and clinched sixth place on the grid. This shows that even the most minute margins count here.”

**Jeroen Bleekemolen****Futurecom TME, Futurecom Audi A4 DTM #19****18th place, 49.409s**

“It was a pity that we weren’t as good today as we were yesterday. I don’t know what the reason was because, subjectively, everything was okay. In the race we need to try and push forwards. This was a difficult qualifying.”

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**Vanina Ickx****Futurecom TME, Original Zubehör Audi A4 DTM #20****20th place, 49.936s**

“The plan had been to complete the qualifying on three sets of tyres and to do three laps with each of them. On the first set, though, I spun massively when I started braking. Because this cost time, I was only able to do one lap on the last set of tyres. Unfortunately, I didn’t improve my lap time vis-à-vis the free practice.”

**Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Director Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline):** “Only Sunday evening will show where we truly stand. It’s a pity being so far at the back of the field despite such narrow gaps. We had expected more. It wouldn’t have been enough for the very front but third place would have been possible. We need to think positive. The races at the Norisring have always been something special. Maybe we’ll be a bit luckier in the race .”

**Ernst Moser (Team Director Audi Sport Team Phoenix):** “What a shame – Christian was on a super lap but in the last corner things just weren’t right any more, otherwise we would have been among the top eight. After Brands Hatch, we would have liked to push forwards once more. Here, a lap must be absolutely flawless. With Pierre, there was no chance any more in the second session. Four

tenths were lacking. We need to analyse why he had such heavy understeer. Nevertheless, we're not unhappy."

**Kimmo Liimatainen (Team Manager Audi Sport Team Rosberg):** "This was a good qualifying for our team. With Timo, we finished in the top eight. Too bad for Frank, he was driving well, too. The field was extremely close today. Having both cars among the top ten is a pretty good result."

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**[www.audi-motorsport.info](http://www.audi-motorsport.info) (Accreditation necessary)**

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## The starting grid at the Norisring

- 1 Jamie Green (Mercedes), 48.489s
- 2 Bernd Schneider (Mercedes), 48.509s
- 3 Bruno Spengler (Mercedes), 48.622s
- 4 Jean Alesi (Mercedes), 48.647s
- 5 Mika Häkkinen (Mercedes), 48.655s
- 6 Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM), 48.676s
- 7 Tom Kristensen (Siemens Audi A4 DTM), 48.717s
- 8 Timo Scheider (Gebrauchtwagen:plus Audi A4 DTM), 48.925s
- 9 Christian Abt (Playboy Audi A4 DTM), 48.787s
- 10 Frank Stippler (S line Audi A4 DTM), 48.789s
- 11 Daniel la Rosa (Mercedes), 48.789s
- 12 Heinz-Harald Frentzen (Veltins Audi A4 DTM), 48.949s
- 13 Alexandros Margaritis (Mercedes), 48.949s
- 14 Pierre Kaffer (Castrol Audi A4 DTM), 49.417s
- 15 Mathias Lauda (Mercedes), 49.065s
- 16 Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM), 49.069s
- 17 Susie Stoddart (Mercedes), 49.331s
- 18 Jeroen Bleekemolen (Futurecom Audi A4 DTM), 49.409s
- 19 Stefan Mücke (Mercedes), 49.797s
- 20 Vanina Ickx (Original Zubehör Audi A4 DTM), 49.936s

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