

Communications Motorsport

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DTM countdown: Mattias Ekström's race against time

- Only eight weeks before the season opens at Hockenheim
- Left hand in plaster after sport accident
- Good fitness helps the Audi factory driver

Ingolstadt, March 4, 2011 – One man is particularly happy that the new DTM season starts relatively late: Mattias Ekström (32). The Audi factory driver broke his left wrist in a sport accident in the middle of February. As a result a race against time began for the two-time DTM Champion, since the Swede aims to be sitting at the wheel of his Audi A4 DTM when the season opens on May 1 at Hockenheim.

The injury happened on the penultimate day of the Audi Winter Camp at the Sonnenalp in Ofterschwang. "When I was making a smash while playing volleyball I ended up rotating onto my back," explains Ekström. "On the way down I put my left hand out – and when I hit the ground I knew immediately that something was wrong. It felt like 2000 volts pulsing through the hand."

The diagnosis: a hairline fracture of the radius in the left wrist. The result: Four weeks cast, followed by four weeks rehab. If everything runs according to plan Ekström can sit in his race car again shortly before Hockenheim. The DTM star had to cancel his planned participation in the famous "Vasaloppet" cross country skiing event in Sweden. "I'd never been in such good form and would have certainly set a new best time..."

That he had trained so much after his tonsil operation in December can only be of benefit for Ekström on his way back into the race car as the plaster cast on the left hand does not only restrict daily life, but also the fitness plan. Pedaling on the ergometer and gymnastics are also possible with an injured hand. Apart from that, however, the left hand needs one thing in particular at the moment: lots of rest. "It isn't painful anymore and there's hardly any pressure from the cast," says the DTM Champion from 2004 and 2007. "But this isn't just a good sign: It also shows just

how quickly the hand is losing muscle mass.” To build this up again and to train will be the main task as soon as the cast is removed. This is particularly important for the left-right movement on the Audi A4 DTM steering wheel.

The Audi driver receives medical care in the Swiss Olympic Medical Center “Move Med” in Zürich, which specializes in sport accidents. “I’m in excellent hands here,” says Ekström. “They are familiar with such injuries from other professional athletes and make a very professional impression.” They give the Swede prospect that he will be completely fit and ready to race in good time for Hockenheim.”

He is not at all concerned that he must miss a few tests: “Of course it would be good to have a few more kilometers under my belt, especially with the new Hankook tires. However, when I was still a complete novice in the DTM I wasn’t able to test so much. So, it’s a little like ‘back to the roots’.”

His goal also remains unchanged: If he has anything to do with it he aims to be the one to bring the DTM title back to Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm at the end of the season. “Nothing has changed – I’m still completely motivated and ambitious, even though I’ve been in the DTM so long,” he says. “I aim to and I will give 100 per cent in every race to be able to say at the end of the season: my performance was top. Whether or not this was enough to be champion remains to be seen – but this is obviously the target.”

The Audi Group sold around 1,092,400 cars of the Audi brand in 2010. The Company posted revenue of €29.8 billion and an operating profit of €1.6 billion in 2009. 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, of the Audi A4 in early October 2008 and of the Audi Q5 in July 2010. Production of the new Audi A1 has been running at the Brussels plant since May 2010. The Company is active in more than 100 markets worldwide. AUDI AG’s wholly owned subsidiaries include AUDI HUNGARIA MOTOR Kft., Automobili Lamborghini Holding S.p.A. in Sant’Agata Bolognese (Italy) and quattro GmbH in Neckarsulm. Audi currently employs around 60,000 people worldwide, including around 46,600 in Germany. Between 2011 and 2015 the brand with the four rings is planning to invest around €11.6 billion, mainly in new products, in order to sustain the Company’s technological lead embodied in its “Vorsprung durch Technik” slogan. By 2015, Audi plans to increase the number of models in its portfolio to 42. AUDI AG will present the full results for the 2010 fiscal year at its Annual Press Conference on March 8, 2011.

Audi has long been fulfilling its social responsibility on many levels – with the aim of making the future worth living for generations to come. The basis for Audi’s lasting success is therefore formed by environmental protection, the conservation of resources, international competitiveness and a forward-looking human resources policy. One example of AUDI AG’s commitment to environmental issues is the Audi Environmental Foundation.