

Ingolstadt, 23 September 2005

## Motorsport

### First “match ball” for Audi driver Mattias Ekström

- **Defending champion comes as leader to Istanbul**
- **DTM stars for first time in Turkey**
- **Circuit is new territory for all DTM drivers**

On the first weekend in October, the DTM stars for the first time in Turkey – on a racing circuit which is already considered one of the world's most challenging only a few weeks after its opening. On the spectacular, 5.338-kilometre Istanbul Park circuit, Audi factory driver Mattias Ekström plays his first “match ball”: The Swede from Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline could wrap up the title early with a win.

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However, his rival Gary Paffett must not score any points for this to happen – which is considered rather unlikely in view of the season up to now. Ekström and Paffett scored points at all the previous nine races. The two mounted the podium five times in succession. The championship lead swapped hands every time at the last four races. Since the beginning of August, the two title aspirants have not been separated by more than a single point.

Ekström nevertheless starts the penultimate race of the season with a psychological advantage: Only the Audi driver can wrap up the title early at Istanbul. Even if he retires he still has a second “match ball” to play at the finale at Hockenheim on 23 October.

His brand team mates want to support him in his title quest with good results. Tom Kristensen can race completely without worries: The record Le Mans winner has already made third place his own. Christian Abt, the best driver of a year-old car with the Audi Sport Team Joest A4, has one goal in particular at Istanbul: He wants to make Heinz-Harald Frentzen work for the honour of best placed German driver.

The race circuit, located 40 kilometres south-west of central Istanbul, is new territory for every DTM driver and team. The drivers only know the circuit from the television pictures. In preparation, the Audi Sport technicians were only able to resource data from the SEAT works team gathered during the FIA Touring Car World Championship at Istanbul. However, the WTCC cars are considerably slower than the 460-hp DTM cars.

ARD broadcasts qualifying on Saturday 1 October (from 2 p.m. German time) and the race on Sunday 2 October (from 1.45 p.m.) at the usual times live from Istanbul.

## Quotes before the race at Istanbul

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**Mattias Ekström (Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline #1):** “I only know the circuit at Istanbul from the television. It looks great. Apparently there are very fast, but also some slower sections. Our Audi A4 will also be competitive there. The fans can look forward to another exciting DTM race.”

**Martin Tomczyk (Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline #2):** “I’m really looking forward to Turkey, and want to get on the podium whatever happens. Several Turkish friends from Rosenheim are flying with me to the race and will obviously keep their fingers crossed for me. With their help I shouldn’t have any problems being understood in Istanbul...”

**Tom Kristensen (Audi Sport Team Abt #5):** “I worked as expert for Danish television during the Formula 1 race and studied the circuit closely at the same time. It appears to offer a good mix of slow corners, blind curves and obviously the super fast Turn 8. I’m already itching to see how the A4 handles there.”

**Allan McNish (Audi Sport Team Abt #6):** “I think that the DTM race at Istanbul will be very impressive. The circuit is pretty fast and has several difficult corners which might be quite tricky in a DTM car. In general the circuit appears to be flowing and have similar characteristics to Spa. It’s great to be a part of the DTM premiere in Turkey.”

**Christian Abt (Audi Sport Team Joest Racing #14):** “I’ve never had a problem getting to grips with a new circuit quickly. The circuit should suit me with its

combination of fast and slow sections. I want to score points again at Istanbul, and, more importantly, beat Heinz-Harald (Frentzen).”

**Pierre Kaffer (Audi Sport Team Joest Racing #15):** “I’m really looking forward to Istanbul. I was never there, but followed the Formula 1 coverage closely to learn the circuit layout. I’ve also read a lot about the track. If everything is as they say, then the circuit should suit me.”

**Dindo Capello (Audi Sport Team Joest #18):** “I only know Istanbul from the television. The circuit looks very interesting and reminds me of Spa, Nürburgring and Brunn. I like such circuits. What’s more important for me is that Istanbul is new to everybody and everybody starts at zero. The time is ripe for my first DTM point.”

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**Frank Stippler (Audi Sport Team Joest #19):** “Istanbul is new territory for us and a real change as a result. Like my colleagues, I also only know the circuit from the Formula 1 Grand Prix coverage. The circuit appears to be quite challenging, it goes up and down. I hope that I get to grips with it.”

**Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Boss Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline):** “Istanbul will be of particular interest because everybody starts at the same level. Nobody has ever driven there before. When you see just how the DTM races unfold it’s just impossible to make any predictions. Quite simply, everything must fall into place, just as it did for us at the EuroSpeedway. We come with a one point advantage to Istanbul – and we want to leave with at least the same.”

**Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Team Joest):** “The best thing is that for the first time all 20 drivers start from zero. I’m intrigued just exactly how this will affect things. I hope that this is an advantage for us. Our target is to get Christian (Abt) past Heinz-Harald (Frentzen) again and to help Mattias (Ekström) a little in the championship. Maybe he can get a bigger advantage than just a single point.”

**Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport):** “A fantastic and interesting circuit awaits us in Turkey. I’m convinced that the two guys who are fighting for the championship will again fight it out amongst themselves as to who leads or trails by a few points. It speaks volumes for the DTM that Mattias (Ekström) and

Gary (Paffett) have been separated by a single point for the last three races. A championship battle couldn't be any better or more exciting."

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