

Hockenheim, 21 April 2007

Motorsport

Four Audi A4 DTM cars on the first six places

- **Martin Tomczyk on front row in DTM opening race**
- **Mattias Ekström on fourth place of the grid despite best time**
- **Strong start by Mike Rockenfeller**

In the opening round of the 2007 DTM at Hockenheim, the Audi squad clinched an outstanding starting base for the race. Audi was the only one of the two manufacturers to succeed in getting all four new cars into the third section of the three-part qualifying. With Martin Tomczyk starting from second place, Mattias Ekström from position four, Tom Kristensen from fifth, and Timo Scheider from sixth place, all of the latest-generation Audi A4 DTM cars will start the race from the first three rows – and, what is more, on a circuit on which Audi has never won before.

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The evolution Audi A4 DTM (internal project name “R13”) was the quickest car in qualifying: Mattias Ekström set the best time of the day at 1m 34.128s in the second section, which he was not able to equal himself, though, in the third and crucial part, as the track kept getting warmer.

A strong performance was shown by Mike Rockenfeller: Rockenfeller, at age 23 Audi’s youngest factory driver, secured eleventh place on the grid in his DTM début and was thus by far the fastest driver of a 2006-spec Audi A4 DTM.

The race at Hockenheim will start at 2:03 p.m. (local time) on Sunday. ARD will broadcast live from Hockenheim starting at 1:45 p.m.

Quotes after Qualifying

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “We’ve seen that the new Audi A4 DTM has the potential to set great times. Unfortunately, with Mattias Ekström things didn’t work quite as well anymore in the final trial as they had when he set the fastest time in the penultimate section. With four cars starting from the first three rows, we’re well placed for the race on Sunday. Of course a pole position would have been nice – and it would have been possible too. But my outlook for the race is positive.”

Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #4)

2nd place, 1m 34.849s / 1m 34.388s / 1m 34.446s

“This was a very difficult qualifying, particularly because the tyres are still holding surprises in store for us. You never knew whether they’d have optimum grip or not. The set-up of the car was good, but as far as the tyres are concerned, we’ve still got some work to do. I’m incredibly happy with the result. Best Audi driver in the first qualifying of the year – that’s simply a dream! The season has started exactly the way I’d been hoping it would.”

Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #3)

4th place, 1m 34.647s / 1m 34.128s / 1m 34.601s

“The first qualifying of the year went well in the first two sessions. The car was very good. Prior to the last outing we tried something with the tyres but, unfortunately, it didn’t work out that well. You’ve simply got to try and make it all the way to the front – now we’ll have to manage that on Sunday.”

Tom Kristensen (Siemens Audi A4 DTM #7)

5th place, 1m 34.919s / 1m 34.696s / 1m 34.681s

“For me, the qualifying was a bit difficult. Ever since the practice session in the morning I was struggling with oversteer. We made quite a few changes but weren’t able to completely solve the problem. This time we didn’t manage to come up with optimal tyre pressure, which has never been the case in qualifying. We tried various things and the car got better, but we didn’t have any more time for another attempt. Fifth place after such a hard day isn’t all that bad, though, and for the race we do have the right tyre pressure.”

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Timo Scheider (Gebrauchtwagen:plus/Top Service Audi A4 DTM #8)
6th place, 1m 35.039s / 1m 34.486s / 1m 34.686s

“In the beginning, things were going very well – exactly according to schedule. At the end, though, we had a problem with the driveshaft in the third qualifying segment, which was too bad. We’d been shooting for a place on the first three rows of the grid. I achieved this goal, and that’s a positive result.”

Mike Rockenfeller (S line Audi A4 DTM #11)
11th place, 1m 35.269s / 1m 34.978s

“I’d have wished for a result among the top ten. If you see how difficult it was, and where the other 2006-spec cars are, it’s clear that we made the best of the situation. My thanks to Team Rosberg. On Friday, things weren’t going well at all and after that the team checked every single bolt, and fully supported me. I hope that this result is a small reward for all the work the boys did.”

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Christian Abt (Playboy Audi A4 DTM #16)
15th place, 1m 35.407s

“The car had superb balance. The first attempt was okay. In the second outing I made a mistake, which cost me a lot of time. Too bad!”

Adam Carroll (Futurecom Audi A4 DTM #20)
17th place, 1m 35.466s

“This wasn’t so great, unfortunately. I’d been hoping for a better result than 17th place. Towards the end of the Free Practice we made a few more changes that were supposed to benefit us over the distance. But we had only little time to balance the car for the qualifying, so I’m a bit disappointed. Now the race will be crucial.”

Alexandre Prémat (Audi Bank Audi A4 DTM #17)
18th place, 1m 35.507s

“I’m disappointed about not getting any further than I did on new tyres in the qualifying. On the first set of new tyres I made a mistake in the second corner that cost me an incredible amount of time. Now I’m working with the team on having a strong car for the race.”

Lucas Luhr (Philips Audi A4 DTM #12)**19th place, 1m 35.559s**

“I can’t remember the last time I was so far at the back. Apparently the tyre pressure was a little too high with the new set of tyres. I had no grip, the car was running like on ice. I wasn’t able to attack anywhere. That’s not the way things work in qualifying.”

Vanina Ickx (Futurecom Audi A4 DTM #21)**20th place, 1m 36.691s**

“I’m a little disappointed because I’d made some good progress in the morning and had been hoping for a better qualifying result. I wasn’t really lacking all that much. On the first set of tyres I spun 360 degrees, but nothing was damaged. However, I did lose a bit of confidence before the second attempt. So I didn’t manage to get it all together perfectly.”

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Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Director Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline):

“Four cars among the top six, that’s a good team result we can definitely be satisfied with. We really plan to put the pressure on the two Mercedes cars in front of us. Things were incredibly tight, but that’s exactly what the DTM is all about. Congratulations to all for a great job!”

Ernst Moser (Team Director Audi Sport Team Phoenix): “The result is absolutely disappointing. This morning our performance in Free Practice was great. We didn’t make any changes before the afternoon, but in the qualifying practice the balance wasn’t right any more. Both drivers complained about different phenomena. We need to analyse the reasons for this.”

Arno Zensen (Team Director Audi Sport Team Rosberg): “A real load has come off my mind. After a difficult Friday, things were already going better for us in Free Practice on Saturday, but I’m even more satisfied with ‘Rocky’s’ result. That was a positive surprise. A great job by the whole team! Too bad Lucas, there was more potential in his case. Compared with the others, though, we got off lightly.”

The starting grid at Hockenheim

- 1 Bruno Spengler (Mercedes), 1m 34.369s
- 2 Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM), 1m 34.446s
- 3 Paul Di Resta (Mercedes), 1m 34.449s
- 4 Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM), 1m 34.601s
- 5 Tom Kristensen (Siemens Audi A4 DTM), 1m 34.681s
- 6 Timo Scheider (GW:plus/Top Service Audi A4 DTM), 1m 34.686s
- 7 Mika Häkkinen (Mercedes), 1m 34.774s
- 8 Daniel La Rosa (Mercedes), 1m 34.869s
- 9 Bernd Schneider (Mercedes), 1m 34.877s
- 10 Alexandros Margaritis (Mercedes), 1m 34.895s
- 11 Mike Rockenfeller (S line Audi A4 DTM), 1m 34.978s
- 12 Susie Stoddart (Mercedes), 1m 35.107s
- 13 Jamie Green (Mercedes), 1m 35.180s
- 14 Gary Paffett (Mercedes), 1m 35.369s
- 15 Christian Abt (Playboy Audi A4 DTM), 1m 35.407s
- 16 Mathias Lauda (Mercedes), 1m 35.411s
- 17 Adam Carroll (Futurecom Audi A4 DTM), 1m 35.466s
- 18 Alexandre Prémat (Audi Bank Audi A4 DTM), 1m 35.507s
- 19 Lucas Luhr (Philips Audi A4 DTM), 1m 35.559s
- 20 Vanina Ickx (Futurecom Audi A4 DTM), 1m 36.691s

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