

Hockenheim, 16 April 2005

Motorsport

Hockenheim as seen by Audi driver Ekström

- **Grand Prix circuit sets stage for DTM season opener**
- **Hairpin offers best opportunity for overtaking**
- **Unique atmosphere at “Motodrome”**

Baden-Württemberg’s Hockenheimring sets the stage for the 2005 DTM season opener. Audi driver Mattias Ekström comments on the 4.574 kilometre Grand Prix circuit and his first race as the DTM Champion.

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How does it feel to come back to Hockenheim as the champion?

Mattias Ekström: “Of course it’s a great feeling to have ‘number one’ on my Audi A4’s livery. But this doesn’t do me a whole lot of good this weekend. All of the 20 drivers are starting into the race with zero points because – unfortunately – there’s no such thing as a champion’s bonus in the DTM ...”

What are the key points for you at Hockenheimring?

Mattias Ekström: “The entrance to the ‘Parabolika’ is important. This is where you need to take the first right-hander in an optimum manner in order to take as much speed as possible with you onto the long straight. If you lose just one kph here, you’ll be short of this one kph on the entire ‘Parabolika’ as well. And that costs a lot of time.”

Where do you see the best opportunities for overtaking?

Mattias Ekström: “Braking into the hairpin is, no doubt, a good point for overtaking – unfortunately, it’s also a good point for being overtaken yourself. Last year, our Audi A4 was very good at passing in the tight ‘Motodrome’ as well.”

What do you expect in the first turn after the start?

Mattias Ekström: “The start in the first race of the year is always something special. There are a few new guys in the field, who still have to get used to the pace in the DTM. But here in Hockenheim this will not create any problems because the asphalted run-off area is very large.”

The grandstands at the 'Motodrome' will be sold out in the race. As a driver, do you even notice this turnout of fans?

Mattias Ekström: "The atmosphere here is unique. Entering the crowded 'Motodrome' after the long and rather lonely straights is a moving experience for every driver. Especially at the end of the formation lap with all the air horns, flags and smoke the atmosphere is overwhelming. That's my idea of an ideal start to the season."

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**Photographs and additional information available on the Internet:
www.audi-motorsport.info (Accreditation necessary)**

The track at Hockenheim (based on the data recording of the Audi A4 DTM)

