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Motorsport

Istanbul Park as seen by Frank Stippler

- **Impressive circuit with different altitudes**
- **Getting to know a new track is no mean feat**
- **Critical left-hand turn immediately after the start**

Only a few weeks after its inauguration, Istanbul Park is regarded as one of the world's most demanding race tracks. The most spectacular circuit has a length of 5.338 kilometres, featuring a mix of high-speed straights and tight cornering combinations. The DTM debut's best time was clocked by Frank Stippler, who drove the fastest lap in the first test session on Friday. The Audi factory driver comments on the circuit located approximately 40 kilometres south-west of the centre of Istanbul.

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How would you describe Istanbul Park?

Frank Stippler: "Considering all of its dimensions, the circuit is definitely impressive and has a very special flair. Particularly thrilling are the big differences in altitudes, which are hardly found any more on other new circuits. However, with its long straights and few corners, which require lots of downforce, Istanbul Park is not exactly a perfect circuit for our 2004-spec Audi A4 DTM."

The DTM is staging its first event at Istanbul. How difficult is it for a driver to familiarise himself with a new race track?

Frank Stippler: "You get to know the track relatively fast. Yet getting to the point of "fine-tuning" does take more than just one practice session. Added to this is the fact that at Istanbul Park there's still plenty of room for making small mistakes even when you know the track well."

What are the crucial places for you at Istanbul?

Frank Stippler: "There's a longer straight here after practically every corner – in other words, each turn is a crucial place. If you don't exit the corner perfectly, you'll be lacking crucial tenths on the straight. And of course Turn 8, with its three different radii, is a tricky place."

Where do you see the best opportunities for overtaking?

Frank Stippler: "In front of Turn 10, there's probably a good opportunity. But in order to pass, you definitely have to be very close to the guy in front."

The first corner after the start is a tight left-hander. Is this a dangerous turn?

Frank Stippler: "No doubt, this is a critical place. You're going downhill, which makes the cars even lighter on the rear axle while you're braking into the corner. Particularly at the start, all the drivers need to handle this situation with extreme caution."

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Istanbul Park (based on the data recording of the Audi A4 DTM)

