

Le Mans, 15 October 2006

## Motorsport

### Le Mans witnesses exciting DTM début

- **Tom Kristensen on podium despite slow start**
- **Martin Tomczyk makes fourth position his own**
- **Timo Scheider scores point in year-old car**

34,000 spectators witnessed the successful début of the DTM around the Circuit Bugatti at Le Mans and yet another thrilling race, in which Tom Kristensen was the best Audi driver. The Dane had put himself in an excellent position, to possibly take the championship fight all the way to the Hockenheim finale on 29 October, after securing a front row slot in qualifying. However, at the start the Dane lost three positions and the title chances as a result. Kristensen fought his way back up to third. Kristensen nevertheless dropped to third overall in the championship standings and is now three points behind Bruno Spengler. Fifth position for Bernd Schneider was enough to win the title with a race to spare.

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Barcelona winner Martin Tomczyk secured fourth place in the 2006 DTM championship standings with one race still to run after finishing a fighting fourth at Le Mans. The youngest Audi factory driver cannot be caught by two-time Formula 1 World Champion Mika Häkkinen, who sits immediately behind Tomczyk in the standings, at the last race at Hockenheim.

Tomczyk worked his way from eighth on the grid to fourth position during the race at Le Mans and successfully repelled the advances of new DTM Champion Bernd Schneider in the closing stages of the race. Timo Scheider as highest placed finisher in a year-old A4 claimed one more point for Audi in eighth position. Christian Abt and Heinz-Harald Frentzen completed the top ten. Frentzen lost a possible points scoring opportunity after an attack from Mercedes driver Jamie Green, who received a “drive through” penalty as a result.

The race for Mattias Ekström and Frank Stippler was already over on the first lap: The two Audi drivers were involved in a spectacular collision in the chicane, which necessitated a safety car period.

## Quotes after the race

**Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport):** “Unfortunately Tom (Kristensen) didn’t make a perfect start. We had to bring him into the pits early for strategic reasons. The two Mercedes’ were able to drive unimpeded at the front for many laps. However, we also didn’t have the basic speed today, which we’d hoped to have. We fought tooth and nail to the end and saw an exciting race. I congratulate Mercedes on winning the championship. We look forward to next year and obviously to the finale at Hockenheim, in which we’ll once again do our utmost.”

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### Tom Kristensen

**Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Siemens Audi A4 DTM #7**

**3rd place, + 12.770s**

“It goes without saying that I’m disappointed that the championship is lost. Congratulations, however, to Bernd (Schneider) who had a fantastic season. My car was very good today. Unfortunately, I didn’t get away well at the start, I had too much wheelspin. So we had to change the strategy and make the first pit stop earlier. However, because of the shorter opening stints I got caught up in traffic, which gave Spengler and Häkkinen the chance to control the race. I had a fantastic fight with Jamie Green and I eventually got the better of him. After such a start third was the best I could do.”

### Martin Tomczyk

**Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Siemens Audi A4 DTM #7**

**4th place, + 23.709s**

“Honestly: our chances for the title were small. We fought but, unfortunately, didn’t make it. Personally, I’m satisfied. My focus was on making Audi’s strategy work out. The chances to do so, though, never materialised, so I drove my race. In the end I was fighting with Bernd (Schneider).”

### Timo Scheider

**Audi Sport Team Rosberg, Gebrauchtswagen:plus Audi A4 DTM #16**

**8th place, + 29.203s**

“My race was pretty good. After the start I managed to move forwards superbly up to the first turn. Finishing with one point is nice but we could have at least scored two. We had a problem at the front left-hand side during the pit stop. Later, the car

lost speed. Apparently, after some hard braking, the rear brake cylinder no longer opened up properly.”

**Christian Abt**

**Audi Sport Team Phoenix, Playboy Audi A4 DTM #12**

**9th place, + 40.180s**

“I’m not happy. I had no grip at the rear. Only on the last six laps things started getting better. We need to analyse the reasons. I seldom had to fight as hard in a race as I did today.”

**Heinz-Harald Frentzen**

**Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Audi A4 DTM #6**

**10th place, + 42.277s**

“There were some interesting fights in this race, but unfortunately I was bumped off by a colleague from another brand and I think that this was a relatively unfair act. The stewards confirmed my opinion and gave him a penalty.”

**Pierre Kaffer**

**Audi Sport Team Phoenix, Castrol Audi A4 DTM #14**

**12th place, + 50.128s**

“I’d expected quite a bit more. In the race we were simply too slow. A positive thing was the fight with Bernd Schneider, which was really good fun. The duel with Jean Alesi towards the end was nice as well. We showed a good team performance in the qualifying.”

**Thed Björk**

**Futurecom TME, Futurecom Audi A4 DTM #19**

**14th place, + 59.708s**

“That was a good experience. I enjoyed every lap and wasn’t very nervous either. When the crash occurred on the first lap I was careful. I did my best but then spun once when Stefan Mücke hit my rear. After that, I tried to maintain the pace.”

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**Vanina Ickx**

**Futurecom TME, Original Zubehör Audi A4 DTM #20**

**16th place, - 2 laps**

“Unfortunately my engine stalled during the start. I was pushed into the pit lane because my car wouldn’t start again. After it was running again I had an uneventful race.”

**Mattias Ekström**

**Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #5**

**Retired (accident)**

“I only got as far as two turns. What happened exactly we need to find out in a video analysis and a few meetings. That’s a disappointing end of this racing event.”

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**Frank Stippler**

**Audi Sport Team Rosberg, S line Audi A4 DTM #15**

**Retired (accident)**

“That was a short race. I got across the elevation quite well and would have passed Bernd (Schneider) and Mattias (Ekström). Suddenly Mattias turned into me at a right angle and we both drove through the grass. Mathias Lauda didn’t see me in a dead angle and crashed into me full force. One can only thank the DTM officials for the fact that the cars are so safe because being hit on the side is the most unfavourable constellation.”

**Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Director Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline):** “We need to analyse why a better result wasn’t possible today. We didn’t really pick up momentum throughout the weekend, and our chance for the title win was only minimal anyhow. Congratulations to Bernd Schneider on winning the Championship.”

**Ernst Moser (Team Director Audi Sport Team Phoenix):** “That’s a sobering result, considering the grid positions. Our pace was too slow. At least, Pierre (Kaffer) was able to keep Bernd Schneider in check for a few laps. Both drivers were not happy with the balance and grip level. One of them complained about understeer, the other about oversteer.”

**Arno Zensen (Team Director Audi Sport Team Rosberg):** “Too bad for Frank (Stippler), because up to his accident things had been looking pretty good. What happened exactly, we need to look at again. Timo (Scheider) drove a very good race. The strategy was good, the second pit stop, unfortunately, wasn’t, otherwise Timo would have gone back out in front of Margaritis and Schneider. There, the team gave away points – sorry, Timo!”

## The result

- 1 Bruno Spengler (Mercedes), 39 laps in 1h 03m 09.292s
  - 2 Mika Häkkinen (Mercedes), + 0.398s
  - 3 Tom Kristensen (Siemens Audi A4 DTM), + 12.770s
  - 4 Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM), + 23.709s
  - 5 Bernd Schneider (Mercedes), + 24.044s
  - 6 Jamie Green (Mercedes), + 24.510s
  - 7 Alexandros Margaritis (Mercedes), + 28.702s
  - 8 Timo Scheider (Gebrauchtwagen:plus Audi A4 DTM), + 29.203s
  - 9 Christian Abt (Playboy Audi A4 DTM), + 40.180s
  - 10 Heinz-Harald Frentzen (Audi A4 DTM), + 42.277s
  - 11 Jean Alesi (Mercedes), + 42.649s
  - 12 Pierre Kaffer (Castrol Audi A4 DTM), + 50.128s
  - 13 Susie Stoddart (Mercedes), + 54.876s
  - 14 Thed Björk (Futurecom Audi A4 DTM), + 59.708s
  - 15 Stefan Mücke (Mercedes), - 1 lap
  - 16 Vanina Ickx (Original Zubehör Audi A4 DTM), - 2 laps
- Not classified:
- Daniel la Rosa (Mercedes), - 32 laps.
- Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM), - 39 laps (accident)
- Frank Stippler (S line Audi A4 DTM), - 39 laps (accident)
- Mathias Lauda (Mercedes), - 39 laps.

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