

Communication Motorsport

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New Audi A4 DTM to meet competitors for the first time

- Three-day official DTM tests at Mugello, Italy
- Champion Ekström competes with Mercedes newcomer Schumacher
- Total of nine Audi drivers prepare for season opener

Ingolstadt – The start to the new DTM season is approaching: since Monday morning all of the drivers from Audi and Mercedes-Benz have been meeting at this year's first official tests, which provide the teams with their first opportunity to assess where they stand. The event in which champion Mattias Ekström will also pit himself against the most prominent DTM newcomer, Ralf Schumacher, is scheduled to last until Wednesday.

For Audi, all nine of the drivers signed so far are taking part in the tests. In addition to the drivers from the past season, the two Audi newcomers Oliver Jarvis and Katherine Legge are experiencing a real DTM feeling for the first time. Audi has taken a total of five Audi A4 DTM cars to Mugello: Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline is using two new vehicles, the squads from Phoenix and Rosberg are each testing a car from last year. The fifth A4 DTM is a test prototype.

"The winter break was long enough. It's a great feeling to be sitting in the racing car again and to not only be seeing four rings but a few stars in the rear-view mirror," says Mattias Ekström with a smile. After internal tests the incumbent DTM champion is now back on the circuit together with the competition from Mercedes-Benz for the first time. "As is customary for Audi Sport, we're going about these tests with one hundred per cent concentration in order to be



optimally prepared by the time the season starts. This is definitely necessary because I'm sure that we'll be seeing a number of nail-biting and extremely tight races again this year."

The very first driver to go out in drizzling rain on wet tarmac shortly after nine a.m. on Monday morning was Audi youngster Mike Rockenfeller. Other drivers taking the wheel on Monday are Alexandre Prémat for Team Phoenix, and Mattias Ekström, Tom Kristensen, Timo Scheider as well as Martin Tomczyk for Abt Sportsline. In the car fielded by the Futurecom squad Katherine Legge will hand over the wheel in the afternoon to Christijan Albers, one of the potential candidates for the private team.

The season to which Audi will start as the title defender of the driver and team classifications will start on 13 April, at Hockenheim, the traditional venue of the season opener. The event will be followed by ten further races, of which five will be staged in Germany and five in other European countries.

Photographs and information can be obtained at www.audi-motorsport.info