

Hockenheim, 21 October 2005

Motorsport

The Hockenheimring as seen by Christian Abt

- **Exciting mix of slow and quick sectors**
- **Good opportunities for overtaking at end of Parabolica**
- **Fans at the “Motodrom” make for a unique atmosphere**

A race weekend could hardly be more thrilling than this: for the first time in the “new” DTM, the fight for the champion’s title between two brands is not decided until the finale at Hockenheim. Before this duel is staged between Audi driver Mattias Ekström and Gary Paffett on Sunday, Christian Abt has had a reason to celebrate since the last race at Istanbul: the driver from Kempten (Bavaria) will finish the season as the best driver of a 2004-spec car. The “champion in a car from last year” comments on the 4.574-kilometre Hockenheimring.

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How would you describe the Hockenheimring?

Christian Abt: “The Hockenheimring offers a thrilling mix of quick sectors, such as the long Parabolica, and the slow Motodrom. From a technical perspective, the circuit is very demanding, which means that you definitely need a perfect set-up to be among the front runners.”

How much of the atmosphere in the sold-out Motodrom do you actually perceive as a driver inside the cockpit ?

Christian Abt: “Unfortunately, you can’t hear all the air horns and the cheering during the race because it’s simply too loud inside the cockpit. Yet while I slowly drive onto the grid, seeing all the flags, banners and the smoke guns fired by the fan clubs, that’s something very special for me every time. There’s no other race track in the world that puts you in closer touch with the fans.”

What are the crucial places for you at Hockenheim?

Christian Abt: “Actually the whole Motodrom is a crucial place. Here, it’s important to handle even the first turn perfectly. Because if you make a mistake here, this tight combination of corners will make you carry it with you all the way through to the start-finish straight.”

Where do you see the best opportunities for overtaking?

Christian Abt: “There are good opportunities in the Sachs corner in the Motodrom, where you can try to pass on the inside. Also, at the end of the Parabolica you can brake as you approach the hairpin. Yet to do that, you need a good top speed or the guy in front of you making a mistake.”

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

Christian Abt: “The first turn is critical indeed, because after the start the field spreads wide and then the cars have to make it through this bottleneck. We’re all well advised to take it easy there to keep things from ending up in the kind of chaos we had at the season opener in April. Fortunately, there’s a large run-off area on the outside, if something should go wrong.”

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At the moment, weather conditions are changing constantly. What kind of weather are you hoping for on race day?

Christian Abt: “Ideally, a dry track so that we can drive the race in the same conditions throughout. And it would be the icing on the cake for the many spectators, who would definitely be witnessing a grand finale in this case.”

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**Photographs, sound bites and additional information to download at:
www.audi-motorsport.info (accreditation necessary)**

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

