

Nuremberg, 17 July 2005

Motorsport

The Norisring as seen by Frank Stippler

- **Overtaking possible only in front of the two hairpins**
- **A balancing act right after the start**
- **Heat will play a crucial role**

Audi is coming to its “home game” at Nuremberg’s Norisring as the leader of the standings. At mid-point in the season, Champion Mattias Ekström has a one-point advantage over his immediate rival, Gary Paffett. Audi’s starting position in front of the impressive turnout of spectators at this venue could hardly be better: on Saturday evening, Audi driver Tom Kristensen captured the pole position in a thrilling qualifying session. Having clinched 13th place, Frank Stippler was the best driver of a 2004-spec Audi A4 DTM. The native of Cologne comments on the pitfalls of the 2.3-kilometre city circuit that appears to be simple, but isn’t.

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Is the Norisring as simple and easy as it appears at first glance ?

Frank Stippler: “No, it certainly isn’t. Added to the two very narrow hairpins is the extreme bumpiness of the track, which at times differs from one metre to the other. The important thing here is to find the optimum surface for braking and accelerating, while taking advantage of the line of rubber that’s been put on the track.”

What are the crucial places for you at the Norisring?

Frank Stippler: “Clearly, it’s the two hairpins. Finding the right braking point, and thus cornering perfectly, is a balancing act. If you don’t manage this, you’ll take all the speed you’ve lost onto the straight with you. This can easily cost three tenths of a second.”

Where do you see the best opportunities for overtaking?

Frank Stippler: “Actually, the only opportunities I see are before the Grundig and the Dutzendteich corners. Yet this is where things will be particularly difficult for the drivers of the 2004-spec cars, because we do lack a bit of top speed for

slipstream braking as we approach these turns. In the Schöller-S, there only seems to be an opportunity for overtaking if the guy in front of you makes a mistake.”

The first corner after the start is a hairpin. Is this a dangerous turn?

Frank Stippler: “The Grundig corner is like any other hairpin: four cars are approaching the turn alongside each other, yet there’s room for only one – or two at most – at a time. Handling this situation is a balancing act: of course you can never make up as many places at once as you can at the start. But if you damage your car bumping into someone else you really haven’t gained a thing.”

The weather forecast is predicting temperatures above 30 degrees again. How important is heat in the race?

Frank Stippler: “It’s certainly a crucial factor. During the race, cockpit temperatures rise to almost 70 degrees, which impairs concentration severely. There’s no cold, fresh air, and even the litre of water in your drinking bottle is warm after two laps. It’s like riding a bicycle in a sauna.”

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

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

