

Communications Motorsport

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Tom Kristensen with Audi on pole at Le Mans

- **Second pole position of the season for Tom Kristensen**
- **Seventh best qualifying time for Audi in the 2008 season**
- **DTM leader Timo Scheider starts from position five**

Ingolstadt/Le Mans – After qualifying, Audi factory driver Tom Kristensen, the record winner of the 24 Hours of Le Mans with eight wins under his belt, is also at the very front of the DTM grid in France. At the “Circuit Bugatti”, the Dane in the Audi A4 DTM secured the pole position in front of Jamie Green (Mercedes) with a lead of eight hundredths of a second. The next position is occupied by Audi team-mate Mattias Ekström. The leader of the standings, Timo Scheider, achieved fifth place on the grid in his Audi A4 DTM, and will thus be going into the race directly behind his immediate championship rival Paul di Resta (Mercedes).

Audi has every reason to be delighted: for as much as the seventh time in the current season a new Audi A4 DTM will be starting from the pole position, for the second time it will be Tom Kristensen, who was last sitting on pole at the Nürburgring. For him, this is a particularly fitting “place of success”: after eight victories at the 24-Hour Race at the same venue – most recently in June 2008 with Audi – the Dane is regarded as “Mister Le Mans”. With his lap of 1m 30.149s, Kristensen established a new track record, approximately three tenths below the previous time clocked in 2006, although the circuit has since been extended by five metres. For Kristensen, it was the seventh pole position in his DTM career.

One row behind him, from position three, Mattias Ekström will start in another Audi A4 DTM to the DTM's penultimate race of the season on Sunday. After position one at Zandvort and two at Hockenheim, this marks the Swede's third-best qualifying result this year.

In the title fight a particularly thrilling constellation has emerged: Timo Scheider, who leads the standings with a seven-point advantage, achieved fifth place on the grid as the third-best Audi driver at Le Mans. He is separated by merely 166 thousandths of a second from the fourth-placed driver on the grid, Paul di Resta, who is his immediate rival for the title. Martin Tomczyk in the fourth Audi A4 DTM of Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, who had been heading the time sheets as late as in the second qualifying section, ultimately finished in eighth place.

For the ninth time this season, the best result of a year-old car goes to Ingolstadt: as before at Barcelona, Mike Rockenfeller from Audi Sport Team Rosberg was the best driver of a "used car". The German finished ninth. He is followed on the grid by three other drivers of an Audi A4 DTM, Oliver Jarvis, Alexandre Prémat and Markus Winkelhock.

In addition to the fight for victory and the duel for the title, fans can expect track conditions that are likely to add further suspense: for race Sunday, rain has been forecast at Le Mans. The race, previously extended from 40 to 43 laps, will be broadcast live from France by ARD on "Das Erste" starting at 1:45 (CEST). As usual, background reports and highlights will be offered by Audi.tv on the Internet.

Quotes after qualifying

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): "I'm very happy about Tom's pole position here at his second home, Le Mans, where he obviously feels very comfortable. It was a very close qualifying with Timo on position five and his championship rival Paul di Resta on position four. So, the two are standing directly together and have been setting very similar times all weekend. That's why I'm sure that we'll be seeing a gripping race tomorrow."



Tom Kristensen (Audi A4 DTM #9): "I'm happy with the pole position, which would have already been possible at Barcelona. In qualifying, things were very close, but I squeezed every bit of potential out of my Audi A4 in order to set the quickest time. It's always nice to come back here, to Le Mans, even though – except for the pit lane and the first chicane – this track has very little in common with the circuit at the 24-Hour Race. Of course, tomorrow it'll also be about the championship for Audi and Timo. The best way to help him will be to snatch as many points from our rivals as possible."

Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #1): "I'm satisfied. I consistently improved during qualifying. My weekend here at Le Mans has been great so far, although I've got a nasty cold. I'm standing on the second row, Tom is on pole, and Timo is at the front of the grid as well. It'll be an exciting Sunday."

Timo Scheider (GW:plus/Top Service Audi A4 DTM #10): "Fifth place on the grid is definitely not perfect, but even in practice things weren't going all that well here. Still, we managed to consistently improve the car, so the gap to the front is smaller than expected. With Tom on position one, 'Eki' on three and Paul di Resta directly in front of me, my starting base for the race is not as bad as fifth place might look at first glance."

Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #2): "From my perspective, things were going really well up to the last qualifying. I got along well. In the last qualifying segment I made a mistake on the first lap on both sets of tyres. That's strictly my mistake. I'm really upset. I've never made such a mistake on the fastest lap twice in a row. I wanted to be at the very front, so I took a slightly higher risk. For me, individual results count but this, unfortunately, backfired on me."

Mike Rockenfeller (S line Audi A4 DTM #18): "I'm happy that by finishing ninth I've been the best driver of a year-old car in qualifying for the second time after Barcelona. I'm also happy for the team."



Oliver Jarvis (Best Buddies Audi A4 DTM #15): "That was a good qualifying even though I dropped to tenth place. I think that the ninth place clinched by 'Rocky' was the maximum in the 2007-spec car today."

Alexandre Prémat (Audi Bank/Shell Helix Audi A4 DTM #14): "It wasn't an easy qualifying because all 2007-spec Audi cars were very close together. My eleventh place is not a bad starting base particularly since we should have a good set-up for the race. Of course there's still a question mark behind the weather."

Markus Winkelhock (Playboy Audi A4 DTM #19): "The qualifying started well, I was half a second faster than the other 2007-spec Audi cars in the first section. In the second session I had no more grip on the rear wheels, like at Barcelona. We'll analyse why that was the case."

Christijan Albers (Audi A4 DTM #21): "We tried to achieve the maximum. We could have driven a little faster yet, but on the last lap Jamie Green was driving in front of me. I'm not that far behind the 2007-spec cars. So, it's okay."

Katherine Legge (Audi A4 DTM #20): "I'm a bit disappointed because I'd been hoping to make it into the second qualifying. But I had steering problems. C'est la vie. Now I'm hoping that things will be going better tomorrow."

Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Director Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline): "A mixed grid to be sure, but pole is pole. We're very proud that our Le Mans legend Tom Kristensen of all people is on position one. It'll probably be an interesting race on Sunday."

Ernst Moser (Team Director Audi Sport Team Phoenix): "Predictions said that it would be difficult for us here to finish among the top eight. Unfortunately, the outcome confirmed that nobody was able to compete with the new cars. Our performance was good. Oliver was really quick, together with Mike Rockenfeller. Things between places nine and ten were very close. We can be satisfied because none of the Mercedes cars from last year had any part in the action at the front of the field."



Arno Zensen (Team Director Audi Sport Team Rosberg): “‘Rocky’ was quick throughout the weekend and then concentrated his good performance in the qualifying. Congratulations to him on being the best driver of a year-old car yet again. Markus was very quick in the first session, but in the second one he made a small mistake on the first set of tyres. Consequently, he was only able to drive one fast lap on the next set, otherwise a better result would probably have been possible for him as well.”

The starting grid at Le Mans

- 1 Tom Kristensen (Audi A4 DTM) 1m 30.149s
- 2 Jamie Green (Mercedes) 1m 30.229s
- 3 Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM) 1m 30.245s
- 4 Paul di Resta (Mercedes) 1m 30.379s
- 5 Timo Scheider (GW:plus/Top Service Audi A4 DTM) 1m 30.545s
- 6 Bernd Schneider (Mercedes) 1m 30.619s
- 7 Bruno Spengler (Mercedes) 1m 30.765s
- 8 Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM) 1m 31.181s
- 9 Mike Rockenfeller (S line Audi A4 DTM) 1m 31.030s
- 10 Oliver Jarvis (Best Buddies Audi A4 DTM) 1m 31.170s
- 11 Alexandre Prémat (Audi Bank/Shell Helix Audi A4 DTM) 1m 31.422s
- 12 Markus Winkelhock (Playboy Audi A4 DTM) 1m 31.438s
- 13 Maro Engel (Mercedes) 1m 31.473s
- 14 Christijan Albers (Audi A4 DTM) 1m 31.585s
- 15 Susie Stoddart (Mercedes) 1m 32.029s
- 16 Gary Paffett (Mercedes) 1m 32.276s
- 17 Katherine Legge (Audi A4 DTM) 1m 32.410s
- 18 Mathias Lauda (Mercedes) 1m 32.722s
- 19 Ralf Schumacher (Mercedes) 1m 33.221s

- Ends -

Photographs and information available at www.audi-motorsport.info

AUDI AG sold a total of 964,151 cars in 2007 and thus achieved its twelfth consecutive record year. With revenue of € 33,617 million and profit before tax of € 2,915 million, the company attained its best figures ever. Audi produces vehicles in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Changchun (China) and Brussels (Belgium). At the end of 2007, production of the Audi A6 started in Aurangabad, India. The company is active in more than 100 markets worldwide. AUDI AG's wholly owned subsidiaries include Automobili Lamborghini Holding S.p.A. in Sant'Agata Bolognese, Italy, and quattro GmbH in Neckarsulm. Audi employs about 57,000 people worldwide, including 45,000 in Germany. The brand with the four rings invests more than €2 billion each year in order to sustain the company's technological lead embodied in its “Vorsprung durch Technik” slogan. Audi plans to significantly increase the number of models in its portfolio by 2015 to 40.