



## Press Information

Zandvoort, 4 September 2004

### Zandvoort as seen by Mattias Ekström

Before the DTM away race on the North Sea coast, Audi driver Mattias Ekström is heading the drivers' standings with a nine-point lead. To the Swede, the demanding track amidst the dunes of Zandvoort brings back particularly good memories: in 2002, this was the venue at which Ekström celebrated his first DTM victory, followed by another podium position in last year's race. The 26-year old shooting star comments on the Zandvoort circuit:

#### **What is it that makes this circuit so particularly fascinating?**

**Mattias Ekström:** "Zandvoort is unpredictable. The circuit has many corners, few straights and lots of quick points. And it has the two most beautiful corners on the whole DTM calendar: the fourth and the last turn before the start-finish straight. The level of grip at Zandvoort is lower than anywhere else."

#### **What memories do you associate with Zandvoort?**

**Mattias Ekström:** "To be honest, whenever I come to Zandvoort, I must think of Laurent (Aiello). I'll never forget the moment of celebrating his title victory on the roof of his car two years ago. At that point, even Laurent – who's normally so cool – had more than one tear rolling down his cheeks."

#### **What role does the sand on the track play?**

**Mattias Ekström:** "During the test sessions on Friday, I sometimes have the feeling of sitting in a road-sweeper, as veritable clouds of sand are being whirled up. On top of that, the asphalt is very rough – and that's really hard on the tyres."

#### **Where does Zandvoort offer opportunities for overtaking?**

**Mattias Ekström:** "In the past few years, the tight turn before the bend leading to the finish line used to be the most thrilling point. That's where I overtook Manuel Reuter and Jean Alesi last year. I'm afraid the friendship between myself and my French fellow driver may have suffered a bit from this incident as well... But now, they've put up a stack of tyres there, so the fun is over. I think that, now, overtaking will be possible primarily in the two slow corners on the infield."

#### **"Tarzanbocht", the first corner after the start, is notorious for trouble. How will the start go off?**

**Mattias Ekström:** "I'm sure there won't be any problems at the start if everyone acts sensibly. As far as I'm concerned, of course I'm hoping that I'll be able to manage a better start than last year. At that time, I unfortunately stalled by engine – actually, though, that was merely an act of solidarity with my teammate Martin Tomczyk, who was standing in front of me with a similar problem."

Find a strip map with shifting points and speeds, photos and further information overleaf and on the Internet:

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# Circuit Park Zandvoort (based on the data recording of the Audi A4 DTM)

