



Press Information

Shanghai, 18 July 2004

Audi achieves podium result in China

Mattias Ekström finished third in the DTM invitation race in Shanghai (China), giving Audi another podium result. Starting from ninth position in his Audi A4 DTM in a gruelling heat of almost 40 degrees Celsius, the Swede proved that the new street circuit in the centre of China's boom town allows overtaking. Impressive was also Rinaldo Capello's DTM debut: The Italian moved to third place with a great start and eventually finished fifth despite paper had blocked the air intakes of his Audi A4 DTM. As a consequence, the brakes overheated while Capello did not get any more fresh air into the cockpit. A similar problem caused Frank Biela to pit. Peter Terting finished a strong eleventh at his DTM comeback in a 2003 Abt-Audi TT-R.

Audi lost the chance of winning in Shanghai due to collisions on the opening lap which caused the retirement of the fastest three Audi A4 DTM cars. Tom Kristensen was touched from behind and spun into the car of his team-mate Martin Tomczyk at the first corner. Emanuele Pirro was pushed into the wall while fighting for second position one corner later. Christian Abt also retired after an accident.

Due to an incident that happened at the first start, only one of the two races scheduled in Shanghai were held. Works on the track delayed the start until almost 6 p.m. local time.

Quotes after the race

Mattias Ekström (Audi Sport Team Abt / Audi A4 DTM #5)

3rd place, + 13.228s

"I think it was a great show for the spectators. There was a lot of action especially in the first lap. Despite being faster than the drivers in front of me I had to wait for mistakes of them because it is so difficult to overtake here. Dindo (Capello) was very gentle. He did not block me when I was catching him. Alesi fortunately made a mistake. It was quite a nice feeling to give my French friend a little lesson."

Rinaldo Capello (Audi Sport Infineon Team Joest / Audi A4 DTM #22)

5th place, + 32.756s

"Finishing fifth in my DTM debut race makes me feel really happy. I could not expect more. In the beginning, I was even third, but my front brakes overheated because the air intakes were blocked by paper. I let Mattias (Ekström) pass but tried everything to keep Albers behind despite the problems."

Peter Terting (Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline / Abt-Audi TT-R #23)

11th place, - 1 lap

"It's quite a good result to finish 11th in last year's car at my DTM comeback after such a long break. An even better result would have been possible if I had not been sent into a spin at the hairpin. This cost me various places."

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Frank Biela (Audi Sport Infineon Team Joest / Audi A4 DTM #45)

13th place, - 1 lap

"Things went well before the brakes started to overheat. A bag had blocked the air intakes. I had to come to the pits to remove the bag. After this the car was running fine again."

Christian Abt (Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline / Audi A4 DTM #11)

Retired (accident)

"I have to say sorry to the team, this accident was my fault. When I tried to pass Janis, I lost the grip at the rear and touched the wall."

Tom Kristensen (Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline / Audi A4 DTM #12)

Retired (accident)

"My start was better than Alesi's and I was ahead of him. Turning into the corner I got a knock on my right rear which sent me into a wild spin in front of everybody. I would like to review the situation, but I don't think it was my fault."

Martin Tomczyk (Audi Sport Team Abt / Audi A4 DTM #6)

Retired (accident)

"I had a good start and passed two cars before the first corner. I left many space on the inside because I expected somebody to be there. Despite that I got touched in the right rear and spun. I will forget about Shanghai and look forward to Nürburgring."

Emanuele Pirro (Audi Sport Infineon Team Joest / Audi A4 DTM #44)

Retired (accident)

"I feel very sorry for the team and Audi. We had the potential to do a good race but the three quickest Audis were eliminated on the first lap. I drove around the accident at the first corner. Then I was side by side with the second placed car going into the next corner. Unfortunately he pushed me on the dirty part of the track and I was out."

Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Director Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline): "First of all congratulation to Mattias who once again showed a strong performance and gave our team a good result in the 'Shanghai adventure'. Of course you can't be satisfied when you lose three cars in a race. We got in trouble with two cars right after the start. But that's how street circuits are: The smallest touch can mean the end of your race."

Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Infineon Team Joest): "Dindo drove a great races and could have finished his DTM debut even on the podium if the air intakes of his brakes had not been blocked. Frank was also running well before he had a similar problem. Of course it was a real shame that Emanuele's race was over as early as at the second corner."

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Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): "Shanghai has created a great stage for the DTM in a very short time. The race, however, naturally was not like we wanted it to be. We lost our fastest three cars, which had started well and were running in good positions, on the very first lap. That's why we could not achieve much in the end. Mattias once more made the best out of the situation fighting his way to third position."

Find photos and further information on the internet:
www.audi-sportpress.com (Accreditation required)

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