

Barcelona, 23 September 2006

Motorsport

Audi dominates qualifying at Barcelona

- **Audi in the rain quicker than Mercedes**
- **Three Audi A4 DTM cars on the first three grid positions**
- **Tomczyk and Frentzen on row one**

With a commanding qualifying performance in the rain Audi secured the top three positions on the grid for the first DTM race in Spain at Barcelona. In difficult conditions Martin Tomczyk (24) in the Red Bull Audi A4 DTM took the fourth pole position in his DTM career – the first since Hockenheim in October 2004. Heinz-Harald Frentzen, for the first time since joining Audi, will start from the front row of the grid. Tom Kristensen, coming third, was quicker, as well, than Bernd Schneider in the best Mercedes. Mattias Ekström will start the race immediately behind the leader of the standings from the third row.

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Following heavy rainfall the three-part “shoot out” for the pole position took place on a wet and slippery track where the right use of rain tyres was crucial. This was best managed by Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline which made it into the last section of the top eight with all four Audi A4 DTM cars.

Another strong performance was shown by Frank Stippler from Audi Sport Team Rosberg. After setting the best time in the 2005-spec A4 in the morning’s free practice session he finished seventh to achieve his best qualifying result so far this season. Team-mate Timo Scheider – coming ninth – missed the top eight by merely 39 thousandths of a second.

A surprise was managed by Vanina Ickx in the 2004-spec Audi A4 DTM of customer team Futurecom TME, who claimed the 14th grid position on the slippery tarmac, leaving behind – among others – the double winner in this season, Bruno Spengler in a Mercedes.

Six Audi A4 DTM cars on the first four rows of the grid give Audi an optimum starting base for achieving their fourth victory this season in the prestigious duel against Mercedes and further reducing the gap to current DTM leader Bernd

Schneider. The race is scheduled to start at 2:00 p.m. local time, ARD will start to broadcast live from Barcelona on “Das Erste” starting at 1:45 p.m..

Quotes after qualifying

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “Of course I’m very satisfied with this qualifying performance. Since the race in Turkey last year we had something like a small ‘rain trauma’. But today we managed to establish an outstanding starting base for ourselves as a result of hard work. I’m very proud of my boys. Today we had to make a lot of decisions, and very crucial ones at that, in a very short frame of time – all this has worked out very well. I’m also happy about ‘Stippi’ having shown a good performance today. That Vanina (Ickx) made it into the second session was a great achievement, as well, which she can be proud of.”

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Martin Tomczyk

Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #4

1st place, 1m 14.764s / 1m 14.345s / 1m 13.900s

“It’s been a while since I took my last pole, so I’m all the more delighted. Things couldn’t have gone a lot better for us today than they did. My team had a large part in today’s pole position because we tried out lots of different approaches during the practice sessions, with tyre pressure, for example. This hard work has paid off, and it has shown, yet again, how important teamwork is. We’ve got the right starting base, now we want to make the most of it tomorrow.”

Heinz-Harald Frentzen

Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Veltins Audi A4 DTM #6

2nd place, 1m 14.417 / 1m 13.946s / 1m 13.967s

“Everything went well and smoothly. In the last outing I tried to improve once more but I couldn’t pick up any more speed. Martin was a tiny bit quicker – my congratulations to him on clinching pole. But I’m very satisfied with second place, as well. For the first time, I’m on the front row with Audi.”

Tom Kristensen

Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Siemens Audi A4 DTM #7

3rd place, 1m 14.661s / 1m 14.193s / 1m 14.064s

“We knew it would be raining in the beginning but that there’d be less rain after a while. That’s why we had to be very careful to keep the tyres from overheating. It was a real qualifying thriller, which was very strenuous both on the track and in the pits. The right tyre pressure and the optimum time to go out were crucial. I’m satisfied. Congratulations to Martin and Heinz-Harald on places one and two. Together with myself on third, this is a dream result for Audi.”

Mattias Ekström

Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #5

6th place, 1m 14.794s / 1m 14.459s / 1m 14.266s

“The qualifying was very tough. Between the different trials we made a few more changes to the car to improve handling. I’m happy to have made it into the third qualifying session. Of course sixth place isn’t satisfactory but it’s good that so many Audi drivers are in front.”

Frank Stippler

Audi Sport Team Rosberg, S line Audi A4 DTM #15

7th place, 1m 15.008s / 1m 14.407s / 1m 14.308s

“The positive development could be seen throughout the weekend, and this morning I was even the quickest in free practice. What counted was perfect timing regarding the tyres. On the first set it was very difficult for me to qualify for the next section. On the next two sets, things were going better. Today I learned another lesson about how to handle wets in qualifying.”

Timo Scheider

Audi Sport Team Rosberg, Gebrauchtwagen plus Audi A4 DTM #16

9th place, 1m 14.667s / 1m 14.686s

“Basically, I feel pretty much at ease because in the morning during free practice we were somewhat disconcerted with the conditions. In the first qualifying section we noticed that on the second set of tyres we had a clearly better car. That’s why we continued driving on this set. Perhaps we should have changed tyres once more because on the last three laps the track dried off further and the tyre had used up its whole potential.”

Pierre Kaffer

Audi Sport Team Phoenix, Castrol Audi A4 DTM #14

12th place, 1m 14.833s / 1m 15.006s

“First, I’m happy about Audi’s first row on the grid and – also – that Tom (Kristensen) is in front of Bernd Schneider. My team and I had a hard time in the rain yesterday. I can’t be satisfied with my twelfth place. In the second round of the qualifying our timing wasn’t quite up to par.”

Vanina Ickx

Futurecom TME, Original Zubehör Audi A4 DTM #20

14th place, 1m 15.069s / 1m 15.278s

“I think today we can open a bottle of champagne! It’s a great feeling having made it into the second qualifying session – I really can’t say exactly how I did it... Now I’m hoping to manage a good start again and to maintain my position in case it rains in the race as well.”

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Nicolas Kiesa

Futurecom TME, Futurecom Audi A4 DTM #19

15th place, 1m 15.167s

“After my previous practice sessions had been good, unfortunately I again didn’t achieve what was possible in the qualifying. I didn’t manage a good lap because the car felt completely different on the second set of tyres.”

Christian Abt

Audi Sport Team Phoenix, Playboy Audi A4 DTM #12

16th place, 1m 15.263s

“My result isn’t all that thrilling. We had higher expectations for this weekend. In the dry things were going well but in the wet we never managed to set a really good time. Now we’re hoping for a dry Sunday. Too bad that I was slowed a bit by Stefan Mücke, otherwise we might have finished in the top 14.”

Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Director Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline): “Well done to the whole team which has shown a great performance. I’m proud that particularly in the hot final phase of the Championship we were able today to give everyone a foretaste of our capabilities – and in the rain at that. This hadn’t been our great strength in the past.”

Ernst Moser (Team Director Audi Sport Team Phoenix): “Unfortunately we weren’t able to improve compared with yesterday. Although we received a lot of information from the other teams we weren’t able to apply it properly together with our drivers. We still don’t have a complete grasp on the reasons why things aren’t working for us in the rain at all. Looking at the others, you can see that it can work. Now we need to continue to analyse the situation.”

Arno Zensen (Team Director Audi Sport Team Rosberg): “I’ve always said that Frank Stippler knows how to drive and finally he’s had the chance to prove it again. Even the best time he set in the morning was sensational. Maybe on the last trial he was too hard on his tyres but even so we can be happy with his result. Timo (Scheider) missed the last qualifying section just barely. We’re now on places seven and nine – I think that’s quite alright.”

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Photographs, sound bites and additional information on the Internet:
www.audi-motorsport.info (Accreditation necessary)

The starting grid at Barcelona

- 1 Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM), 1m 13.900s
- 2 Heinz-Harald Frentzen (Veltins Audi A4 DTM), 1m 13.967s
- 3 Tom Kristensen (Siemens Audi A4 DTM), 1m 14.064s
- 4 Bernd Schneider (Mercedes), 1m 14.132s
- 5 Mika Häkkinen (Mercedes), 1m 14.157s
- 6 Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM), 1m 14.266s
- 7 Frank Stippler (S line Audi A4 DTM), 1m 14.308s
- 8 Alexandros Margaritis (Mercedes), 1m 14.883s
- 9 Timo Scheider (Gebrauchtwagen:plus Audi A4 DTM), 1m 14.686s
- 10 Mathias Lauda (Mercedes), 1m 14.750s
- 11 Jean Alesi (Mercedes), 1m 14.882s
- 12 Pierre Kaffer (Audi A4 DTM), 1m 15.006s
- 13 Jamie Green (Mercedes), 1m 15.057s
- 14 Vanina Ickx (Original Teile Audi A4 DTM), 1m 15.278s
- 15 Nicolas Kiesa (Futurecom Audi A4 DTM), 1m 15.167s
- 16 Christian Abt (Playboy Audi A4 DTM), 1m 15.263s
- 17 Daniel la Rosa (Mercedes), 1m 15.266s
- 18 Stefan Mücke (Mercedes), 1m 15.277s
- 19 Bruno Spengler (Mercedes), 1m 15.324s
- 20 Susie Stoddart (Mercedes), 1m 15.407s

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