

EuroSpeedway, 28 April 2006

Motorsport

Audi driver Ekström fastest twice

- **Best time at EuroSpeedway in the rain**
- **Quickest Audi driver on dry track as well**
- **Vanina Ickx best driver of a 2004-spec car**

Two of the last three DTM races Audi driver Mattias Ekström won at the EuroSpeedway – the fact that he would like to add another victory to this string in the “Lausitz” on Sunday the Swede suggested in the two tests on Friday: in pouring rain in the morning, Ekström at the wheel of the Red Bull Audi A4 DTM clocked the fastest time (1m 35.432s) by far. In the afternoon, the 2004 DTM Champion finished in third place, being again the fastest Audi driver.

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In the rainy first test a total of four Audi A4 DTM cars were at the front of the field. As the track was drying off in the afternoon the places kept changing, with the best times being clocked just before the end of the practice session.

A remarkable performance was shown by Vanina Ickx: On the circuit that was new to her, the Belgian was the quickest driver of a 2004-spec car in the second test.

The forecast has predicted a continuation of the changing weather conditions in the Lausitz. This promises an even greater thrill for the shoot-out qualifying. ARD will broadcast the fight for the pole position live on “Das Erste” on Saturday starting at 1:35 p.m. (local time).

Quotes after Friday's tests

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “After the rain in the morning, the track was completely dry at the end of the second section. Still, the grip was not the same as it would have been with two complete sections being driven in dry conditions all the way through. Today we saw how the cars respond. Since we have to anticipate changing conditions for the remainder of the weekend, this may have been a useful experience.”

Mattias Ekström**Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #5****1st place / 3rd place, 1m 17.960s**

“It was a good test day for us. In the rain we quickly found a good set-up for the race with which I was comfortable immediately. In the dry conditions in the afternoon we didn’t have a lot of time any more to sort everything. Yet one thing is clear: we have to – and we will – improve to beat Mercedes here.”

Tom Kristensen**Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Siemens Audi A4 DTM #7****8th place / 9th place, 1m 18.330s**

“I can hardly remember ever having driven on a circuit with so little grip as the wet EuroSpeedway this morning. When the track dried off in the afternoon, I was very satisfied with my A4. I drove good times on slicks although this didn’t include a perfect lap. I also had a decent long-run. So we’re on the right track for the race.”

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Pierre Kaffer**Audi Sport Team Phoenix, Castrol Audi A4 DTM #14****6th place / 13th place, 1m 18.715s**

“It was interesting to drive the new car in the rain for the first time. I got along quite well. In dry conditions, too, we’re heading in the right direction. In the end, when everyone was out on new tyres, we tried something which, unfortunately, didn’t work. Sometimes you need to venture onto new territory to get ahead.”

Martin Tomczyk**Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #4****4th place / 8th place, 1m 18.281s**

“This morning we had constantly wet conditions with which I got along well. In the dry we tried to come up with a somewhat decent set-up as soon as possible. On the news, though, they’ve predicted a wet weekend.”

Frank Stippler**Audi Sport Team Rosberg, S line Audi A4 DTM #15****3rd place / 10th place, 1m 18.340s**

“Altogether, my day was positive. In the rain, coming third in the morning, was quite good. In the dry, we found ourselves further towards the back, as I’d expected. We’re going to continue fighting. To fourth place, only two tenths are

missing, and there are similar gaps towards the back. This will be a really tough job.”

Heinz-Harald Frentzen

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

10th place / 11th place, 1m 18.527s

“This was a day with lots of variety. Today I drove the Audi A4 DTM in the rain for the first time and gathered a great deal of valuable experience. That’s why I wouldn’t have minded if the wet conditions had continued a bit longer, allowing us to sort more things yet. But even this way we now have plenty of data and a lot of work to do to analyse and apply it.”

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Timo Scheider

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

2nd place / 12th place, 1m 18.559s

“Basically speaking, I’ve had a pretty positive day. Today I drove the Audi in the rain for the first time, and I don’t know the current circuit variant very well yet either. In dry conditions, we changed the set-up from one extreme to the other. This approach didn’t pay off, though, because I wasn’t able to feel the effect of new tyres.”

Vanina Ickx

Futurecom TME, Original Zubehör Audi A4 DTM #20

19th place / 16th place, 1m 19.487s

“This morning I had lots of fun in the wet, even though my lap times weren’t that great. It was helpful to learn more about the car and to develop a feeling for how it handles in the rain. This afternoon it took a while to get up to speed. In the end, though, I drove quite a decent time. I hope that I’ll be able to continue from there tomorrow.”

Christian Abt

Audi Sport Team Phoenix, Playboy Audi A4 DTM #12

15th place / 18th place, 1m 19.954s

“This Friday has been one of the worst in my entire career. Now we need to make the best of the few laps we got to drive. The positive thing is that the car feels just as good as it did at Hockenheim. My time in the afternoon was driven without third gear.”

Olivier Tielemans**Futurecom TME, Futurecom Audi A4 DTM #19****20th place / 19th place, 1m 20.341s**

“The beginning was rather difficult. Never before have I driven a touring car in the rain. Even with a formula car I haven’t been out in the rain for a long time. First I had to understand how the car responds. Fortunately, the afternoon was drier, I was able to try a few things and kept getting faster and faster.”

Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Director Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline): “Our mechanics had a strenuous day of work today because they had to change the set-up of our cars completely from rainy to dry conditions. In spite of this we tried to work our way through our entire programme in order to be prepared as best we can for any contingency this weekend.”

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Ernst Moser (Team Director Audi Sport Team Phoenix): “Pierre’s day was pretty good. We found a good set-up in the rain. In dry conditions, things went well too. Why he wasn’t able to improve in the end on new tyres we need to analyse. With Christian, nearly everything went wrong. Twice he had a gearbox problem, once he got off the track when he was on a fast lap. That incident damaged a few things.”

Arno Zensen (Team Director Audi Sport Team Rosberg): “As we were able to see this morning, rain seems to suit as well. On the other hand, I’m not unhappy at all after the test in the dry. Frank Stippler wasn’t even able to show what was possible on his last set of tyres, because he didn’t have a free lap. With Timo there’s also some more potential as the incredibly narrow time gaps have shown.”

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