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Motorsport

Audi driver Mattias Ekström about Hockenheim

- **Traditional scene of DTM opener**
- **Hockenheim holds DTM spectator record**
- **Maximum speed and traction are of premium importance**

Hockenheim has been the scene of both the opening and final rounds of the most popular international touring car series since the 2000 season. Audi factory driver Mattias Ekström talks about the 4.574 kilometre circuit on which the first DTM race of 2007 is held this coming weekend.

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What's so unique about the Hockenheim circuit?

"Hockenheim is always interesting. It is a big challenge to find the correct set-up. We have, on one hand, extremely high top-speeds, and on the other you need good traction out of the slower corners. We only really go head-to-head with the opposition for the first time each year there after the tests – and in October again for the last time."

How would you describe the now legendary atmosphere at Hockenheim?

"The atmosphere is something very special. The grandstands are packed out. Such a backdrop sends shivers down anybody's spine. In April 2006, 104,000 spectators showed up and in October an incredible 149,000. That was a new record for the DTM. Even when the paddock is full to bursting I still enjoy it, and love to give lots of autographs."

Where can the spectators expect to see the best overtaking manoeuvres during the opening race?

"I hope that our car is a little faster this year than the Mercedes giving us better chances of also overtaking on the straight. Essentially, there are good opportunities to overtake entering the second corner and at the end of the long 'Parabolika' straight leading to the hairpin."

Hockenheim is the only circuit traditionally used twice a year – does this help a driver?

“From the practical point of view it doesn’t really help us that we compete on the same circuit twice. The car is always developed in such a way during the season that the data from April is of little meaning in October.”

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

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