



Press Information

Hockenheim, 18 April 2004

Audi scores podium result at DTM comeback

118,000 spectators witnessed a good DTM debut for the Audi factory team: The Swede Mattias Ekström brought the Audi A4 DTM home on the podium in its first ever race. With Tom Kristensen (4th), Martin Tomczyk (5th) and Emanuele Pirro (7th), three further Audi drivers finished in the points. Audi was the only manufacturer to score points in the DTM season opener with four cars. Christian Abt and Frank Biela had no such luck when being involved in a collision on the opening lap of the race. While Abt retired, Biela was able to complete the race after changing the front bonnet.

Quotes after the race

Mattias Ekström (Audi Sport Team Abt / Audi A4 DTM #5)
3rd (+ 9.200s)

“Everybody speaks about the battle between the young guns and the old hands – now the score is 1:0 for the young guns. I am also happy for Audi: Finishing the first race as a factory team on the podium is a good achievement. We must become a little faster, but I am sure that is something we can achieve by doing our homework. The race was really hard especially at the beginning. Everybody was fighting for positions.”

Tom Kristensen (Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline / Audi A4 DTM #12)
4th (+ 11.798s)

“Unfortunately I lost the winglets on the left side of the rear when I was hit early on in the race. The balance of the car was affected, I had problems turning into right-hand corners – and there are a lot of them at Hockenheim. I lifted twice not to take any risks on my team mate Martin Tomczyk. The second time I had to let Mattias by. Compliments to my pit-crew: Both pit-stops were great.”

Martin Tomczyk (Audi Sport Team Abt / Audi A4 DTM #6)
5th (+ 13.836s)

“I am very satisfied with my fifth place in spite of losing a place to Tom due to the pit-stop strategy. I wanted to come to the pits earlier, but unfortunately that did not work out because the radio didn't work. Because of this I dropped behind Tom.”

Emanuele Pirro (Audi Sport Infineon Team Joest / Audi A4 DTM #44)
7th (+ 43.364s)

“I achieved my targets: I finished the race and scored points although it did not look like that after the start. First gear jumped out, therefore I dropped way back. The car was great throughout the entire race, so I could work my way up to seventh place.”

Frank Biela (Audi Sport Infineon Team Joest / Audi A4 DTM #45)
16th (- 1 lap)

“For me the race was as disappointing as qualifying. For the first-lap collision nobody was actually to blame for. Of course it was a shame, because today a

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point would have been possible. At least I could finish the race and see what happens to the car over a race distance. I hope that will help me next time.”

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

“I was pushed from behind on the first lap and consequently touched the car in front. The collision resulted in a puncture and strong vibrations – it was impossible to continue the race. Of course I am disappointed, because the first race is always particularly important.”

Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Director Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline): “I am proud of my team; they worked hard over the last weeks. Particularly here at Hockenheim many things were new which we had to get used to. In spite of that, the cars were perfectly prepared, all pit stops worked smoothly, and we collected our first trophy. This is a good basis on which we will continue our work.”

Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Infineon Team Joest): “A seventh place is not what we are used to from the previous years. But faced with the fact that it was our first race in the new DTM and starting from 13th and 14th on the grid, I am satisfied. The team did a great job; we had clean pit-stops and good tactics that we adapted during the race. Thanks to this we made up at least three places.”

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “That was a good team effort for the start of the Audi season, despite not being able to win. Presumably we were a little too conservative with the entire car set-up, that’s why we could not totally match the speed at the top, especially on fresh tyres. However, the basis is created. Compliments to the whole Audi team that made this good debut possible.”

Photographs and further information available in the Internet:
www.audi-sportpress.com (accreditation necessary)

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