

Nuremberg, 21 July 2006

Motorsport

Audi sets the pace for “home race” as well

- **Mattias Ekström quickest at the Norisring on Friday**
- **14 cars within half a second**
- **Qualifying on Saturday starting at 5.50 p.m.**

After the exploits in the DTM races at Oschersleben and Brands Hatch, the “home race” at Nuremberg’s Norisring started well for Audi Sport too. In sweltering heat with temperatures of up to 33 degrees in the shade Mattias Ekström in the Red Bull Audi A4 DTM of Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline set Friday’s best time.

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In both of the 90-minute test sessions the Swede was the quickest Audi driver. After taking third place in the first test in the morning with a gap of merely 0.150 seconds, he improved in the afternoon by over half a second to set a best time of 49.228 seconds.

The fastest four cars on Friday came within 80 thousandths of a second, the top 14 within half a second. This promises suspense galore for the qualifying which starts at 5:50 p.m. (local time) on Saturday and will be broadcast by ARD on “Das Erste” from 6:10 p.m.

Quotes after Friday’s tests

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “The weather was extremely hot in both test sessions today. That’s why the lap times were a bit slower than last year’s. Mattias (Ekström) set a good time. We’re going to try and use the information to come up with a good set-up for all of our cars tomorrow. The fans can look forward to a close and thrilling qualifying.”

Mattias Ekström

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

3rd place / 1st place, 49.880s

“It’s always nice to come to the Norisring. Particularly positive is the fact that in terms of the suspension set-up we started at a much higher level today than in all

the previous races this year – that accounts for the good time set at the end of the second test. If we continue on this path, Sunday can turn out to be a great day. But we've got a long way to go until then."

Heinz-Harald Frentzen

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

13th place / 5th place, 49.475s

"Compared to these temperatures, a sauna is a really pleasant place – and there you only wear a towel and not an overall and helmet. My Friday was okay. I'm driving the Audi A4 for the first time at the Norisring, which – as we all know - is quite a special circuit. I found out a few interesting things. My car was running perfectly but I'd have liked to have had a little more time for trying out even a few more things."

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Timo Scheider

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

14th place / 9th place, 49.628s

"In the first test I wasn't satisfied with the rear suspension. It's difficult driving a flawless lap on all these bumps. We're among the top ten, which is a good thing, but on Saturday it'll be about hundredths and thousandths and this definitely won't make things any easier. On the long-run our car wasn't in optimum form yet."

Pierre Kaffer

Audi Sport Team Phoenix, Castrol Audi A4 DTM #14

17th place / 11th place, 49.680s

"Actually, I had thought that on my favourite track things would have been going better in the first practice session. But in the first test we had a 'bug' in the car. We found out what it was before the second test. What makes me feel optimistic about tomorrow is the fact that I clocked my fastest time on used tyres."

Jeroen Bleekemolen

Futurecom TME, Futurecom Audi A4 DTM #19

6th place / 12th place, 49.680s

"Today went well. Sixth place in the first test was super. In the second test we developed the set-up further. Unfortunately, we were lacking a bit of time at the end because the car wasn't perfect yet when I went out on new tyres. But maybe

everything isn't perfect yet with the others either. In any event, we're in good shape."

Frank Stippler**Audi Sport Team Rosberg, S line Audi A4 DTM #15****11th place / 13th place, 49.712s**

"The analysis of the day shows that we were doing pretty well on old tyres up to the mid-point of both the first and second session. Unfortunately, the new sets of tyres we used afterwards didn't really build up grip either in the qualifying set-up nor over the distance. This we need to analyse now. Basically, though, we're doing well with last year's cars."

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Martin Tomczyk**Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #4****7th place / 14th place, 49.722s**

"Boy, what a heat! It was clear that the times would be so close together – and this won't change during the remainder of the weekend either. I went through the programme we had planned for today, including the long-run, which gave us some starting points. With the set-up I'm satisfied. Let's see what tomorrow brings when the track has more grip."

Tom Kristensen**Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Siemens Audi A4 DTM #7****5th place / 15th place, 49.741s**

"Somehow this Friday was exactly like the one last year. We tried out a lot of different things but sometimes went in the wrong direction. In particular, I had a hard time with the brakes. But maybe that's a good omen, too, because in 2005 Friday wasn't that great either – and on Sunday I started from pole. I wouldn't mind if things continued that way again ..."

Christian Abt**Audi Sport Team Phoenix, Playboy Audi A4 DTM #12****16th place / 17th place, 49.757s**

"In the first test in the morning I brushed the wall. The repair cost time which we were lacking. The set of tyres was missing at the end as well. Now we need to do some more work tomorrow for the qualifying, and I'm sure things will be going better then."

Vanina Ickx

Futurecom TME, Original Zubehör Audi A4 DTM #20

20th place / 19th place, 50.349s

“The first time I came into contact with the DTM was exactly one year ago here at the Norisring. It’s great to be part of this show in this city race now. In the first test in the morning we were a bit unfortunate because we had to change the starter and lost a lot of time. Also, I’m losing too much time on the straights. I’m pretty satisfied with the way the day went, though.”

Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Director Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline):

“Everything was running smoothly for us today. We tried to adjust to the heat, which will probably stay with us throughout the weekend, as well as we could. We know that although Friday in the DTM is a nice day things don’t really get going until Saturday. I’m confident that with our preparations we’re extremely well set for tomorrow.”

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Ernst Moser (Team Director Audi Sport Team Phoenix): “We had thought that the first practice here would be easier. But in the first test both cars were difficult to drive. We resolved that situation in the second test. We were satisfied with the balance of the cars. But at the end, on the new tyres, we were slower. We need to find out why.”

Kimmo Liimatainen (Team Manager Audi Sport Team Rosberg): “This was a good day for Team Rosberg, on which everything was running like a charm. Of course the track was still very dirty in the morning, that’s why the times are not very conclusive. With the second test I’m quite satisfied because the team worked well. We can probably improve a bit more on Saturday.”

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