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## Motorsport

# Audi signs Markus Winkelhock

- **Formula 1 tester deputises for Tom Kristensen in the DTM**
- **Le Mans record winner still recovering**
- **Alexandre Prémat is fit to race again**

Markus Winkelhock, Formula 1 test driver for Spyker, competes for Audi in the DTM this coming weekend. The young German deputises for Le Mans record winner Tom Kristensen in the Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline. Tom Kristensen is still recovering following his serious accident in the season opener at Hockenheim. The Frenchman Alexandre Prémat is, however, fit to race again.

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26-year-old Markus Winkelhock flies directly from the Formula 1 tests at Paul Ricard (France) to the DTM event at the EuroSpeedway on Thursday afternoon. "I'm extremely happy to get this chance from Audi – even though I know how difficult it will be," explains the Swabian. "I've followed every race since I left the DTM. The difference in performance between the cars is now miniscule, especially this year."

Winkelhock competed in 2004 with a year-old car in the DTM before taking the opportunity to be a Formula 1 test driver. At the EuroSpeedway Lausitz he drives the Siemens Audi A4 DTM, and in doing so sits at the wheel of a current generation DTM car for the first time. "Of course things aren't made any easier for me since I was unable to test beforehand," says the son of former German Formula 1 star Manfred Winkelhock. "However, I'm a driver who can normally get used to new cars, new circuits and environments very quickly. I hope that I live up to my own expectations and can produce the best for Audi. Nevertheless, I'm really looking forward to join this fantastic team."

Alexandre Prémat, who fractured a lumbar vertebra in the accident at Hockenheim, is, in contrast to Tom Kristensen, fit for racing again. "I've

been working for some time now on improving my fitness, from weight training to jogging,” explains the Frenchman. “The rehabilitation programme was very intensive. I’m one thousand per cent motivated! I’m really very relieved to be able to return so soon after such a heavy accident. I’m looking forward to seeing my team again and returning to the Audi family. I want to get a good result at the EuroSpeedway after having been away from the DTM scene for a month. Three drivers of older cars locked out the podium last time out at Oschersleben, which I obviously liked a lot. This shows that the DTM concept works. Practically every driver can score points”

“I’m glad that Alexandre (Prémat) is fit again and can drive for Audi Sport Team Phoenix at the EuroSpeedway,” says Head of Audi Motorsport Dr Wolfgang Ullrich. “Obviously, we were all hoping that Tom (Kristensen) could race again. However, he needs more recuperation to fully recover from the affects of his serious accident. At this time, the doctors are unable to predict when he will be one hundred per cent fit again. Tom will get all the time in the world from us. With Markus Winkelhock he have taken a talented young man on board, who demonstrated his talent in 2004 during his first DTM season and has done an excellent job as Formula 1 test driver. He will be available to us for other events should Tom be absent for a longer period of time.”

Frank Biela, who stood-in at short notice for Tom Kristensen for the race at Oschersleben, will oncentrate completely on preparation for the 24 Hours of Le Mans on 16/17 June.

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