

Communications Motorsport

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Third pole in a row for Audi driver Timo Scheider

- **Championship leader starts from top of the grid at Mugello too**
- **Eighth consecutive pole position for Audi in DTM**
- **Three Audi A4 DTM cars on first two rows of the grid**

Ingolstadt/Mugello – Audi driver Timo Scheider remains “the man to be beaten” in the DTM: at the third race of the season the German in his GW:plus/Top Service Audi A4 DTM will start from the pole position as well. At Mugello (Italy), Scheider managed a perfect lap at the crucial moment of qualifying, resulting in a gap of over three tenths of a second to the rest of the field.

Since the new Audi A4 DTM cars – following their victories at Hockenheim and Oschersleben – have to run with 20 kilograms more weight than the 2008-spec Mercedes contenders, the field at Mugello moved together closely, as expected. In the third and crucial qualifying segment the quickest four Audi and Mercedes vehicles came within 86 thousandths of a second of each other almost up to the end of the session – and, what’s more, on a race track that – at 5.245 kilometres – is the longest on the DTM schedule.

However, just as the chequered flag was being waved, Timo Scheider managed to improve by four tenths of a second yet again and, cheered by his mechanics, pushed from fifth place forwards to first. Despite the handicap weight, which at Mugello – according to computer simulations run by Audi Sport – costs almost five tenths of a second per lap, the Audi driver stayed below last year’s pole time by 0.772 seconds.



With Tom Kristensen on grid position three and Mattias Ekström on position four, three of the four new Audi A4 DTM cars fielded by Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline will start to the race from the first two rows on the grid. Kristensen set the fastest time in the first qualifying segment, Ekström in the second. However, as track temperatures kept rising, neither of them managed to match his personal best time in the third session.

A strong performance was shown by Markus Winkelhock: after clinching his first points at Oschersleben, the German driver from Audi Sport Team Rosberg managed his first leap into the top eight of qualifying. This feat made Winkelhock the quickest driver of a car from last year as well. Alexandre Prémat, Mike Rockenfeller and Oliver Jarvis in their 2007-spec cars followed in positions nine to twelve.

A mid-field block of Audi cars is completed by Martin Tomczyk, who did not find a perfect setup for his Audi A4 DTM throughout the weekend and will start the race on Sunday from twelfth place on the grid, directly in front of Ralf Schumacher. Christijan Albers took 16th place, Katherine Legge – in 18th place – at her third DTM event won her first qualifying duel against her Mercedes rival Susie Stoddart.

With grid positions one, three and four, Audi has achieved an outstanding starting base for the race on Sunday, which will start at 2 p.m. local time. Race simulations on Friday revealed that the new Audi A4 DTM, despite its handicap weight, not only sets fast lap times, but is able to do consistently fast times as well. ARD will broadcast live from Tuscany on “Das Erste”, starting at 1:45 p.m. The small gaps let expect a tight race.

Quotes after qualifying

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “It was an extremely thrilling and close qualifying. Our rivals were very strong. I’m incredibly happy that Timo (Scheider), yet again, got things right at the crucial moment and delivered a truly fantastic time. The strong team performance with three cars on the first two rows proves that the A4 DTM is running superbly also here.”

Timo Scheider (GW:plus/Top Service Audi A4 DTM #10): “I went all out in my fight. When I was fifth in the last qualifying, my goal was to at least make it onto the second row. On my last trial I somehow managed finding a line on which grip was really good. Even when I turned into the first corner, I was surprised. The lap



was pretty good all the way to the end. Incredible that a pole position was possible again. I want to thank Audi and Abt – yet again, I was given the perfect package.”

Tom Kristensen (Audi A4 DTM #9): “I’m satisfied. Nothing had to be done to my car during qualifying. The engineer only optimised my tyre pressure, which worked out well. I simply had to drive faster and faster, and that definitely worked in the first two sections. Unfortunately, I did not improve any more on the last set of tyres. That cost me the front row on the grid. But position three is good too and, tomorrow, everything is open.”

Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #1): “That was a very close qualifying with three Audi cars among the top four. Timo managed a great lap, while we weren’t totally perfect when it really mattered. That’s why the result wasn’t enough for the front row of the grid.”

Markus Winkelhock (Playboy Audi A4 DTM #19): “The qualifying was pretty good. As early as in the test things were going well, and I like the circuit anyhow. That’s why my hopes had been relatively high and I was able to put them into action in qualifying. In the third section I went overboard in one of the corners and lost some time. That’s why we reserved one set of tyres for the race and settled for eighth place. In any event, I’m satisfied.”

Alexandre Prémat (Audi Bank/Shell Helix Audi A4 DTM #14): “Ninth place isn’t so bad, but a place among the top eight would have been possible. Unfortunately, I made a few mistakes in my first sector. For the race, we found a good setup. My aim is to collect at least two points for Team Phoenix.”

Mike Rockenfeller (S line Audi A4 DTM #18): “I’m disappointed with tenth place. Markus (Winkelhock) made it into the final qualifying – so, a better result would have been possible. Alexandre (Prémat) and Oliver (Jarvis) set about the same times as I did. It’s a really close situation. We didn’t get our sectors together. As early as in free practice, when it started getting warmer, I was too slow. Maybe I can move forwards in a good race.”

Oliver Jarvis (Best Buddies Audi A4 DTM #15): “This has not been my best qualifying of the season so far. In the fast turns my car was oversteering heavily. Once I almost spun, but I didn’t lift. Our time was okay, but, unfortunately, it wasn’t enough for the third qualifying.”



Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #2): "It was fair to middling, but foreseeable. I took over a setup for qualifying I'd never used before, since we didn't know where we stood after the free practice. So it was a gamble. Everyone knows that you usually lose when you gamble – and that's what happened to me as well."

Christijan Albers (Audi A4 DTM #21): "I went out on my last trial when Mathias Lauda was driving in front of me. Unfortunately, he just wouldn't give way at all. We came to a quick turn and my downforce broke in his slipstream. And then, to top it off, he lifted. It was nothing but a waste of time. Factually, I missed qualifying that way. It would have been possible for me to set a good time."

Katherine Legge (Audi A4 DTM #20): "Qualifying was a big disappointment. We thought that the gaps would be much smaller. Unfortunately, we didn't even achieve our time from the free practice session. We made a big mistake with the tyre pressure, which probably cost us almost a whole second. With regard to our speed in the race, unfortunately, we don't know where we stand compared to the competition. But tomorrow everything can be different."

Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Director Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline): "It was very thrilling up to the final second. Timo (Scheider) is in top shape and drives at the highest level. He can only be congratulated. I'm hoping that things will continue this way."

Ernst Moser (Team Director Audi Sport Team Phoenix): "Too bad that we didn't make it into the third section. Yet again, it was very close. The new generation of vehicles is very quick. Still, I would have thought that we could have made it into the final qualifying session with a 2007-spec car. It's a shame, but now we're concentrating on the race."

Arno Zensen (Team Director Audi Sport Team Rosberg): "I'm happy. Both cars among the top ten, and one even in the final qualifying segment – that was a class act. We knew that we wouldn't be able to improve a whole lot more. That's why we used only one set of tyres with Markus (Winkelhock). Congratulations to the whole squad and to Timo Scheider, who clinched the third pole position in the third race."



The starting grid at Mugello

- 1 Timo Scheider (GW:plus/Top Service Audi A4 DTM) 1m 43.079s
- 2 Jamie Green (Mercedes) 1m 43.401s
- 3 Tom Kristensen (Audi A4 DTM) 1m 43.420s
- 4 Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM) 1m 43.472s
- 5 Paul di Resta (Mercedes) 1m 43.487s
- 6 Bruno Spengler (Mercedes) 1m 43.579s
- 7 Bernd Schneider (Mercedes) 1m 43.579s
- 8 Alexandre Prémat (Audi Bank/Shell Helix Audi A4 DTM) 1m 43.927s
- 9 Mike Rockenfeller (S line Audi A4 DTM) 1m 43.997s
- 10 Markus Winkelhock (Playboy Audi A4 DTM) 1m 44.025s
- 11 Oliver Jarvis (Best Buddies Audi A4 DTM) 1m 44.031s
- 12 Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM) 1m 44.154s
- 13 Ralf Schumacher (Mercedes) 1m 44.735s
- 14 Gary Paffett (Mercedes) 1m 44.914s
- 15 Christijan Albers (Audi A4 DTM) 1m 44.986s
- 16 Maro Engel (Mercedes) 1m 45.357s
- 17 Mathias Lauda (Mercedes) 1m 45.644s
- 18 Katherine Legge (Audi A4 DTM) 1m 46.086s
- 19 Susie Stoddart (Mercedes) 1m 46.258s

Photographs and information available at www.audi-motorsport.info

AUDI AG sold a total of 964,151 cars in 2007 and thus achieved its twelfth consecutive record year. With revenue of €33,617 million and profit before tax of €2,915 million, the company attained its best figures ever. Audi produces vehicles in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Changchun (China) and Brussels (Belgium). At the end of 2007, production of the Audi A6 started in Aurangabad, India. The company is active in more than 100 markets worldwide. AUDI AG's wholly owned subsidiaries include Automobili Lamborghini Holding S.p.A. in Sant'Agata Bolognese, Italy, and quattro GmbH in Neckarsulm. Audi employs about 54,000 people worldwide, including 45,000 in Germany. The brand with the four rings invests more than €2 billion each year in order to sustain the company's technological lead embodied in its "Vorsprung durch Technik" slogan. Audi plans to significantly increase the number of models in its portfolio by 2015, from the 26 currently on offer to 40.