

Istanbul, 2 October 2005

Motorsport

Tom Kristensen best Audi driver at Istanbul

- **Le Mans record winner fifth after strong race in the rain**
- **Title defender Mattias Ekström without points after collision**
- **Frank Stippler best driver of a 2004-spec A4**

The decision in the DTM will not be made until the finale at Hockenheim on 23 October: in the DTM race at Istanbul, Turkey, title defender Mattias Ekström in the Audi A4 DTM of Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline for the first time this season finished without scoring points, following a collision on the opening lap. Best Audi driver in the rain race was his team-mate Tom Kristensen, who pushed forwards from tenth to fifth place in difficult conditions. In the manufacturers' standings, Audi dropped back to second place.

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On the wet track, Mattias Ekström had made a lightning start, pushing forwards from fifth to third place even before the first turn. At the end of the first lap, though, he was hit by a rival. From that moment, the Swede had to struggle with handling problems, which became increasingly serious during the course of the race. After ranking in an uncontested sixth place in the first third of the race, Ekström dropped back to twelfth in the final phase.

Best driver of a 2004-spec A4 entered by Audi Sport Team Joest was Frank Stippler, who came 13th. After one of his usual good starts, the German had finished the first lap in tenth place and thus had justified hopes of scoring points. On the second and third sets of tyres, though, the Audi driver was struggling with a car that was difficult to drive.

Pierre Kaffer (spin), Christian Abt (collision) and Dindo Capello (electronics) retired. Martin Tomczyk had to park his Audi A4 DTM one lap before race end because the air intake was clogged by grass. Allan McNish crossed the finish line in 15th place.

Quotes after the race

Tom Kristensen (Audi Sport Team Abt #5)

5th place, + 30.889s

“This was a race in very difficult conditions with lots of aquaplaning and poor visibility in the early phase. Our strategy and the pit stops were very good. In the duels with Spengler and Manuel Reuter, who was fighting with Mattias (Ekström), I lost some time. Unfortunately, the front runners had gotten too far away by that time. If you start from tenth place, you can’t expect a lot more than this.”

Mattias Ekström (Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline #1)

12th place, + 58.189s

“My start was good, but the Mercedes cars were quicker. My two pit stops weren’t perfect either. During the first stop, I stalled the engine and the second stop, as well, was too slow. The last set of tyres didn’t work out at all, that’s why I kept dropping back further and further. Of course I’m disappointed, because things were really looking good immediately after the start. But after Green hit me, the car just wasn’t the same any more.”

Frank Stippler (Audi Sport Team Joest #19)

13th place, + 1m 08.087s

“The car was very good, and so was my start, I was quicker than the guys in front of me straight away. That’s when I started to eye the top ten, but on the drying track the car became nearly undriveable. That’s why I was passed through to 13th place. I’m satisfied with the fact, though, that I didn’t make any mistakes in these difficult conditions. The pit stops were perfect, too. It was a good weekend with a poor result.”

Allan McNish (Audi Sport Team Abt #6)

15th place, + 1m 12.520s

“The start was very difficult for us, I tried to stay out of any trouble. But Alex Margaritis used me as his brake on several occasions. Then we made a relatively early first stop, after which the track was clear for me to go in a very nicely balanced car. That way, I was able to make up a lot of time. After the second tyre change, though, the car was oversteering heavily. All of a sudden, my lap times were three to four seconds slower – that was very strange.”

Martin Tomczyk (Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline #2)

16th place, - 1 lap

“I got off the track into the grass, that’s why we had to move up my first pit stop in order to remove the grass from the radiator. That cost time. Afterwards, I kept gaining momentum, things were really going well. But then I was pushed into the grass. That didn’t happen on purpose, Frank (Stippler) simply hadn’t seen me. Yet one lap before the finish, I had to pit again and that meant the end of my race.”

Dindo Capello (Audi Sport Team Joest #18)

Retired (electronics)

“This was a short race for me, there were problems with the electronic system, which got wet because of the rain. When the engine no longer delivered full power, we decided to stop. Continuing to drive made no sense.”

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Pierre Kaffer (Audi Sport Team Joest Racing #15)

Retired (spin)

“In the beginning, it was a good race, I was as far up as tenth place. But something went wrong during the pit stop. That’s why I had nothing to lose any more and decided to take a full gamble on slicks. But it was still too wet and I spun into the gravel trap.”

Christian Abt (Audi Sport Team Joest Racing #14)

Retired (accident)

“My start wasn’t so bad, I was in 15th place. The conditions were difficult. Of course I wanted to fight all the way through to seeing the chequered flag, but Heinz-Harald (Frentzen) thwarted my plans in a big way. I suppose he made a braking mistake. In any event, my race was over after he hit me in the rear.”

Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Director Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline): “This wasn’t our day today. You could see that Mattias’s (Ekström) car after being touched by Jamie Green was no longer driveable. We need to analyse what happened there, he simply wasn’t able to keep it steady. Basically, this meant his race was over on the first lap. I feel sorry for Mattias, but now we’re going to do everything within our means to perhaps turn the situation around once more at Hockenheim.”

Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Team Joest): “This wasn’t a good race for us. Frank (Stippler) was the only one who might have been able to score points today, but his tyres weren’t perfect after the stops. Now, we’re going to take a fresh look forwards and attack again in the finale.”

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “Of course we can’t be satisfied with this result – particularly with regard to the championship. We didn’t have a good starting base after the qualifying, and the race didn’t go according to our expectations either. We need to analyse the reasons. After Jamie Green’s attack, which, for my taste, was harder than necessary, Mattias’s (Ekström) car was not really driveable any more. He had no choice but to bring the car home. Tom (Kristensen) managed to push forwards to fifth place from tenth on the grid. A lot of things went wrong today. But you have to be able to get over even a day like this, and now we’re all particularly motivated for Hockenheim. We will strike back.”

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