



Press Information

Zandvoort, 4 September 2004

Zandvoort as seen by Mattias Ekström

Before the DTM away race on the North Sea coast, Audi driver Mattias Ekström is heading the drivers' standings with a nine-point lead. To the Swede, the demanding track amidst the dunes of Zandvoort brings back particularly good memories: in 2002, this was the venue at which Ekström celebrated his first DTM victory, followed by another podium position in last year's race. The 26-year old shooting star comments on the Zandvoort circuit:

What is it that makes this circuit so particularly fascinating?

Mattias Ekström: "Zandvoort is unpredictable. The circuit has many corners, few straights and lots of quick points. And it has the two most beautiful corners on the whole DTM calendar: the fourth and the last turn before the start-finish straight. The level of grip at Zandvoort is lower than anywhere else."

What memories do you associate with Zandvoort?

Mattias Ekström: "To be honest, whenever I come to Zandvoort, I must think of Laurent (Aiello). I'll never forget the moment of celebrating his title victory on the roof of his car two years ago. At that point, even Laurent – who's normally so cool – had more than one tear rolling down his cheeks."

What role does the sand on the track play?

Mattias Ekström: "During the test sessions on Friday, I sometimes have the feeling of sitting in a road-sweeper, as veritable clouds of sand are being whirled up. On top of that, the asphalt is very rough – and that's really hard on the tyres."

Where does Zandvoort offer opportunities for overtaking?

Mattias Ekström: "In the past few years, the tight turn before the bend leading to the finish line used to be the most thrilling point. That's where I overtook Manuel Reuter and Jean Alesi last year. I'm afraid the friendship between myself and my French fellow driver may have suffered a bit from this incident as well... But now, they've put up a stack of tyres there, so the fun is over. I think that, now, overtaking will be possible primarily in the two slow corners on the infield."

"Tarzanbocht", the first corner after the start, is notorious for trouble. How will the start go off?

Mattias Ekström: "I'm sure there won't be any problems at the start if everyone acts sensibly. As far as I'm concerned, of course I'm hoping that I'll be able to manage a better start than last year. At that time, I unfortunately stalled by engine – actually, though, that was merely an act of solidarity with my teammate Martin Tomczyk, who was standing in front of me with a similar problem."

Find a strip map with shifting points and speeds, photos and further information overleaf and on the Internet:

www.audi-sportpress.com (Accreditation required)

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Circuit Park Zandvoort (based on the data recording of the Audi A4 DTM)

