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Audi again on pole at DTM finale

- **Eighth pole position for Audi in the 2008 DTM season**
- **Mattias Ekström clinches pole position at Hockenheim**
- **DTM leader Timo Scheider third on the grid**

Ingolstadt/Hockenheim – Eleven races, eight best times in qualifying: the Audi A4 DTM is clearly the quickest car of the 2008 DTM season. At the finale at the Hockenheimring the Swede Mattias Ekström clinched the eighth pole position of the year for Audi. Leader of the standings Timo Scheider will start to the most crucial race (Sunday, starting at 1:45 p.m., local time, live on “Das Erste”) from position three, just behind his rival for the title Paul di Resta (Mercedes). A total of six Audi drivers made it into the top ten.

In a gripping qualifying, Ekström beat the existing DTM track record by more than four tenths of a second. The Swede was 40 thousandths of a second quicker than Paul di Resta. Timo Scheider in third place secured a good starting base for the race as well.

For the third consecutive time, an Audi A4 DTM will start from the top grid position at a DTM race at the Hockenheimring. For Audi, it will be the 45th pole position in the DTM altogether. After Zandvoort, Mattias Ekström is on pole for the second time this year.



The qualifying on Saturday started with a moment of shock for Markus Winkelhock, who on entering the Motodrome lost control of his Playboy Audi A4 DTM and crashed against a tyre wall. The German remained unhurt but has to settle for the last grid position on Sunday.

At the beginning of the second qualifying segment Timo Scheider approached Turn 1 a little too far on the inside. His GW:plus/Top Service Audi A4 DTM briefly lifted off the kerbs and came down with a hard landing. After a quick repair the leader of the standings was able to continue with qualifying and showed strong nerves. At the last moment, he bumped Mercedes driver Jamie Green from third place on the grid.

Martin Tomczyk and Tom Kristensen will be splitting the fourth row on the grid on Sunday. Directly behind them will be Mike Rockenfeller, Oliver Jarvis and Alexandre Prémat in the best cars from last year. All three Audi drivers outperformed all 2007-spec Mercedes cars.

A strong qualifying performance was also shown by Christijan Albers, who secured 13th place on the grid in the two-year old A4 of the Audi customer team Futurecom TME.

For the race on Sunday, similarly good weather as during the qualifying has been forecast. Timo Scheider goes into the finale with a two-point advantage over Paul di Resta. On Friday, the leader of the standings shone with a strong race simulation.

At the season opener at the Hockenheimring in April, Audi celebrated a one-two-three victory and will have the chance on Sunday to successfully defend the DTM champion's title for the first time since 1990/1991. A good omen for Timo Scheider: last year Mattias Ekström clinched the title from grid position three at the finale as well.



Quotes after qualifying

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): "We can be very satisfied. We've got cars that function very well. Timo (Scheider) on his first trial was a bit too far on the inside of the first turn and therefore made a long jump. Consequently, he was a little more careful on his second trial. You can see that by the lap time because he lost in the first sector. Other than that, he reached exactly the same speed as the two drivers on the first row of the grid. I'm looking positively towards the race and am hoping for weather as nice as today's. In addition, I'm wishing for our boys to be driving a flawless race and that we'll be seeing a nice, clean finale."

Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #1): "That'll be a hot race tomorrow. Starting from the pole position is great. Being surrounded by the two boys who are fighting for the championship makes the whole thing even more exciting. First, I'll be concentrating fully on myself. But if I should have to fight against one of these two then I'll be doing that a little more fiercely with one of them than with the other."

Timo Scheider (GW:plus/Top Service Audi A4 DTM #10): "I'm happy that we held up to the pressure and worked out a good starting base with a position on the second row of the grid. Congratulations to Mattias (Ekström) on clinching pole and 'thank you' to my boys who kept cool after a slip at the beginning of the qualifying and did a perfect job. It's nice to be standing directly next to Paul (di Resta) – I'm sure that the spectators will be witnessing a thrilling finale."

Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #2): "Unfortunately, my time wasn't that good. The important thing is that Audi with Mattias (Ekström) is all the way at the front and that Timo (Scheider) is within striking distance to Paul di Resta. Unfortunately, no further Audi A4 DTM cars are at the front. I simply did not have a perfect lap."

Tom Kristensen (Audi A4 DTM #9): "I'm not happy with the position, but my car functioned very well. I'm surprised to have only finished eighth. With the camber



settings, we opted for a conservative setting. That was simply not enough to drive a top time.”

Mike Rockenfeller (S line Audi A4 DTM #18): “In ninth place I’m now the best driver of a car from last year for the third time in a row. Basically, I’m happy. But in the penultimate corner of my fastest lap I made a big mistake. I feel sorry about that for the team, otherwise I might have even been running a bit further in front. I believe that, basically, we’ve almost achieved the maximum. I will try and drive a good race at the finale and to finish in the points.”

Oliver Jarvis (Best Buddies Audi A4 DTM #15): “I’m in tenth place and was half of a tenth of a second slower than the quickest 2007-spec car. That’s disappointing because my car was very good, but towards the end of my best lap the rear tyres were losing too much grip. Otherwise, we’d have been three tenths better. Now I’m hoping for a good race result.”

Alexandre Prémat (Audi Bank/Shell Helix Audi A4 DTM #14): “I’m pretty satisfied. That was my first qualifying after becoming a father! With eleventh place we did pretty well in the field of year-old cars. ‘Well done’ to ‘Rocky’ for the time he set! Our car is very good for the race. I want to score points and try to pass Gary Paffett in the championship.”

Christijan Albers (Audi A4 DTM #21): “The first lap was good even though the car was understeering a little. Then we had oversteer on the last two laps, which cost us a lot of time. That was too bad. There were also problems with radio communications. All that bothered me a bit. We’re seeing how close the competition is between the 2006-spec and the 2007-spec cars yet again – one tenth of a second. So that means we arguably did a pretty good job.”

Katherine Legge (Audi A4 DTM #20): “It’s disappointing not to have had a good qualifying at the last race because I’d like to close the season with a positive result. A lot was beyond my control – there were simply too many little things. Unfortunately, the result does not reflect our true pace. We’ve still got a lot of work to do for Sunday. We’ve got many new tyre sets we can use but it’ll be a tough races for the vehicles from our year group.”



Markus Winkelhock (Playboy Audi A4 DTM #19): “At the end of the year I experienced the worst qualifying of the season. The first sector times were okay. The car felt pretty good. There was a tendency towards turn-in oversteer. And that then turned out to be my problem. As I was turning into the Motodrome, the rear of the car pushed, I spun and slipped into the tyre stacks.”

Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Director Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline): “This was suspense galore! We’ve got a decent base for tomorrow. There’s nothing lost in that yet. I believe we’re always better on the attack. That’s why we’re looking forward to race Sunday.”

Ernst Moser (Team Director Audi Sport Team Phoenix): “It was hardly possible to achieve any more than we did today. The gap to ninth place was half a second. Tenth and eleventh place are okay for the team. It’s simply good fun to drive the finale at Hockenheim in front of such a crowd. We can achieve quite a bit from our positions. We’ll do everything we can to see Audi bring home the title.”

Arno Zensen (Team Director Audi Sport Team Rosberg): “‘Rocky’ was simply a class act. Since he won the LMS title he set the best time in a used car three times in the DTM. Ninth place was the maximum. Superb, well done! Markus (Winkelhock) drove two sector times that were good before he lost the car at the entrance to the Motodrome. It all happened very fast, these things just happen. We need to look ahead. At first glance, it seems that the damage to his car isn’t all that heavy. We want to attack the field from the rear.”



The starting grid at Hockenheim

- 1 Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM) 1m 32.244s
- 2 Paul di Resta (Mercedes) 1m 32.284s
- 3 Timo Scheider (GW:plus/Top Service Audi A4 DTM) 1m 32.492s
- 4 Jamie Green (Mercedes) 1m 32.615s
- 5 Bernd Schneider (Mercedes) 1m 32.680s
- 6 Bruno Spengler (Mercedes) 1m 32.769s
- 7 Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM) 1m 32.930s
- 8 Tom Kristensen (Audi A4 DTM) 1m 33.005s
- 9 Mike Rockenfeller (S line Audi A4 DTM) 1m 33.578s
- 10 Oliver Jarvis (Best Buddies Audi A4 DTM) 1m 33.612s
- 11 Alexandre Prémat (Audi Bank/Shell Helix Audi A4 DTM) 1m 33.737s
- 12 Gary Paffett (Mercedes) 1m 33.742s
- 13 Christijan Albers (Audi A4 DTM) 1m 33.770s
- 14 Maro Engel (Mercedes) 1m 33.935s
- 15 Mathias Lauda (Mercedes) 1m 34.459s
- 16 Ralf Schumacher (Mercedes) 1m 34.499s
- 17 Susie Stoddart (Mercedes) 1m 34.665s
- 18 Katherine Legge (Audi A4 DTM) 1m 35.756s
- 19 Markus Winkelhock (Playboy Audi A4 DTM) no time

- Ends -

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 57,000 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 to 40.