

Hockenheim, 29 October 2006

## Motorsport

### Audi closes out DTM finale on the podium

- **Tom Kristensen third in front of record Hockenheim crowd**
- **Thrilling touring car racing in front of 149,000 fans**
- **Misunderstanding between Frentzen and Ekström**

Tom Kristensen claimed another podium finish for Audi in front of a record crowd of 149,000 spectators at the DTM finale at Hockenheim. The Dane driving for Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline finished third in a riveting race characterised by hard fought battles and numerous retirements. Despite the front suspension of Kristensen's Siemens Audi A4 DTM being damaged after contact with Jamie Green's Mercedes during the opening stages of the race, he kept new DTM Champion Bernd Schneider at bay for the entire distance.

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Pole sitter Heinz-Harald Frentzen took the lead in the Veltins A4 at the start. The former Formula 1 driver led the field for the opening ten laps before having to concede his position to eventual winner Bruno Spengler. Frentzen was in sixth position before a misunderstanding and subsequent collision with Mattias Ekström put both Audi drivers out of the race four laps from home.

To this point all four Audi A4 DTM were in point scoring positions. Mattias Ekström had carved his way through the field from 14th to seventh, after opting for late pit stops, to join a group containing Tom Kristensen, Bernd Schneider, Martin Tomczyk and Heinz-Harald Frentzen, who had been fighting tooth and nail for position throughout the entire race.

Martin Tomczyk finished just behind Bernd Schneider. Timo Scheider (Audi Sport Team Rosberg) and Christian Abt (Audi Sport Team Phoenix) also scored points in sixth and seventh places respectively as best drivers of year old cars. Vanina Ickx took the chequered flag in eleventh place. Thed Björk and Pierre Kaffer were forced to retire with brake problems. Frank Stippler was an innocent victim of a collision on the first lap.

## Quotes after the race

**Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport):** “What we saw in the season’s final round was superb touring car racing. However, all the battles around Tom (Kristensen) also cleared the way for Bruno Spengler and Jamie Green to distance themselves from the rest of the field. Tom captured another podium place for Audi. In the group he was fighting he was running in front throughout. I’m disappointed about the accident between Mattias (Ekström) and Heinz-Harald (Frentzen), which was totally unnecessary. Unfortunately, this year we didn’t manage to clinch the title, although we gave everything. After Brands Hatch, we lost a round and got behind. Now we’re determined to re-capture the title next year.”

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### **Tom Kristensen**

**Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Siemens Audi A4 DTM #7**

**3rd place, + 10.490s**

“That was a tough race. Actually, there were two races and, from my perspective, I was in the one where the fighting was really fierce. Clinching third place in the fantastic fights I was involved in wasn’t easy. In the early phase I had body contact with Jamie (Green). After that, my front wheel was a bit off-centre. The car was very nervous, particularly while braking into the hairpin. I gave everything and that was enough to keep the group led by Bernd (Schneider) behind me. Third place was the best we could achieve today. Audi and my team worked hard for this.”

### **Martin Tomczyk**

**Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Siemens Audi A4 DTM #7**

**5th place, + 12.026s**

“The race in front of this crowd was incredibly good fun. The fight with Heinz-Harald (Frentzen) could have had a better outcome for me because I was quicker than he, and the fact that it didn’t is too bad. I could have pulled him along behind me, but this way we both lost places. We could have handled that situation better. Generally, though, I’m satisfied because our speed was good and there were some great fights. It was a nice way to end the season, in which my car stayed intact.”

## **Timo Scheider**

**Audi Sport Team Rosberg, Gebrauchtwagen:plus Audi A4 DTM #16**

**6th place, + 19.526s**

“My goal had been to finish at least in tenth place of the DTM overall classification, and having scored three points today, this goal was clearly achieved. That’s a nice consolation for the boys and for me. Unfortunately, we had a technical problem with the power wrench signal during the pit stop. But basically I’m satisfied. The team did a great job.”

## **Christian Abt**

**Audi Sport Team Phoenix, Playboy Audi A4 DTM #12**

**7th place, + 21.359s**

“The team gave me a top car that was really fast. The first pit stop took a bit too long but we were able to make it up on the track. I lost some time, though, because I had to let Mattias (Ekström) pass. Otherwise I would have been among the front runners because in the early phase I was close to Jamie Green.”

## **Vanina Ickx**

**Futurecom TME, Original Zubehör Audi A4 DTM #20**

**11th place, - 1 lap**

“This was something I hadn’t expected. It’s my best result of the year. Even though my performance wasn’t that strong I was able to have some nice fights with a few rivals in the beginning of the race.”

## **Mattias Ekström**

**Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #5**

**12th place, - 2 laps (collision)**

“The car was very quick in the race. The start was good but in the first turn I had to get out of the way of the crowd and that cost me a few places. When I caught Heinz-Harald Frentzen I thought he had seen me but that was a misunderstanding and I touched him. I can only apologise for this mishap. It’s too bad this happened and definitely not a nice way to end the season”

## **Heinz-Harald Frentzen**

**Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Veltins Audi A4 DTM #6**

**14th place, - 3 laps (collision)**

“I’m very disappointed. Having started from pole, of course I had expected a better outcome of the race. Unfortunately I was the last to pit, wasn’t able to make really good use of the tyres as a result, and lost one position after the other. And to top it off, I’m spun by a team-mate.”

## **Thed Björk**

**Futurecom TME, Futurecom Audi A4 DTM #19**

**15th place, - 10 laps (brakes)**

“It was a good start and I had some really nice duels. Running on the outside, though, I lost several positions in a corner. Later I lost braking power at the front, smoker was entering the cockpit and I spun.”

## **Pierre Kaffer**

**Audi Sport Team Phoenix, Castrol Audi A4 DTM #14**

**not classified, - 11 laps (brakes)**

“It had been a super race until my retirement. The start was a bit turbulent. I was in the wrong place at the wrong time and lost time. Once the track was clear for me, it was obvious that my speed was good, as was Christian’s (Abt). Unfortunately, we encountered a problem with the brakes after the pit stop. Today, it would have been possible to finish in the points. Everyone can see that our performance curve was pointing upwards.”

## **Frank Stippler**

**Audi Sport Team Rosberg, S line Audi A4 DTM #15**

**Retirement (collision)**

“I had a good start but had to focus on not getting too close to the group of Audi drivers in front of me. At the same time, Mercedes drivers were pushing from behind. The car was good but I was hit. I’m hoping that this year will have helped me to build up my strength.”

**Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Director Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline):** “I’m disappointed. Our performance was lacking, and if that’s the case you can’t achieve anything on the track. We need to make the car quicker and will attack again next year.”

**Ernst Moser (Team Director Audi Sport Team Phoenix):** “Both cars were doing well. For the season’s finale, we knew what he had to with the cars to get to this point. With Pierre (Kaffer) the brake pedal dropped to the floor at some point after we had exchanged all the parts only yesterday – perhaps some inadvertent mistake was made. Christian (Abt) drove a good race. He had the chance to finish two places further towards the front.”

**Arno Zensen (Team Director Audi Sport Team Rosberg):** “I’m happy that we finished tenth in the Championship with Timo. Despite the fact that we had a technical problem with the power wrench during the pit stop, we were fortunate enough that this didn’t affect his position. Frank Stippler was struck by misfortune in a major way yet again. A huge compliment to Audi, to quattro GmbH, to the team and to the drivers for this great season. Next year we want to achieve even more.”

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## The result

- 1 Bruno Spengler (Mercedes), 37 laps in 1h 00m 13.459s
  - 2 Jamie Green (Mercedes), + 1.503s
  - 3 Tom Kristensen (Siemens Audi A4 DTM), + 10.490s
  - 4 Bernd Schneider (Mercedes), + 11.507s
  - 5 Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM), + 12.026s
  - 6 Timo Scheider (Gebrauchtwagen:plus Audi A4 DTM), + 19.526s
  - 7 Christian Abt (Playboy Audi A4 DTM), + 21.359s
  - 8 Jean Alesi (Mercedes), + 36.280s
  - 9 Susie Stoddart (Mercedes), + 38.475s
  - 10 Mathias Lauda (Mercedes), - 1 lap
  - 11 Vanina Ickx (Original Zubehör Audi A4 DTM), - 1 lap
  - 12 Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM), - 2 laps (collision)
  - 13 Alexandros Margaritis (Mercedes), - 3 laps
  - 14 Heinz-Harald Frentzen (Veltins Audi A4 DTM), - 3 laps (collision)
  - 15 Thed Björk (Futurecom Audi A4 DTM), - 10 laps (brakes)
- Not classified:
- Daniel la Rosa (Mercedes), - 11 laps
  - Pierre Kaffer (Audi A4 DTM), - 11 laps (brakes)
  - Mika Häkkinen (Mercedes), - 17 laps
  - Stefan Mücke (Mercedes), - 33 laps
  - Frank Stippler (S line Audi A4 DTM), - 36 laps (collision)

## Final standings:

1 Schneider, 71 points; 2 Spengler, 63; 3 Kristensen, 56; 4 Tomczyk, 42; 5 Green, 31; 6 Häkkinen, 25; 7 Frentzen, 24; 8 Ekström, 21; 9 Alesi, 15; 10 Scheider, 12; 11 Margaritis, 11; 12 Mücke, 7; 13 Abt, 6; 14 Stippler, 3; 15 la Rosa, 2; 16 Kaffer, 1.

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