

Istanbul, 1 October 2005

Motorsport

Audi driver Ekström on third row at Istanbul

- **DTM leader is quickest Audi driver in qualifying**
- **Tom Kristensen in Super Pole as well**
- **Frank Stippler best driver of a 2004-spec A4**

The leader of the standings, Mattias Ekström, is facing a difficult task in the DTM race at Istanbul Park, Turkey: as the best Audi driver, the Swede from Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline claimed fifth place on the starting grid in the Super Pole qualifying session. His immediate rival, Gary Paffett (Mercedes), will start from pole position on Sunday, with three brand colleagues creating a buffer between himself and Ekström.

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As the second-best Audi driver, Tom Kristensen will start from position ten. The Dane had been the quickest in Saturday morning's free practice. His best time of 1m 47.248s would have been enough for third place in Super Pole. Yet a mistake in the first turn of the single timed lap cost Kristensen the chance of clinching a place on the first two rows of the grid.

Best driver of a 2004-spec A4 entered by Audi Sport Team Joest was the German Frank Stippler, who finished 14th. Like on Friday, the top 16 cars in the qualifying came within a single second of each other.

The penultimate race of the DTM season is scheduled to start at 3 p.m. local time (2 p.m. German time) on Sunday. ARD will broadcast live from Istanbul, starting at 1.45 p.m.

Quotes after qualifying

Mattias Ekström (Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline #1)

5th place, Super Pole, 1m 47.553s

“The qualifying was okay. I managed to make it into the top ten. In the Super pole I gave my best but that simply wasn't quick enough. Tomorrow is another day,

though. We're going to prepare the car for the race as best we can. I've started from fifth place on several occasions this year – and finished on the podium every time.”

Tom Kristensen (Audi Sport Team Abt #5)

10th place, Super Pole, 1m 48.070s

“In the free practice and the qualifying sessions, things were going well. After seeing where Mattias was, I had to give everything in the Super Pole. Unfortunately, my car snapped away as early as in the first corner. Of course starting from tenth place is a disappointment. But in the race I usually manage to go forwards – that's my goal for tomorrow as well.”

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Martin Tomczyk (Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline #2)

13th place 1m 47.878s

“Although the car felt good, I came merely 13th as the third-best Audi driver. It seems like this circuit wasn't built exactly for us, the Audi drivers. But the race tomorrow will be an altogether different matter.”

Frank Stippler (Audi Sport Team Joest #19)

14th place, 1m48.001s

“Best Audi from last year – under the circumstances, this is the best I could have expected. It's possible that we changed too many settings on the car during the qualifying. During the second trial, the car was difficult to drive but I attacked anyhow. The result was a high-speed spin. At least, my third and last attempt was good enough for 14th place on the grid.”

Allan McNish (Audi Sport Team Abt #6)

15th place, 1m 48.181s

“During my first trial I had a bit of oversteer, which we corrected for the second attempt. On my third outing I got off a bit too far towards the outside of the first corner. That was too bad because the remainder of my sector times would probably have been good enough for me to make it into the Super Pole. I'm disappointed and will have to fight tomorrow.”

Dindo Capello (Audi Sport Team Joest #18)

16th place, 1m 48.186s

“As early as on my second trial I was close to qualifying for the Super Pole, that’s why I felt confident. Apparently, though, we changed the set-up in the wrong direction because, in the end, the car wasn’t as good any more as before. This circuit isn’t exactly ideal for last year’s Audi cars. But tomorrow in the race things can look completely different. Whenever we’ve failed to make it into the Super pole, we’ve scored points in the race.”

Christian Abt (Audi Sport Team Joest Racing #14)

18th place, 1m 48.341s

“I was simply too slow because the car was right and conditions in the qualifying were good. Perhaps we’re still lacking a bit of experience on this track, because you can make a lot of mistakes here. But I won’t allow my spirits to sink, the race is very long. The championship is at stake, so a lot can happen.”

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Pierre Kaffer (Audi Sport Team Joest Racing #15)

20th place, 1m 48.392s

“Of course, finishing last had not been my goal. But the DTM field is simply extremely tight. The narrow gaps show this clearly. Unfortunately, we’re always lacking the crucial tenths for starting further towards the front.”

Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Director Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline):

“No doubt, we have less than a perfect starting position. But those who know us, know that we’re fighters. We’re going to give everything tomorrow. Our goal, now, must be to at least create a good starting base for Hockenheim.”

Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Team Joest): “It was clear that it would be difficult for us to make it into the Super Pole. Now, our four cars are exactly behind each other on the grid, on positions 14, 16, 18 and 20. So far, we’ve always clinched good points-finishes whenever we weren’t in the Super Pole – I hope that’ll be the case tomorrow as well.”

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “This has been our worst qualifying result of the season so far. We’ll have to analyse the reasons carefully. In the race, now, the main thing will be to contain the damage. Mattias is surrounded by Mercedes drivers. This will make things very difficult for him. But

he knows such situations from previous years. And we're going to give him all the support we possibly can."

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