

Oschersleben, 5 May 2007

Motorsport

Audi driver Rockenfeller causes a stir

- **Youngest Audi factory driver on front row of the grid**
- **Pole position missed by merely 0.074 seconds**
- **Good starting position for DTM leader Ekström as well**

Mike Rockenfeller – at age 23 the youngest Audi factory driver – was the great sensation in the qualifying practice for the DTM race at Oschersleben. In the fight for the pole position, “Rocky” at the wheel of his S line Audi A4 DTM only had to admit defeat to the two-time Formula 1 World Champion Mika Häkkinen by 74 thousandths of a second. This means that for the first time the rookie from Neuwied will be starting from the front row of the grid in his second DTM race – a remarkable feat that has been accomplished only by very few DTM newcomers so far.

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The qualifying on the 3.696-kilometre circuit near Magdeburg offered a foretaste of what spectators may expect to see in the race. As in the Hockenheim season opener, the DTM field is presenting itself as a colourful mixture as well as being extremely compact. From the first five rows on the grid one Audi and one Mercedes each will be starting to the race on Sunday – and, what’s more, separated by extremely small time gaps.

The quickest driver of a newest-generation Audi A4 DTM, which at Oschersleben – due to the regulations – weigh 14 kilograms more than the new Mercedes C-Class, was the leader of the standings Mattias Ekström. The Swede secured fourth place on the grid. Timo Scheider was the fastest driver in the two first qualifying sessions and captured sixth place in the crucial third section. With Martin Tomczyk on position seven and Christian Abt on nine, a total of five Audi drivers will be starting the race from the first five rows. By clinching 14th place at the wheel of his 2005-spec Audi A4 DTM, Adam Carroll ensured that all four Audi teams made it into the second part of the three-part qualifying.

Quotes after Qualifying

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “It was an extremely tight situation again. Everyone gave the max. I’m particularly happy for Mike (Rockenfeller), who showed a superb performance. The other Audi drivers came very close. You just need to look at the small gaps and consider what we wanted to achieve by balancing the weight situation in the DTM. So far, this has been working out well. Tomorrow will be a tough race for everybody.”

Mike Rockenfeller (S line Audi A4 DTM #11)
2nd place / 1m 22.766s / 1m 22.751s / 1m 22.530s

“This is what I call fun – fighting at the very front of the field. I really relish this. We knew that we’d have a good chance here, although I’d never have expected to finish among the top two or three. It’s a dream that this has worked out. A huge thank you from me to my team Rosberg and to Audi. Being this far at the front in my second race is fantastic. My next goal now is to collect points.”

Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #3)
4th place, 1m 22.804s / 1m 22.666s / 1m 22.682s

“It was very tight. We were well sorted on Friday and Saturday morning. Everything felt good, but it wasn’t enough to achieve a better result in qualifying. Now I’m going to give everything. We’ll see what happens on Sunday.”

Timo Scheider (Gebrauchtwagen:plus/Top Service Audi A4 DTM #8)
6th place, 1m 22.609s / 1m 22.551s / 1m 22.831s

“The first two sessions went well. Being the quickest twice was something special. In the last segment I ran through some dirt on my first trial. The second lap was very good. On my last lap I overshot the kerb at the start and finish and lost two-and-a-half tenths. Otherwise, I might have been able to make it onto the first row. Too bad, because the car was good, but perhaps I was a little too ambitious during the last session.”

Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #4)

7th place, 1m 22.888s / 1m 22.817s / 1m 22.935s

“A poor result: From start to finish, things didn’t go the way they should have. I always lost everything in the final sector, in the last turn, to be specific. I’d expected to be further towards the front. It’s disappointing that the problem always came up at only one particular place.”

Christian Abt (Playboy Audi A4 DTM #16)

9th place, 1m 23.050s / 1m 22.899s

“I’m totally satisfied. I couldn’t have wished for better than ninth place – particularly considering how things were going yesterday.”

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Adam Carroll (Audi A4 DTM #20)

14th place, 1m 23.077s / 1m 23.394s

“I’m a little disappointed as my positions in the tests and in free practice had been much better. Unfortunately, I had to wait for a long time at the pit lane exit and after that wasn’t able to warm up the tyres any more. I’d have preferred making it into the top ten. Now I have to make up ground in the race and try to score points.”

Lucas Luhr (Philips Audi A4 DTM #12)

16th place, 1m 23.400s

“16th place really isn’t a good result. I wasn’t able to drive faster, and we don’t know the reason why. This is frustrating because – up to that point – the weekend had been going really well. But as soon as performance really mattered, it was all over. We’re going to analyse the whole situation carefully and continue to work hard.”

Marco Werner (Audi Bank Audi A4 DTM #17)

17th place, 1m 23.420s

“Things could have gone a little better. Unfortunately I was slower on the second set of tyres than on the first. I definitely would have liked making it at least into the second session. I’m sorry for the team because they really worked hard. We also made some progress, but for my first qualifying in the DTM, it wasn’t enough.”

Frank Biela (Siemens Audi A4 DTM #7)

18th place, 1m 23.694s

“This is not a result you can be satisfied with, not even considering the fact that I’m contesting a DTM race for the first time again and didn’t have an opportunity to test beforehand. Perhaps on the second set of tyres I might have been able to make it into the second section. But in turn 10 I slid into the gravel trap because of some dirt on the track. It’s really a shame. I’m still learning, even though I’ve been in this business for such a long time. Now I want to at least make up some ground in the race.”

Vanina Ickx (Audi A4 DTM #21)

20th place, 1m 24.468s

“All in all, I’m satisfied with Saturday. In the morning I improved my times, and I wasn’t lacking too much compared with the others. I’d been hoping to improve some more in qualifying – but in vain. That was disappointing, but on the whole, the day was a step forwards.”

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

“The air is thin. The field is incredibly tight. There’s no guarantee as to where you stand. Everything has to be one-hundred-percent right. With some, it wasn’t. Hopefully we’ll be doing better on Sunday.”

Ernst Moser (Team Director Audi Sport Team Phoenix): “Christian’s performance is outstanding. Actually, he doesn’t like this circuit at all. The improvement from free practice to qualifying was great. We made a few more changes to the set-up. Marco (Werner) experienced how tight things are in the DTM. It was his first attempt but he still needs a few more practice units. But his performance was good, as was that of his crew.”

Arno Zensen (Team Director Audi Sport Team Rosberg): “Rocky was sensational! A big load has come off my chest. I knew we’d be able to finish among the top eight with both cars – but on row one? Incredible! It’s just too bad that Lucas (Luhr) isn’t further towards the front. That’s why we’re looking at the day with mixed emotions.”

Qualifying results at Oschersleben

- 1 Mika Häkkinen (Mercedes), 1m 22.456s
- 2 Mike Rockenfeller (S line Audi A4 DTM), 1m 22.530s
- 3 Bruno Spengler (Mercedes), 1m 22.625s
- 4 Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM), 1m 22.682s
- 5 Jamie Green (Mercedes), 1m 22.791s
- 6 Timo Scheider (GW:plus/Top Service Audi A4 DTM), 1m 22.831s
- 7 Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM), 1m 22.935s
- 8 Gary Paffett (Mercedes), 1m 23.134s
- 9 Christian Abt (Playboy Audi A4 DTM), 1m 22.899s
- 10 Bernd Schneider (Mercedes), 1m 22.909s
- 11 Paul Di Resta (Mercedes), 1m 23.152s
- 12 Mathias Lauda (Mercedes), 1m 23.296s
- 13 Alexandros Margaritis (Mercedes), 1m 23.338s
- 14 Adam Carroll (Audi A4 DTM), 1m 23.394s
- 15 Daniel La Rosa (Mercedes), 1m 23.386s
- 16 Lucas Luhr (Philips Audi A4 DTM), 1m 23.400s
- 17 Marco Werner (Audi Bank Audi A4 DTM), 1m 23.420s
- 18 Frank Biela (Siemens Audi A4 DTM), 1m 23.694s
- 19 Susie Stoddart (Mercedes), 1m 23.897s
- 20 Vanina Ickx (Audi A4 DTM), 1m 24.468s

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