

Barcelona, 23 September 2007

Motorsport

Audi favours a sporting decision of the title

- **Excessively rough driving at the DTM race at Barcelona**
- **Audi withdraws all vehicles as a consequence**
- **Audi driver Mattias Ekström continues to lead the table**

The title decision in the 2007 DTM will only be made in the finale at Hockenheim on 14 October. 42,000 spectators at the Circuit de Catalunya near Barcelona (Spain) witnessed an excessively rough race in which one Audi driver after the other was bumped off the track by Mercedes drivers – among them all four drivers of Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline including the two candidates for the title, Mattias Ekström (Sweden) and Martin Tomczyk (Germany). When the situation threatened to escalate, Audi decided to withdraw all seven Audi A4 DTM cars that were still in the race.

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From the start, the quickest in qualifying, Martin Tomczyk, had taken the lead before being bumped off the track on lap seven by the two-time Formula World Champion Mika Häkkinen. After the incident, Tomczyk was at first able to continue the race in eleventh place but later had to retire because the radiator of his Audi A4 DTM was damaged in the collision.

Leader of the standings Mattias Ekström had advanced from tenth to sixth place after the start and was very quick after an early first tyre change. While overtaking Daniel la Rosa, who had not pitted yet, he was hit hard by the Mercedes driver. This meant the end of the race for the Swede as well.

Previously, on the starting lap, Tom Kristensen had been turned around by Mercedes driver Gary Paffett. When Timo Scheider and Mike Rockenfeller, who was running in third position, also were pushed off the track by Mercedes drivers, Head of Audi Motorsport Dr Wolfgang Ullrich – after consultation with the Chairman of the Board of AUDI AG, Rupert Stadler – decided to withdraw all seven Audi cars remaining in the race to send a clear message in favour of fair racing.

“What happened on the race track today was simply unacceptable,” stated Rupert Stadler, who witnessed the race live at the team garage of Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline. “We’re proceeding from the assumption that emotions will cool down again before the Hockenheim race and that spectators will see a finale with fair sport. It’s also clear that we continue to be committed to the DTM. But a few things will probably have to change.”

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “We wanted to see a tough, but fair touring car race today. But we had to get the impression that the Mercedes drivers used every opportunity to eliminate our cars. This is not the style in which we want to conduct motorsport. We want to see tough and fair duels but nothing of the kind we had today. That’s why we took the decision to withdraw all of our vehicles. That was not an easy decision, and it cost us points, and maybe even the title. But we wanted to send a clear message for fair motorsport.”

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