

## **Audi says: “Thank you, Mattias Ekström!”**

- **Most versatile motorsport driver says goodbye to Audi**
- **Exceptional career with the four rings with successes in DTM, GT3, Rallycross and Dakar**

**Ingolstadt, September 26, 2024 – 23 years ago, Mattias Ekström competed in the DTM as an Audi factory driver for the first time. Now he is finally saying “Adjö” to the four rings in his native Swedish. The exceptional sportsman, who always stood by his opinions and was therefore also able to polarize, was a first-class ambassador for Audi: two-time DTM champion, rallycross world champion, Spa 24 Hour race winner, Dakar stage winner and conqueror of the legendary Streif downhill ski run – uphill in an all-electric Audi e-tron technology demonstrator.**

Emotions, memories and lots of autographs: This was Mattias Ekström’s farewell to Audi in Ingolstadt on September 26 – the brand with which he celebrated the greatest successes in his outstanding motorsport career. Many motorsport fans from the Audi workforce and Rolf Michl, Managing Director of Audi Sport GmbH, attended the farewell on the factory premises. “We owe Mattias an immense amount, and in turn we have helped him to the greatest successes of his career,” said Michl, who led the brand’s Dakar program to success this year as Head of Motorsport. “To this day, I am impressed not only by his continuous performance but also by his excellent team spirit. Mattias has never concentrated solely on racing. He has always helped to drive projects forward, support our developers and promote the teams he has worked with. With these qualities and his series of successes, he is a great role model for many international talents in motorsport. We wish him all the best for his future career.”

Ekström was not even an Audi factory driver when he won his first title with Audi in his native Sweden in 1999 at the age of 21 – as a private driver in the A4 quattro in the Swedish Touring Car Championship. Two years later, Ekström had a contract with Audi and contested his first season in the DTM. The prestigious touring car series was to remain his sporting home for 17 years. With Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, the Scandinavian celebrated two titles in the Audi A4 DTM, finished four seasons as runner-up, scored 20 pole positions and 23 race wins.

While the DTM was his home for almost two decades, the Swede proved his sporting versatility in a number of other disciplines. Probably no other racing driver is as versatile. In 2011, together with Audi factory driver colleague Timo Scheider and Belgian driver Greg Franchi, he brought Audi’s young customer racing program its first overall 24-hour victory in the Audi R8 LMS GT3 sports car at Spa-Francorchamps in Belgium. In his own EKS team, he won the 2016 World Rallycross Championship with the Audi S1 EKS RX quattro, followed by three second places in the world championship. True to the motto painted on his helmet, “Go hard or go home”, he has also won the drivers classification four times and once the Nations Cup of the Race of Champions to date, an annual meeting of the world’s top motorsport drivers. Among others, he beat

Michael Schumacher twice and his son Mick once. In traditional rallying, the Swede achieved class successes at world championship level. In the Pure ETCR, he proved in 2021 as champion with the Group brand Cupra that he is also a perfect master of pioneering all-electric drives.

This does not only apply to paved surfaces: in 2023, he was runner-up in the Extreme E off-road racing series. At the same time, he did pioneering work in Audi's Dakar project. Together with co-driver and fellow countryman Emil Bergkvist, he helped the team to make an innovative electric drive with a high-voltage battery and energy converter ready for the toughest terrain. Audi thus achieved victory with Carlos Sainz/Lucas Cruz in 2024, while Ekström and his co-driver Bergkvist recorded four stage victories and a day in the lead at the Dakar Rally over the course of the program.

Another highlight with an electric drive was an extreme attempt on a ski slope. In 2019, Mattias Ekström conquered the Streif, the legendary ski slope of the Hahnenkamm race, in a specially equipped Audi e-tron technology demonstrator – uphill! The course was covered in snow and the gradient was 85 percent – too steep to walk up in an upright position.

“Driving for Audi Sport was like a childhood dream coming true,” says the now 46-year-old Mattias Ekström. “Looking back on more than two decades with the four rings brings back many memories. I had the chance to fulfill my dreams as a kid, like racing in the DTM, winning races and titles, and developing race cars. Winning the DTM title in 2004 is something I will cherish forever. But it was more than just motorsport. I had the chance to meet so many interesting and talented people and attended many great events. Being involved with the same company for so long is quite rare in motorsport, and I am very grateful for this period of my life. I can only say thank you to everyone at Audi.”

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In 2023, the Audi Group delivered 1.9 million Audi vehicles, 13,560 Bentley vehicles, 10,112 Lamborghini vehicles, and 58,224 Ducati motorcycles to customers. In the 2023 fiscal year, Audi Group achieved a total revenue of €69.9 billion and an operating profit of €6.3 billion. Worldwide, an annual average of more than 87,000 people worked for the Audi Group in 2023, more than 53,000 of them at AUDI AG in Germany. With its attractive brands and numerous new models, the group is systematically pursuing its path toward becoming a provider of sustainable, fully networked premium mobility.

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