

Hockenheim, 22 April 2007

Motorsport

Audi scores double victory at Hockenheim

- **Audi A4 DTM quickest car in DTM opening round**
- **Tenth DTM win for Mattias Ekström**
- **Serious accident overshadows season opener**

With a double victory at Hockenheim, Audi managed a successful start to the 2007 DTM season. 101,000 spectators (throughout the weekend) witnessed an impressive début of the evolution Audi A4 DTM that was the quickest car on all three days of the event. The Swede Mattias Ekström celebrated his tenth victory in the DTM with a flawless race and perfect strategy of Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline. Martin Tomczyk (Germany) bumped Mercedes driver Bruno Spengler from second place on the last lap to complete Audi's triumph.

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For Audi, this was the first success on the current track layout of the German Grand Prix circuit and the first victory at Hockenheim in exactly five years. The double victory might even have turned into a triple exploit of the Audi A4 DTM cars if it had not been for Bruno Spengler hitting Timo Scheider's car after a driving mistake. The newcomer to Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline thus dropped to ninth place after the crash in which he was not at fault, deprived of the reward for the perfect race he had driven up to that point. Spengler later received a 50-second penalty for his action.

The round at Hockenheim was overshadowed by a serious accident on the opening lap, which involved Audi drivers Tom Kristensen (Denmark), Alexandre Prémat (France) and Adam Carroll (Great Britain). After slight contact with another car, Kristensen had spun at the entrance to the "Parabolica" and was then "torpedoed" at high speed by several vehicles running behind him. While Carroll sustained no injuries in the accident at all, Kristensen and Prémat required medical attention at the site of the crash. Both drivers were subsequently taken to the trackside Medical Center, and later to hospitals for thorough medical examinations.

Le Mans record winner Tom Kristensen was found to have merely suffered bruises, while Alexandre Prémat sustained a rupture of a lumbar vertebrae, which, according to doctors, will not result in any permanent damage, though. Nevertheless, the Frenchman will not be able to compete for several weeks.

Both Audi drivers owe the fact that the accident did not lead to any more serious consequences to the extremely high safety standard of the Audi A4 DTM. The safety cells of both cars remained intact. The frontal impact suffered by Alexandre Prémat occurred at 158 kph.

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More fortunate than for Carroll and Prémat was the way the DTM début went for Lucas Luhr and Mike Rockenfeller, who brought their two Audi A4 DTM cars home in positions eleven and twelve after duels with title defender Bernd Schneider and two-time Formula 1 world champion Mika Häkkinen. Vanina Ickx finished the DTM opener as the best female contender in 15th place. For Christian Abt, the race ended prematurely after body contact with Bernd Schneider on lap five.

Quotes after the race

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “This was a day of extreme downs and ups. After the accident, I was deeply worried about Tom (Kristensen) and Alexandre (Prémat). That I was able to speak to both drivers in the Medical Center shortly after the collision shows that the DTM’s safety concept works. Due to the serious nature of the accident Tom and Alexandre were taken to hospitals for further checks. The entire Audi team wishes Alexandre a quick recovery. The race today was marked by superb strategy and a great job done by the team. And it showed how fast our cars were here today. We were able to translate this speed into a double victory – on a circuit that used to be firmly in the hands of Mercedes so far. Apart from the accident at the beginning of the race, it’s been a great day for Audi.”

Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #3)

1st place

“My car was simply the best today. The pit stops, too, were incredible. I’m very happy about my tenth DTM victory and about the fact that the accident in the beginning did not result in any more serious consequences than it did. Fortunately, we were able to continue the race after it was stopped. While I was following the others in the beginning of the race I had a bit too much understeer. That’s why I pitted earlier for the first time in order to be able to have the track to myself. Because without anyone in front, my A4 was perfect.”

Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #4)

2nd place, + 3.826s

“That was an exciting weekend – in both a positive and a negative sense. First, I’d like to wish Tom Kristensen and Alex Prémat all the best. I hope they’ll be with us again soon. The race was very tough, but the outcome was the best possible one of all: a one-two victory for Audi! I achieved my personal goal, although, without my braking error, perhaps I might have even been able to win. But at least the man I prefer sharing the podium with was all the way at the top. It’s the best start to a season one can imagine.”

Timo Scheider (Gebrauchtwagen:plus/Top Service Audi A4 DTM #8)

9th place, + 16.859s

“Basically, this was a good race. I gained one position at the start. And after the race was restarted, my performance was good too. The strategy was perfect: We stayed out for a long time to keep from having to return to the track on new tyres in traffic. Towards the end I caught Martin (Tomczyk), who was unable to pass Bruno (Spengler). Bruno made a mistake while entering the Mercedes-Arena. He slid and was running wide, Martin passed, and I followed. I was three fourths of a car length in front of him, when Bruno simply hit me in the side and turned me around. I cannot understand such an action. It’s disappointing because today we could have clinched a triple victory for Audi that would have been well deserved.”

Lucas Luhr (Philips Audi A4 DTM #12)

11th place, + 33.245s

“A turbulent race at the start to the season! After the accident we started behind the safety car. The cars in front of me accelerated early, and I lost a little bit of ground. After that, things were going well. Only in the second sector I had too much understeer, was caught behind Mike (Rockenfeller) and lost some downforce. The result isn’t all that great, but having started from position 19 you couldn’t expect too much either. But I learned a lot this weekend and will apply that on the track in the upcoming races.”

Mike Rockenfeller (S line Audi A4 DTM #11)

12th place, + 33.801s

“Congratulations to Mattias, Martin and Audi on their good performance. A one-two victory is a good way to kick off the season. I’m personally disappointed as I started in eleventh place and lost some positions. It was a very turbulent race as a result of the accident. The most important thing is that both will be fit again. We need to look at what happened. The race was pretty short, and that made everything a little chaotic. I’m sorry about not having clinched a better result for the team.”

Vanina Ickx (Audi A4 DTM #21)

15th place, + 1m 05.012s

“I’m very happy about Audi’s double victory at Hockenheim at the beginning of the year. A nice result for Mattias (Ekström), who was so unlucky last year. He deserves this victory. I drove my own race and was often alone on the circuit, which was also due to the fact that because of the accident I dropped to the back of the field before the race was re-started. The important thing, though, is that the accident did not have really serious consequences for any of those who were involved.”

Christian Abt (Playboy Audi A4 DTM #16)

Retired (collision)

“I advanced from 15th place to tenth – everything was going according to plan. But then Bernd Schneider thwarted my plans. After our contact, a wishbone at the right-hand rear suspension broke. Too bad, today, we could have scored points. We’ll clinch them next time, though.”

Tom Kristensen (Siemens Audi A4 DTM #7)

Retired (accident)

“Many thanks for all the good wishes I received this afternoon. I’m fine, only my head is hurting quite a bit. Of course the fact that our cars are so safe paid off yet again. Naturally, my congratulations go to Eki, Martin and the whole team on the double victory. But the most important thing now is for Alex to get well again soon.”

Alexandre Prémat (Audi Bank Audi A4 DTM #17)

Retired (accident)

“That was a serious accident, and I’m happy that the Audi A4 DTM is such a safe car. I’m hoping to be fit again soon.”

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Adam Carroll (Audi A4 DTM #20)

Retired (accident)

“A short race! It’s very disappointing to lose several cars so early – both for Audi and for our team. The start was good, and I managed to pass a few cars. Suddenly, though, I saw nothing but white smoke in front of me after Tom (Kristensen) spun. I wanted to get past the scene but then Alexandre (Prémat), who had to evade the incident as well, moved over, and we crashed.”

Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Director Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline): “A double victory at Hockenheim is a huge success. We’ve been waiting for this for many years. I’m just as happy, though, about the fact that Tom (Kristensen) came out of the accident with minor injuries and hope that Alexandre will be with us again as soon as possible too. My thanks go to the team and every member for the good job they did. I don’t mind things continuing this way. We worked very hard for this and reaped the success in the Mercedes stronghold.”

Ernst Moser (Team Director Audi Sport Team Phoenix): “Right on the first lap we lost Alexandre’s (Prémat) car. Then, when Christian (Abt) retired as well, it was the most disappointing result you could imagine. That’s frustrating although in the practice sessions we showed what would have been possible for us. We can build on this, and now we know what we have to do with the tyres. For Audi Sport Team Phoenix, the result was too

bad, but for Audi, the one-two victory was great. We're happy that the accident didn't have more serious consequences for Alexandre and Tom."

Arno Zensen (Team Director Audi Sport Team Rosberg):

"Congratulations to Audi. A double victory at Hockenheim is an incredible exploit – I'm overjoyed. Our own weekend didn't go quite as well: We did finish the race with both cars, but not in the positions we'd been shooting for. There's still more work for us to do."

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The result at Hockenheim

- 1 Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM) 27laps in 1h 10m 16.441s
- 2 Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM) + 3.826s
- 3 Daniel La Rosa (Mercedes) + 7.057s
- 4 Alexandros Margaritis (Mercedes) + 8.451s
- 5 Paul Di Resta (Mercedes) + 9.036s
- 6 Jamie Green (Mercedes) + 10.913s
- 7 Bernd Schneider (Mercedes) + 13.743s
- 8 Gary Paffett (Mercedes) + 14.460s
- 9 Timo Scheider (GW:plus/Top Service Audi A4 DTM) + 16.859s
- 10 Mika Häkkinen (Mercedes) + 17.271s
- 11 Lucas Luhr (Philips Audi A4 DTM) + 33.245s
- 12 Mike Rockenfeller (S line Audi A4 DTM) + 33.801s
- 13 Mathias Lauda (Mercedes) + 36.139s
- 14 Bruno Spengler (Mercedes) + 56.850s
- 15 Vanina Ickx (Audi A4 DTM) + 1 m05.012s

Not classified:

- Christian Abt (Playboy Audi A4 DTM), - 22 laps (collision)
- Tom Kristensen (Siemens Audi A4 DTM), - 27 laps (accident)
- Susie Stoddart (Mercedes), - 27 laps
- Alexandre Prémat (Audi Bank Audi A4 DTM), -27 laps (accident)
- Adam Carroll (Audi A4 DTM), - 27 laps (accident)

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Photographs, sound bites and additional information available on the Internet:
www.audi-motorsport.info (accreditation necessary)

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