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Motorsport

Audi target another victory at Barcelona

- **First ever DTM race in Spain**
- **Audi driver Tom Kristensen with useful circuit knowledge**
- **Title fight enters decisive phase**

The 2006 DTM season enters the finishing straight with a premiere: For the first time in DTM history, the most popular international touring car racing series comes to Spain. The final spurt in the DTM starts on 24 September around the Circuit de Catalunya situated on the outskirts of Barcelona before heading to Le Mans (France) for the first time three weeks later and culminates with the final race at Hockenheim (Germany) on 29 October.

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With only three championship rounds remaining, the title fight between premium manufacturers Audi and Mercedes has come to a head. The pace is getting tougher and every point counts. Audi “factory” driver Tom Kristensen has reduced the gap to championship leader Bernd Schneider to ten points after winning at Zandvoort. The Dane from Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, who has already started from the front row four-times and won twice this year with his Siemens Audi A4 DTM, completed a pre-season test at Barcelona and knows the short 2.949 kilometre DTM loop from his days as a Formula 1 test driver – in a race series where hundredths-of-a-second count for a great deal, a small, but possibly decisive advantage.

The Circuit de Catalunya is also known by the majority of his Audi team-mates. Martin Tomczyk – who more recently finished on the DTM podium twice in succession – won a ‘star-of-tomorrow’ single-seater race there in 1999. Pierre Kaffer led Frank Stippler home at Barcelona in the 2003 Porsche Supercup. Heinz-Harald Frentzen frequently scored points at Barcelona in Formula 1. Nicolas Kiesa competed there in Formula 3000. Mattias Ekström and Timo Scheider know the circuit from tests. Barcelona is only completely new for Christian Abt and Vanina Ickx.

Audi Sport conducted a pre-season test at Barcelona and have made intensive preparations for the final phase in the 2006 DTM with a two-day test at the EuroSpeedway Lausitz between the Zandvoort and Barcelona races.

The first DTM race to be held in Spain starts on Sunday (24 September) at 2 p.m. local time. The ARD broadcasts qualifying on Saturday (23 September) from 2 p.m. and Sunday's race from 1:45 p.m. "live" from Barcelona.

Quotes before the race at Barcelona

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): "DTM comes to Barcelona and will race on the short loop and not the Grand Prix circuit – a circuit layout on which neither of the two manufacturers has been able to test and which is completely new for everybody. We are looking confidently ahead. We completed another development test between Zandvoort and Barcelona, have prepared ourselves very well for the forthcoming races and worked meticulously to ensure that we can continue to fight for the championship."

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Martin Tomczyk

Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #4

"Barcelona is new territory for the DTM but not for me. I've even won a race there. The Circuit de Catalunya is a fantastic circuit for a DTM race. It is neither an advantage nor disadvantage for Audi that we will use the short circuit. I think it's great that both manufacturers come to Barcelona to a circuit on which neither has any previous experience. In this way both start from scratch."

Mattias Ekström

Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #5

"I'm looking forward to Barcelona. It'll be the first time that I race there. I like Spain in general, which is why I'm looking forward to the weekend. It goes without saying that we'll try everything to get Tom (Kristensen) even closer to Bernd (Schneider) in the championship standings."

Heinz-Harald Frentzen

Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Veltins Audi A4 DTM #6

“Barcelona is an absolutely fantastic circuit where there is always a great atmosphere, which I know from my Formula 1 days. I’m really looking forward to driving for the first time at Barcelona since 2003. The circuit will obviously be a new challenge in a DTM car.”

Tom Kristensen

Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Siemens Audi A4 DTM #7

“ ‘Eki’ and I tested earlier this year at Barcelona. I know the circuit from my time as a Formula 1 ‘test’ driver – even the short loop which we flooded once to test rain tyres. So, I’m well aware of what to expect. I think we have a good chance of narrowing the gap to Bernd (Schneider) at Barcelona and at Le Mans. After failing to finish at Brands Hatch we knew that we would have to fight hard and do everything possible. Winning at Zandvoort was fantastic. Unfortunately Bernd stood next to me on the podium, which wasn’t so good. At Barcelona, I’d really not like to see any Mercedes drivers on the podium if possible – otherwise it’ll be really difficult in the title fight.”

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Christian Abt, Audi Sport Team Phoenix, Playboy Audi A4 DTM #12

“Barcelona is a beautiful city which I currently know better than the circuit - which I only know from watching television at the moment. I’ll just wait and see how it is. Our 2005 Audi was better than the 2005 Mercedes at Zandvoort. I hope that this is also the case at Barcelona.”

Pierre Kaffer

Audi Sport Team Phoenix, Castrol Audi A4 DTM #14

“I have great memories of Barcelona. Frank (Stippler) and I scored a one-two together there in the Porsche Supercup. I personally think it’s a great shame that we don’t actually run on the first section of the Grand Prix track – I’ve always loved it.”

Frank Stippler

Audi Sport Team Rosberg, S line Audi A4 DTM #15

“To all intents and purposes Barcelona will be new since we race on the short circuit, and to start with we’ll have to find our way around. I have good memories of the long circuit – I finished on the podium there. For me it’s once again a

question of getting a trouble-free weekend on my account after all the bad luck this year.”

Timo Scheider

Audi Sport Team Rosberg, Gebrauchtwagen:plus Audi A4 DTM #16

“I’m looking forward to Barcelona, because we finally return to warmer regions – after all we didn’t have a particularly long summer this year... Seriously though, we’ll drive on the short circuit at Barcelona, which will certainly please the fans as they’ll see us more often. There is a long straight at Barcelona where we’ll need to carry a lot of speed. If we get things to work as well as they did at Zandvoort, we could also do well there.”

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Vanina Ickx

Futurecom TME, Original Zubehör Audi A4 DTM #20

“Barcelona is another new circuit for me, which I’m not familiar with. I’ve heard a lot about the track, it should be really quick. I’ve been told by my team-mates that I’ll like Barcelona, so I’m looking forward to it.”

Nicolas Kiesa

Futurecom TME, Futurecom Audi A4 DTM #19

“Luckily I know the circuit at Barcelona already. I hope that I can reproduce my Zandvoort performance there. Things are so incredibly close in the DTM that everything must be perfect – especially with a 2004 car. I found a good basic set-up at Zandvoort that should also work at Barcelona and suit the fast corners there, especially the long corner before the start-finish. I want to do well there.”

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

“Everybody breaks new ground at Barcelona. It was for the fans benefit that we decided to race on the short loop: They see a whole lot more on a shorter circuit. We are quite confident that things could run for us as they did at Zandvoort.”

Ernst Moser (Team Director Audi Sport Team Phoenix): “We still don’t have a great deal of information about Barcelona. The circuit layout is slightly different than originally expected and it appears that the track surface has also been changed. We found a good basic set-up at Zandvoort which should give us a head start at Barcelona.”

Arno Zensen (Team Director Audi Sport Team Rosberg): “We want to carry on at Barcelona where we left off in Zandvoort – in the points. However, we’d also like to get finally get ‘Stippi’ up the front. It should be possible, and we’ll be working hard to achieve this.”

Editorial note:

To celebrate the inaugural DTM race at Barcelona, Audi invites all media representatives to a “Spanish Night” on Saturday evening starting at 9 p.m. in the Audi Team & Media Hospitality in the paddock. Further details are available on location from the Audi Team & Media Hospitality reception desk.

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Photographs, sound bites and other information can be found in the Internet at: www.audi-motorsport.info (accreditation required)

Facts about the DTM race at Barcelona

Previous winners at Barcelona

The DTM starts for the first time at Barcelona

Circuit length

2.949 km

Race distance

58 laps = 171.042 km

2006 DTM point standings

| Driver | | Teams | |
|--------------|----|--------------------------------------|----|
| 1 Schneider | 54 | 1 Vodafone/Salzgitter AMG Mercedes | 74 |
| 2 Kristensen | 44 | 2 Audi Sport Team Abt | 62 |
| 3 Spengler | 39 | 3 DaimlerChrysler Bank AMG Mercedes | 56 |
| 4 Tomczyk | 23 | 4 Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline | 39 |
| 5 Green | 20 | 5 stern/Easy Rent AMG Mercedes | 22 |
| 6 Frentzen | 18 | 6 Audi Sport Team Rosberg | 8 |
| 7 Häkkinen | 17 | 7 TV-Spielfilm/TrekStor AMG Mercedes | 7 |
| 8 Ekström | 16 | 8 Audi Sport Team Phoenix | 5 |

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