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Motorsport

Audi to increase DTM commitment

- **New V8 engine for Audi A4 DTM**
- **DTM is the most attractive racing series outside Formula 1**
- **Long-term commitment planned**

AUDI AG continues to bank on the future of the DTM by further increasing its commitment in the highest-calibre and most popular international touring car series for the 2006 season. After clinching the title in 2004 with Audi “factory” driver Mattias Ekström and being defeated this season by only a narrow margin, the objectives for next year are very clear: “We want to recapture the lead from Mercedes-Benz to thus underline our position as the sportiest manufacturer in the premium car segment,” says Professor Dr Martin Winterkorn, Chairman of the Board of Management of AUDI AG. “At the same time, together with Mercedes-Benz, we are going to continue to work on strengthening the DTM’s role as the most attractive racing series outside of Formula 1. With a long-term commitment to DTM, which currently is planned for at least three years including 2008, we are adding our part to that.”

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Audi and Mercedes-Benz, the two leading German automotive manufacturers, compete against each other at the highest level in the 2006 DTM to continue a great tradition. It will re-enact the famous duel which thrilled spectators 70 years ago when the legendary “Silver Arrows” from Auto Union and Mercedes-Benz raced against each other. Mercedes-Benz has been committed to the DTM for many years. Audi, DTM champions in 1990, 1991, 2002 and 2004, is one of the most successful and prestigious brands of the DTM – a series which breaks one record after another: 922,500 fans attended the eleven DTM races last season and approximately two million spectators on average watched every race “live” on ARD TV – thus making 2005 the most successful so far in the DTM’s 21-year history. Furthermore, on an international scale, the DTM reached record TV audiences, far surpassing those of the FIA World Touring Car Championship (WTCC) and other racing series.

“It is obvious that spectators want to see spectacular touring cars at the highest level,” says Head of Audi Motorsport, Dr Wolfgang Ullrich. “And this is exactly what the DTM offers them. Additionally, the cars are so appealing that the DTM even attracts the world’s best racing drivers.” At the same time, the financial investment is reasonable – a prerequisite for entering ten cars, as Audi is planning to do for the 2006 season. The Technical Regulations envisaged for 2007 will further reduce costs, thus making the DTM even more attractive for automotive manufacturers who are currently considering a commitment or are active in another series. “With Audi and Mercedes-Benz committing to DTM on a long-term basis, it gives the series ‘security’ for all interested partners and other manufacturers.”

In the 2006 DTM, Audi will be competing with an A4 DTM version that has been subjected to further development, bearing the internal project name “R12 plus”. Apart from modifications to the aerodynamics and suspension, the A4 DTM will be fitted with a new V8 engine which has been running on the dyno since the end of October.

A total of twelve DTM races are planned for the 2006 season – six of them in Germany, one of AUDI AG’s most important markets. New venues on the calendar are Brands Hatch (Great Britain), Le Mans (France) and Barcelona (Spain), and thus three European circuits which are extremely rich in tradition.

In 2006, the DTM’s attractive supporting programme will again include the SEAT Leon Supercopa and the ADAC Volkswagen Polo Cup.

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Photographs, sound bites and additional information available on the Internet:
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