

Ingolstadt, 8 April 2005

Motorsport

First race for the new Audi A4 DTM

- **DTM season opener in Hockenheim on April 17**
- **Advance ticket sales promise record crowd**
- **Audi with eight cars on the grid for the first time**

Only a few more days before the new DTM season kicks off at Hockenheim. Audi start as defending champions in Europe's most popular touring car series and, for the first time, with eight cars: Four new generation Audi A4 DTM cars will be entered by Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Audi Sport Team Joest races with four of last year's cars.

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The moment of truth looms for the Audi A4 DTM at Hockenheim where it makes its first competitive outing. Immediately after the DTM Presentation, the roll out for the four race cars and a concluding test, in which the final aerodynamic configuration was defined, was held in Spain. It is not allowed to change the aerodynamic configuration during the DTM season and is therefore of particular importance.

Audi drivers Allan McNish, Pierre Kaffer and Frank Stippler make their DTM debuts in Hockenheim. Rinaldo Capello competed in the DTM already last year at the Chinese guest race in Shanghai, but competes in a race for the first time on the new Grand Prix track at Hockenheim.

Mattias Ekström finished third during the Audi A4 DTM car's debut at Hockenheim in April last year. Martin Tomczyk was narrowly beaten into second place at the finale in October at the same venue.

The Audi drivers expect a record crowd in Hockenheim: Over 50,000 tickets – more than ever before – have been sold in advance. The ARD broadcasts qualifying on Saturday (April 16) from 2 p.m. local time and the race on Sunday (April 17) from 1:45 p.m. live from Hockenheim. The 2005 DTM is shown live on television in more than 30 countries worldwide.

Quotes before the DTM opener

Mattias Ekström (Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline #1): “I love coming to Hockenheim and I am particularly interested this time as we will finally know just how good our car is in comparison to those of our competitors. One thing is clear: If we are good at Hockenheim then we’ll be a force to be reckoned with throughout the year – because, till now Hockenheim was never one of our favourite circuits.”

Martin Tomczyk (Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline #2): “In Hockenheim we’ll see exactly how the balance of power in the DTM lies for the first time. I wish that we will be capable of winning from the beginning on. My personal goal is to finish in the top five. It would be a good start to the season for me.”

Tom Kristensen (Audi Sport Team Abt #5): “I’m pleased that it’s about to start. Last year, Hockenheim was my first ever DTM race – the circuit was also new to me. In the meantime I have a DTM season behind me and I like Hockenheim.”

Allan McNish (Audi Sport Team Abt #6): “I’m expecting a tough fight in Hockenheim and for a DTM newcomer like me a relatively hard weekend. I know, however, just how good the new Audi is. That’s why I’m expecting a good result.”

Christian Abt (Audi Sport Team Joest Racing #14): “The goal with one of last year’s cars can only be to get a point. I don’t believe that you can finish in the top ten in qualifying. You have to do your best though, to be as close as possible and to have a good starting position for the race.”

Pierre Kaffer (Audi Sport Team Joest Racing #15): “I can’t wait for my first DTM season to start. Things ran very well at the test at Spa, setting the fastest time gave me a little extra motivation. But we we’ll have to see again just where we really stand. It would be great if a point came our way.”

Rinaldo Capello (Audi Sport Team Joest Racing #18): “It will certainly be of help to us that last year’s cars can run with less weight. But we will probably have to wait till qualifying on Saturday before seeing where we really stand. It would be

fantastic to make the Top Ten, but it won't be easy. However, in the meantime I feel really at home in the A4 DTM."

Frank Stippler (Audi Sport Team Joest Racing #19): "Audi Sport and the team are working feverishly to give me a perfect car again after the testing accident in Spa. I'd like to repay the team with a good performance in Hockenheim. At the moment I can still feel the bruises, but I should be top fit again before the race."

Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Director Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline): "The first race of the season is always very special – particularly in front of such a crowd, which we expect at Hockenheim. We will do everything possible to give the Audi fans something to cheer about. We are well prepared and are, as always, highly motivated."

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Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Team Joest): "Hockenheim was a relatively difficult circuit for the A4 DTM last year, but we now have a large amount of experience and information. There are often teething problems with new cars, so it could be a golden opportunity for us to get a relatively good result with last year's cars."

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): "We had two very different races in Hockenheim last year: With a little luck, the A4 DTM took a podium finish on its debut, and pole position at the finale. During our first DTM season we made a lot of progress with the car between the first and last race. Thanks to the experience, we want to start at a higher level in the 2005 season. We know, however, that our competitors were not idle over the winter. That's why we are looking forward to an exciting curtain raiser in front of packed grandstands."

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