

Nürburgring, 6 August 2005

Motorsport

Five Audi A4 DTM cars among the top ten

- **Mattias Ekström to start from second row at the Nürburgring**
- **All four new A4 DTM cars in Super pole**
- **Christian Abt in last year's A4 third in qualifying**

A strong team performance was shown by Audi in the qualifying session for the seventh DTM round at the Nürburgring. For the first time in the 2005 season, five Audi drivers qualified for the Super pole – and for the first time, as well, this included a driver of a 2004-spec A4. Title defender Mattias Ekström in the Audi A4 DTM entered by Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline clocked 1m22.793s, marking the best time ever to have been achieved by a DTM car on the Nürburgring's sprint circuit. Team-mate Tom Kristensen and Christian Abt in last year's A4 of Audi Sport Team Joest completed the Audi trio at the top. Allan McNish and Martin Tomczyk took positions five and six.

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However, in the subsequent single timed lap of the quickest ten, with slightly different grip conditions, the Audi drivers did not match their qualifying times. Despite being seven tenths slower, Mattias Ekström managed to claim third place on the grid. Tom Kristensen, Martin Tomczyk and Allan McNish claimed positions six, seven and eight. Christian Abt as the quickest driver of a car from last year will start from the fifth row. Frank Stippler, Rinaldo Capello and Pierre Kaffer will enter the race on Sunday, which is scheduled to start at 2 p.m., from 14th, 17th and 19th place. ARD will broadcast live from the Eifel, starting at 1:45 p.m. (local time).

Quotes after qualifying

Mattias Ekström (Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline #1)

3rd place, Super pole, 1m 23.516s

“We were very quick before, that's why the Super pole result is a bit of a disappointment for us. I didn't make any mistakes on my lap, it's just that there

was a lack of grip. I wasn't able to fight any harder than I did. It'll be a tough race tomorrow."

Tom Kristensen (Audi Sport Team Abt #5)

6th place, Super pole, 1m 23.653s

"In the qualifying practice I had a good feeling and even decided to forego a fast lap in order to save my tyres for the race. In the Super pole, there was suddenly a lack of grip. I felt this immediately and then pushed harder, but I had no chance to come close to my qualifying time."

Martin Tomczyk (Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline #2)

7th place, Super pole, 1m 23.676s

"The qualifying went well, I'd been aiming for fourth place. Then, in the Super pole, there was no grip any more. Obviously, our competitors had less of a problem with this. That's why I'm not satisfied with the result."

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Allan McNish (Audi Sport Team Abt #6)

8th place, Super pole, 1m 23.789s

"Especially in the qualifying I was very competitive today, but in the Super pole I pushed a bit too hard. In the final turn I suddenly had heavy oversteer, which cost me a lot of time and a few positions on the grid. Still: in the race we're going to show that we're part of the action."

Christian Abt (Audi Sport Team Joest Racing #14)

9th place, Super pole, 1m 23.813s

"After my great performance in qualifying, I'm not satisfied with my Super pole lap. There had been more in it for me, but in the last sector I probably lost four tenths. Nevertheless: starting from ninth place isn't all that bad, you can still achieve a lot from there."

Frank Stippler (Audi Sport Team Joest #19)

14th place, 1m 23.701s

"In my first attempt I was caught behind a very slow rival, in the second outing I was closely following Tom Kristensen, who was quicker than I, but I lost downforce behind him. The fact that after a repair of the radiator I claimed 14th place after – what I think – was a poor lap, shows how easily I could have made it

into the Super pole. Yet I want to thank my boys for having managed to perform the radiator repair as quickly as they did.”

Rinaldo Capello (Audi Sport Team Joest #18)

17th place, 1m 24.106s

“Before the qualifying I had been more confident, but with my second set of tyres, as well as with the third, I was lacking grip. That’s why I couldn’t run any faster. In some of the corners my car suddenly oversteered heavily. This hadn’t occurred quite like this in the free practice session.”

Pierre Kaffer (Audi Sport Team Joest Racing #15)

19th place, 1m 24.190s

“I had expected a better result because I thought we had found the right set-up in the free practice session. My second flying lap was my fastest but, unfortunately, not fast enough for a place further at the front. In a championship where the field is as close as it is in the DTM every tenth makes a big difference.”

Albert Deuring (Technical Director Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline): “After the strong qualifying, we had difficulties with track conditions in the Super pole. Whilst our competitors knew the pace from the qualifying practice, we lost too much time compared to our qualifying performance, and this was reflected by the result. Now, we’re going to try and work our way forwards in the race with a good strategy.”

Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Team Joest): “I have mixed emotions. I regret that both Pierre Kaffer and Rinaldo Capello were not satisfied with their tyres and that Frank Stippler was slowed down in both of his fast laps. Then we had to replace a leaking radiator on his car, which our boys accomplished in a fantastic six minutes. Unfortunately, we saw no major improvement in the third attempt either. I’m happy for Christian Abt, who, clocking the third-best time in the qualifying session, showed an incredibly strong performance. I suppose that afterwards, in the Super pole, he was a bit too cautious. Still: for tomorrow, we’re hoping for points again.”

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “The qualifying result was a strong performance of the whole squad. In the Super pole, all of our drivers immediately complained about poor grip. We need to find out the reason for this

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and make the best of it in the race. Generally speaking, our cars have so far left a strong impression here.”

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**Photographs, sound bites and additional information to download at:
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