

Zandvoort, 29 July 2007

Motorsport

Quadruple victory for Audi at Zandvoort

- **Martin Tomczyk wins his second DTM race**
- **Perfect teamwork within the Audi squad**
- **Mattias Ekström expands lead in the standings**

The so far most thrilling and fiercely fought DTM race of the year that was marked by strategy, nail-biting duels and perfect teamwork within the Audi squad ended in a total Audi triumph. 74,500 spectators (throughout the weekend) witnessed the first quadruple victory of the Audi A4 in DTM history.

AUDI AG
Kommunikation
85045 Ingolstadt
www.audi.com

Martin Tomczyk (Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline) celebrated his second DTM victory. Alexandre Prémat (Audi Sport Team Phoenix) finished as the runner-up, clinching the first podium position in his still “young” DTM career. Mattias Ekström who captured third place in a fierce fight expanded his lead in the standings. Timo Scheider and Christian Abt with places four and six perfectly complemented the Audi festival alongside the Dutch North Sea coast.

All weekend the Audi A4 DTM was in a class by itself at Zandvoort. Having clinched the top five grid positions, the Audi squad had worked out a perfect starting base in qualifying for the race, which showed, yet again, how difficult it is in the DTM to win with even a superior vehicle.

In the first corner Tom Kristensen was pushed against Paul di Resta by Mercedes driver Bruno Spengler. The collision caused the Dane to lose a lot of ground. Later, title defender Bernd Schneider (also Mercedes) drove into Kristensen’s right-hand rear wheel in the notorious “Tarzan Bocht“. The subsequent fights with Schneider and his teammate Jamie Green ultimately led to the Le Mans record winner’s retirement from the race.

Mattias Ekström led the race in a commanding way straight from the start but lost a lot of time during his first pit stop as the nut of the left rear wheel was jammed. After the stop, the Swede was massively slowed by several Mercedes drivers who performed their mandatory pit stops extremely late. With consummate commitment and an early second stop Ekström consistently made up ground again in the Zandvoort thriller.

In the closing stages, the fans witnessed a new version of the duel with Mika Häkkinen, which Ekström this time managed to decide in his favour. Five laps before race end, the Swede overtook the two-time Formula 1 World Champion. On the final lap, Ekström passed Bruno Spengler as well.

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The fact that Ekström in third place even clinched a podium finish, expanding his overall lead by eight points, he owed to the team spirit of his brand colleagues Christian Abt and Timo Scheider, who let the Swede pass, thus giving him maximum support.

Perfect teamwork in the competition with Mercedes was also demonstrated by Martin Tomczyk and Alexandre Prémat: When Martin Tomczyk, who had been leading the race for a long time, encountered tyre problems he let Prémat pass. When it was clear that Mercedes would have no more chance for victory, Prémat let Tomczyk go ahead again.

Quotes after the race

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “That was an Audi weekend – in qualifying as well as in the race. Although there were some tough manoeuvres they were okay from our perspective. The fans want to see fierce duels. We fought for this quadruple victory and I am convinced that we truly deserved it. Our drivers and teams showed absolutely perfect teamwork today. Everyone knows exactly what to do. This was obvious in many situations today. I can understand that Mercedes are disappointed. But this weekend we simply had the better performance.”

Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #4)

1st place

“That was a tough race which was highly unnerving for me. On the last nine laps I had incredible problems – however, only at one particular place, that was in turn 3. I turned into the corner but the car kept running straight ahead. I don’t know yet why. In this turn I lost a second. Towards the end that situation levelled out a bit, but not much. It was nerve-racking because I wasn’t sure that the tyre would last that long. I really want to thank Audi, Team Abt Sportsline and, above all, Team Phoenix and, particularly, Alexandre Prémat. That’s the way teamwork has to be. We proved that we’re capable of delivering the best teamwork. Many thanks from me for this. As a result, the title fight has become even more exciting.”

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Alexandre Prémat (Audi Bank Audi A4 DTM #17)

2nd place, + 0.297s

“The team did an excellent job, and we were very quick. Everything was handled to perfection. I’m satisfied with our work and happy for Martin (Tomczyk) and Mattias (Ekström), who are both fighting for the title. I led a race in the DTM for the first time today, which was fantastic. Then I let Martin pass so that he could score points, which is very important for him. I’m happy for Audi as well because a top performance was rendered this weekend.”

Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #3)

3rd place, + 2.036s

“My start was good, the car very consistent during the first stint. The first pit stop took too long and I got into traffic. After the second stop I returned to the track behind Häkkinen, joined the fight and managed to pass him. Christian Abt was very nice and let me go by, as did Timo Scheider. That I was able to snatch Bruno Spengler as well, was great. Third place is incredible good for such a race.”

Timo Scheider (Gebrauchtwagen:plus/Top Service Audi A4 DTM #8)
4th place, + 2.413s

“The start was okay and basically went according to plan. Our strategy did not pay off towards the end. At that time, I was stuck behind three of Mercedes’s cars from last year, which cost me a lot of time. The manoeuvre with Bruno (Spengler) at the end was really nice. Actually, a podium place would have been possible today. But it goes without saying that I help Mattias (Ekström) and Martin (Tomczyk) in the fight for the title.”

Christian Abt (Playboy Audi A4 DTM #16)
6th place, + 4.969s

“From eleventh place to sixth – this is a result to be satisfied with. We did a superb job as a team. Of course we also had to pay attention to the Championship, which in the end cost me one or two places. But realising that the performance is right, you don’t mind, really. We’ve done a lot for Audi in the past – today was another example.”

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Mike Rockenfeller (S line Audi A4 DTM #11)
10th place, + 8.914s

“I had a good start and was fifth. I was able to follow the group and was quite happy. In the beginning I stayed out for a very long time and found myself far to the rear of the field after my first stop. It’s disappointing to be able to be among the front runners but to end up at the rear due to pit stops and strategy.”

Markus Winkelhock (Audi A4 DTM #20)
13th place, + 13.279s

“I was struck by misfortune even prior to race start when the car wouldn’t start. That meant I had to start from the last row. As early as in the first turn I overtook several cars. The race was more or less uneventful for me. My car was oversteering across the entire distance.”

Lucas Luhr (Philips Audi A4 DTM #12)
16th place, + 41.986s

“My race was over in the first corner. I had a good start. After the start two rivals drove into my car. This caused me to lose half of my parts and I could do nothing anymore.”

Tom Kristensen (Siemens Audi A4 DTM #7)

18th place, - 5 laps

“My race was decided as early as on the first lap. I had a good start. Bruno Spengler passed me on the inside as I was carefully braking into the first corner because my Audi teammates were in front of me. Spengler hit me hard and I collided with Paul di Resta. This cost me a lot of places. The pit stops were very good but I was driving in traffic a lot. Bernd Schneider and Jamie Green hit me in the rear. I got stuck in a group and wasn’t able to drive any faster. They were a bit optimistic. The last hit by Bernd Schneider was too hard for my car and I had to retire. Actually, I would not expect such an action from a DTM Champion.”

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

“This was an incredible thriller which had a superb outcome for Audi with a quadruple victory and sixth place. That’s a dream result and a confirmation for the entire team. Today everyone worked together perfectly. That was great teamwork! Congratulations to all. I won’t forget this day for a long time.”

Ernst Moser (Team Director Audi Sport Team Phoenix):

“A perfect race. The pace was right, we changed the tyres at the right time, and the strategy was good too. At the end of the race we were even leading. Everything else fell into place. Both cars scored a large number of points – second place – a podium result, finally. We haven’t had this as a team for a long time. A great feeling!”

Arno Zensen (Team Director Audi Sport Team Rosberg):

“A fantastic race for Audi! Three drivers on the podium and four cars among the top four – simply good. We, of Team Rosberg, though, best forget about our race immediately.”

The result at Zandvoort

- 1 Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM) 38 laps in 1h 02m 31.668s
- 2 Alexandre Prémat (Audi Bank Audi A4 DTM) + 0.297s
- 3 Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM) + 2.036s
- 4 Timo Scheider (GW:plus/Top Service Audi A4 DTM) + 2.413s
- 5 Bruno Spengler (Mercedes) + 2.944s
- 6 Christian Abt (Playboy Audi A4 DTM) + 4.969s
- 7 Mika Häkkinen (Mercedes) + 5.748s
- 8 Alexandros Margaritis (Mercedes) + 6.929s
- 9 Gary Paffett (Mercedes) + 7.882s
- 10 Mike Rockenfeller (S line Audi A4 DTM) + 8.914s
- 11 Jamie Green (Mercedes) + 10.536s
- 12 Bernd Schneider (Mercedes) + 11.805s
- 13 Markus Winkelhock (Audi A4 DTM) + 13.279s
- 14 Paul di Resta (Mercedes) + 13.758s
- 15 Mathias Lauda (Mercedes) + 29.626s
- 16 Lucas Luhr (Philips Audi A4 DTM) + 41.986s
- 17 Susie Stoddart (Mercedes) - 1 lap
- 18 Tom Kristensen (Siemens Audi A4 DTM) - 5 laps

AUDI AG
Kommunikation
85045 Ingolstadt
www.audi.com

Communication Motorsport

Telephone +49 (0)841 89 34200, fax +49 (0)841 89 38617

E-Mail motorsport-media@audi.de

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