

Communication Motorsport

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Racing début of the new Audi A4 DTM

- **2008 DTM starts with two races within one week**
- **Timo Scheider quickest in last official tests**
- **Cars from last year have a good chance as well**

Ingolstadt – On 13 April, exactly 182 days after Audi driver Mattias Ekström won the prestigious 2007 DTM title at Hockenheim, the new DTM season, and thus Audi’s “title defence”, begins at the same venue. Just one week later, at Oschersleben, the second race is on the agenda. For the first time since 1990, the most popular international touring car racing series starts with two “back-to-back” rounds.

For Audi, this “back-to-back” start is certainly a good omen: in 1990 Hans-Joachim Stuck, with the then new Audi V8 quattro, clinched the first DTM title for Audi. In the meantime the brand from Ingolstadt has won the coveted title as many as five times.

The Audi squad is particularly eager for the 2008 season to start: Hockenheim and Oschersleben are the first two races for the new Audi A4 DTM which was developed at Audi Sport in the past twelve months and set a remarkable best time in the most recent tests prior to the start of the season at Oschersleben. Now, the new Audi can show just how good it is in direct comparison with the competition since – traditionally – no DTM team puts all of its cards on the table during the official pre-season tests.

The quickest driver in the tests at Oschersleben was Timo Scheider, who drives one of a total of four new A4 DTM cars fielded by Audi Sport Team Abt



Sportsline. Starting in car #1 will be title defender Mattias Ekström whose car had to be taken to Audi Sport in Ingolstadt for repairs after an accident, in which the Swede was blameless, at Oschersleben. Tom Kristensen and Martin Tomczyk also drive a fourth-generation A4 DTM.

Markus Winkelhock in Mattias Ekström's championship-winning car

The two official DTM tests prior to the start of the season suggest that the cars from last year, which are allowed to run with less weight, have a good chance as well. At Mugello (Italy), Audi newcomer Markus Winkelhock set the fastest time. For Audi Sport Team Rosberg, the Swabian drives the A4 bearing chassis number R13-403 in which Mattias Ekström became the DTM champion last year. His team-mate Mike Rockenfeller, driving Tom Kristensen's former A4, was the quickest driver on the last day of testing at Oschersleben – the circuit at which "Rocky" clinched his first DTM podium result in 2007.

Alexandre Prémat and DTM rookie Oliver Jarvis from Audi Sport Team Phoenix were other drivers to leave a strong impression with their cars from last year during the tests at Oschersleben. Katherine Legge, who starts her first DTM season with a 2006-spec Audi A4 DTM, was immediately quicker than her rival Susie Stoddart – and just 97 thousandths slower than Ralf Schumacher.

Audi goes to the first two races of the year filled with positive memories: at Hockenheim Mattias Ekström and Martin Tomczyk clinched a one-two victory for Audi at the beginning of 2007, at the finale the Swede captured the title there and Timo Scheider claimed his first podium result in the DTM. At Oschersleben, in 2004 and 2006, Tom Kristensen was the race winner. In the past four years an Audi A4 DTM has started from the pole position there three times.

As usual, the qualifying practice and the race are broadcast live on "Das Erste". Those who would prefer watching the DTM round on location can order tickets from the Audi ticket hotline at +49 (0) 841 8947777 or online at www.audi-dtm.de. In 2008 a total of eleven races are scheduled, six of them in Germany. In addition, there are international rounds in France, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain.



Quotes before the start to the DTM season

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): "In the DTM it's particularly important to have a good, fast and reliable car from the outset. This is what we've been working on intensively during the past few months. The last tests at Oschersleben were promising. Now it's crucial to do a perfect job at the first few races. The pit crews have to do their best and we've got to deliver a strong team performance. In the DTM, more than ever, speed will be more important than strategy."

Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #1): "Hockenheim is something special because, finally, we'll be able to see how good our new Audi A4 is in comparison to our rivals. Last year I won the race. Of course I'd be delighted about a similarly positive result. At Oschersleben we've always been very competitive with the Audi A4. I'm assuming that the new car will be as good there as the old one was."

Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #2): "I'm starting with high expectations. The season is now coming up quickly, and immediately there are two weekends back-to-back. If things go well, we can score really good points twice in a row. This will be my goal. That's why I'm happy that the first two races – Hockenheim and Oschersleben – are at circuits where I've previously had pretty good experiences."

Tom Kristensen (Audi A4 DTM #9): "Finally, the season's starting. It's very difficult to make any predictions at this stage. We want to give our best in order to win. But only after the first race and possibly at Oschersleben – my 'DTM home' circuit because it's closest to Denmark – will tell where we stand exactly. The opening races are very important because, before them, the cards will not be put on the table. Only then will we be able to judge what kind of a job we did during the winter."

Timo Scheider (GW:plus/Top Service Audi A4 DTM #10): "It's nice that winter's over and we can concentrate on the essential part – driving races. It's also nice that Hockenheim is the first race, as we finished there last year with such a positive result. That's why I'm going to Hockenheim with a very good feeling. Immediately afterwards, the race at Oschersleben is on the agenda, and before these races, the presentation in Düsseldorf – it is an action-packed programme."



Alexandre Prémat (Audi Bank/Shell Helix Audi A4 DTM #14): "I'm really looking forward to starting my second DTM season at Hockenheim where I want to leave a good impression. We should definitely be able to manage this because the 2007-spec cars were very quick at Hockenheim last year. Why shouldn't a podium be possible again with a 2007 model? At Oschersleben the Audi was strong in the past as well and the tests prior to the season went superbly too. My car feels good. This makes me feel confident."

Oliver Jarvis (Best Buddies Audi A4 DTM #15): "I'm very much looking forward to Hockenheim. Unfortunately, I don't know the track so it'll be a very steep learning curve. I can hardly wait for the season to start. I'm eager to see where I stand compared with the other drivers. It would be great to be among the top ten in qualifying and to finish the race – ideally, in the points. The same goes for Oschersleben where I was able to test prior to the season opener."

Mike Rockenfeller (S line Audi A4 DTM #18): "I'm expecting better results than last year and would like to finish in the points regularly. At Oschersleben, I had a great exploit last year. It would be nice if we could repeat this. It's tough in the DTM but I'll be giving my best. I think that with the 2007-spec car we'll have a clearly better base than last year."

Markus Winkelhock (Playboy Audi A4 DTM #19): "I'm not putting myself under pressure but I'm really eager to contest my first race as an official Audi factory driver. For one thing, Hockenheim is my home track and for the other, the season is finally starting. Hockenheim is a circuit that suits me quite well. At Oschersleben I haven't driven any races in several years. But I used to get along well with this circuit. In 1998, in other words ten years ago, I celebrated my first ever victory there. That was in Formula König, and I have pleasant memories of it. So I'm looking forward to the second race of the season as well."

Katherine Legge (Audi A4 DTM #20): "I'm not really sure yet what to expect of my first DTM races. I'm eager to see how a DTM weekend goes. Particularly before the first races there's a lot of nervous tension because I'm venturing out into new territory this season. I want to finish and learn. Afterwards, we'll analyse how things went and will continue moving forwards in our development."

Christijan Albers (Audi A4 DTM #21): "One of the main factors in making my decision was to join Colin Kolles again and the number of people working at his team that I still know. With a number of these guys I already worked with in the past when I was racing in Formula 3, winning the championship in 1999. Working



with these guys will certainly help me to enjoy racing again. It won't be an easy first year back in DTM, especially racing a two year old car. But. I like to fight hard and try to make it back to the top.”

Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Director Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline): “I'm happy that the DTM season is finally starting. We're racers and waiting for the season opener with baited breath. Let's face it, it's an altogether different thing to be testing in front of empty stands or racing before an enthusiastic crowd of spectators, as we always have at the DTM races at Hockenheim and Oschersleben. Our friends from Stuttgart will do everything within their power to snatch the title from us again. But we're well prepared and ready to defend the title. The fans can look forward to a great season opener.”

Ernst Moser (Team Director Audi Sport Team Phoenix): “We've got two quick, highly motivated drivers and a great car. I'm convinced that we're well positioned with last year's championship winning car. At the tests before the start of the season we saw how competitive the Audi A4 is. Our goal will be to finish the qualifying practice among the top eight with Alex (Prémat). If we manage this, anything's possible, even with a car from last year. As a newcomer, Oliver (Jarvis) will find things to be a bit more difficult at the beginning but I'm sure that he'll be joining the front of the field quickly as well.”

Arno Zensen (Team Director Audi Sport Team Rosberg): “We're delighted that the season is finally starting because the winter break was very long indeed. The tests went well, that makes us feel carefully optimistic. We're anxious to see the 'power ratios' in the field at Hockenheim. After that, we'll know whether we can set a similar highlight as we did last year with 'Rocky's' podium position at Oschersleben.”



The schedule at Hockenheim (local times)

Friday, 11 April

09:00 – 09:15	Roll-out
10:45 – 12:15	Test 1
14:15 – 15:45	Test 2

Saturday, 12 April

09:40 – 10:40	Free Practice
13:33 – 14:18	Qualifying (live on "Das Erste" starting at 13:25)

Sunday, 13 April

13:05 – 13:15	Warm-up
14:00	Race (live on "Das Erste" starting at 13:45)

The schedule at Oschersleben (local times)

Friday, 18 April

09:00 – 09:15	Roll-out
10:25 – 11:55	Test 1
14:55 – 16:25	Test 2

Saturday, 19 April

09:50 – 10:50	Free Practice
13:33 – 14:18	Qualifying (live on "Das Erste" starting at 13:30)

Sunday, 20 April

13:05 – 13:15	Warm-up
14:00	Race (live on "Das Erste" starting at 13:45)

Photographs and information available at www.audi-motorsport.info

AUDI AG sold a total of 964,151 cars in 2007 and thus achieved its twelfth consecutive record year. With revenue of €33,617 million and profit before tax of €2,915 million, the company attained its best figures ever. Audi produces vehicles in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Changchun (China) and Brussels (Belgium). At the end of 2007, production of the Audi A6 started in Aurangabad, India. The company is active in more than 100 markets worldwide. AUDI AG's wholly owned subsidiaries include Automobili Lamborghini Holding S.p.A. in Sant'Agata Bolognese, Italy, and quattro GmbH in Neckarsulm. Audi employs about 54,000 people worldwide, including 45,000 in Germany. The brand with the four rings invests more than €2 billion each year in order to sustain the company's technological lead embodied in its "Vorsprung durch Technik" slogan. Audi plans to nearly double the number of models in its portfolio by 2015, from the 25 currently on offer to 40.