

René Rast and the four rings: conclusion of a unique success story

- **Exceptional race driver to leave Audi Sport after the end of the 2022 season**
- **René Rast: “Decision wasn’t easy for me”**
- **Oliver Hoffmann: “René Rast will always remain a friend”**

Neuburg a. d. Donau, August 16, 2022 – The DTM finale at the Hockenheimring on October 8 and 9 will mark the end of a unique success story in motorsport: After twelve years together, René Rast and Audi Sport will part ways. In an emotional video – jointly recorded by Rolf Michl, COO of Audi Sport, and René Rast in Neuburg a. d. Donau on Monday – Rast looks back on his successful time with Audi.

The German, who lives in Austria, has been active in motorsport with the four rings since 2011 – initially, he was primarily competing with the Audi R8 LMS GT3 race car for Audi Sport customer racing. Highlights in the early years were a championship title in the ADAC GT Masters (2014) and victories in the 24-hour races at Spa (2012), the Nürburgring (2014) and Daytona (2012 and 2016). In 2015, René Rast was also part of the Audi driver line-up at the Le Mans 24 Hours.

But René Rast’s life and career were to be changed above all by a phone call late in the evening on July 16, 2016. The question was whether he could come to Zandvoort immediately to step in for the injured Adrien Tambay in Sunday’s DTM race for Audi Sport Team Rosberg. René Rast had always dreamed of the DTM and spontaneously agreed. Without any preparation, he sat in the Audi RS 5 DTM on Sunday and immediately drove the fastest lap in the top-class field during the race on the demanding race track.

When Mattias Ekström was absent from the season finale at Hockenheim a few months later, due to a scheduling conflict with the World Rallycross Championship, René Rast was given his next chance in the DTM. He promptly scored his first points and made such a strong impression in his first “proper” DTM outing that he was given a permanent seat with Audi for the 2017 season.

What followed is a small piece of motorsport history: René Rast achieved the feat of winning the championship title in his very first DTM season. Only six other drivers had achieved this before him. The following years proved that the first title was no coincidence: Within four years, Rast won the championship title three times with Audi Sport Team Rosberg – in 2018, he was the runner-up, missing another title by only four points after an impressive comeback. Rast won 24 races with the Audi RS 5 DTM in four years. He clinched 20 pole positions, set the fastest lap on 14 occasions and collected 1,113 points. All of this within 77 starts, which equates to an average of more than 14 points per race.

After the end of Audi's factory DTM commitment, Rast competed for the Audi Sport ABT Schaeffler team in Formula E. The German also proved his exceptional qualities in the electric racing series with several podium finishes and strong race performances. And his comeback in the DTM with an Audi R8 LMS GT3 evo II from Team ABT Sportsline is also going René Rast-style: At the halfway point of the 2022 season, he is third in the standings as the best Audi driver and, with eight races still to go, has good chances of winning a fourth DTM title. In the first half of the season, Rast finished on the podium four times and already clinched his first victory in a GT3 race car in the DTM during the fifth round at Imola.

"What René Rast has achieved for Audi Sport, particularly in the DTM, is unique," says Oliver Hoffmann, Board Member for Technical Development at Audi. "It is all the more painful that we have to let René go as a race driver after so many successful years together. Our motorsport program is currently being restructured completely as part of the electrification of the company. And René is also at a point in his career where he wants to set a new course. René Rast has a firm place in the history of Audi Sport and he will always remain a friend of the Audi family. We wish him only the best for his future." Julius Seebach, Managing Director of Audi Sport GmbH and responsible for motorsport at Audi, adds: "René Rast has long been underestimated. At Audi Sport, he was able to show that he is one of the world's best race drivers. Above all, his exploits in the Class 1 era of the DTM will always be closely associated with the four rings."

"This decision was anything but easy for me," says René Rast. "Audi has been my life over the past few years. We've worked fantastically together and celebrated many great successes. I'll never forget these moments, nor the many great people who made my victories and championship titles possible. Audi is a strong brand with fascinating cars like the Audi RS 6, which I was able to enjoy as a company car for many years. The Class 1 era in the DTM was the absolute highlight for me. The Audi RS 5 DTM, with its four-cylinder turbo engine, was a fantastic race car. Unfortunately, this era came to an end far too quickly. In both the Le Mans prototypes and Formula E, I also had the misfortune of having just joined the team when the programs ended. That was a real shame. I'm enjoying the DTM with GT3 race cars much more than I could ever have imagined. But I still have a few goals in motorsport that I want to achieve. That's why I have to say goodbye to the Audi fans with a heavy heart after the end of the 2022 season."

In addition, Rast will do everything in the remaining eight DTM races of the 2022 season to crown his time at Audi with another DTM title.

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