

Hockenheim, 9 April 2006

## Motorsport

### Two Audi drivers on the podium

- **Tom Kristensen second after fantastic fight back**
- **Heinz-Harald Frentzen third in Audi on debut**
- **Martin Tomczyk and Timo Scheider also score points**

At a thrilling opening to the DTM season in Hockenheim, 104,000 spectators were eyewitness to an excellent Audi team performance. The performances of both Tom Kristensen and Heinz-Harald Frentzen were particularly impressive: The pair carved their way through the field from grid positions nine and eight to clinch second and third at the chequer helped by a good strategy and perfect pit-stops. As a result, Frentzen claimed a podium position first time out in his first race with the Audi A4 DTM. With Martin Tomczyk, in seventh place, and Timo Scheider finishing eighth, two further Audi drivers scored points. Audi Sport Team Abt leads the teams' championship.

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Mattias Ekström, who jumped from sixth to third position at the start and who had eventual winner Bernd Schneider well in his sights after a quick opening pit-stop, was struck by bad luck when he was forced to retire his A4 with damage to the front right suspension. Christian Abt and Pierre Kaffer were also forced to retire. Frank Stippler lost his chance of points due to a problem during his second mandatory pit-stop. Olivier Tielemans and Vanina Ickx took the chequered flag in 13th and 15th position respectively on their DTM debuts.

### Quotes after the race

**Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport):** “That really was a nail-biting race. Bearing in mind the starting positions we can be extremely satisfied with the result. A second and third position for Tom (Kristensen) and Heinz-Harald (Frentzen) is an excellent team performance. We demonstrated just how much potential is in the Audi A4 DTM, and saw that cars from both manufacturers are almost as quick as each other. Strategy and pit-stops still play an important role alongside fast driving. Today we saw just how high the level is in the DTM. I'm already looking forward to the rest of the season.”

## **Tom Kristensen**

### **Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Siemens Audi A4 DTM #7**

**2nd, + 4.268s**

“I’m obviously happy to have finished second after starting in ninth position. The team did a fantastic job in the pits and with the strategy. I drove absolutely on the limit. I edged closer and closer to Bernd and thought that I was in with a chance of winning. However, about eleven laps before the finish the steering wheel was suddenly skew after I’d driven over the kerbs on the corner exit. I didn’t risk anything after that kept well away from the outside kerbs. That’s why I’m happy that I finished second. My thanks go to the team that got me into this position today.”

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## **Heinz-Harald Frentzen**

### **Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Veltins Audi A4 DTM #6**

**3rd, + 6.279s**

“I’m really very satisfied. To be right at the front in the Championship from the word go is very important in the DTM. I knew just how good my A4 was and that I could translate this into results if everything fell into place. However, I was a little sceptical immediately after the start. I had huge understeer, couldn’t attack and had to be careful that I didn’t lose too many places. That’s why my crew called me in earlier. The balance was good again with new tyres. The strategy to take the second set of tyres early also paid off – even though Mika (Häkkinen) got very close right at the end.”

## **Martin Tomczyk**

### **Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #4**

**7th place, + 19.397s**

“My start was good up to the first corner when some of the Mercedes drivers got into each other’s way. I wanted to stay clear of all that. Mattias Ekström was next to me on the right-hand side, Bruno Spengler pulled over into my lane and touched me hard. I didn’t want to pass this impulse on to Mattias, took my foot off the throttle and lost a few places. Bruno Spengler then made another mistake, got back into the lane and caught me full force. I had to drive through the grass, dropped back to eleventh place and my car was not perfect anymore. Apart from this, I’m very satisfied with the whole weekend, because my team performed very well. I wanted to finish in the points, and I managed that by claiming seventh place.”

## **Timo Scheider**

**Audi Sport Team Rosberg, Gebrauchtwagen plus Audi A4 DTM #16**

**8th place, + 23.482s**

“Eighth place is basically positive, considering the fact that grid position 13 didn’t give me ideal prerequisites for the race. With a fighting spirit and a bit of luck we claimed our first point. We kept improving our performance throughout the weekend and had a very good pace in the race. I’m satisfied – a big ‘thank you’ to my team.”

## **Frank Stippler**

**Audi Sport Team Rosberg, S line Audi A4 DTM #15**

**12th place, + 1m 02.638s**

“My congratulations to Timo Scheider on the point he scored. Unfortunately my race didn’t go according to plan. Because of all the ‘body contact’ my chassis got damaged and we lost a few body parts. Unfortunately we had a problem with our radio communications, so our strategy didn’t work any more either. In addition, there was a spill during the refuelling operation and that fuel was missing in the end.”

## **Olivier Tielemans**

**Futurecom TME, Futurecom Audi A4 DTM #19**

**13th place, + 1m 30.373s**

“I’m very satisfied with my first DTM race. 13th place isn’t bad with a 2004-spec car. Unfortunately, on the second set of tyres and because of the pit stops, I lost some time. Otherwise, perhaps I would have even finished as the second-best driver of a 2004-spec car. This was a good beginning.”

## **Vanina Ickx**

**Futurecom TME, Original Zubehör Audi A4 DTM #20**

**15th place, – 1 lap**

“This was a very good start into my DTM season and I’m happy about having finished the race. In the beginning there was quite a commotion, some rivals drove through the gravel trap and you had to really watch out. I also had to evade Christian Abt who spun in the beginning. I stayed out of all this, pitted early and then had a clear track.”

## **Mattias Ekström**

**Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #5**

**Retired on lap 26 (front right suspension failure)**

“I started from sixth place and was running in third after two corners. I’m satisfied with that. My car had too much understeer to be really fast. I gave my best. The pit stops and the strategy, too, were good. Everything was okay when twelve laps before the end the front right-hand suspension broke. We need to analyse the reason for this.”

## **Pierre Kaffer**

**Audi Sport Team Phoenix, Castrol Audi A4 DTM #14**

**Retired on lap 15 (steering failure after collision)**

“My start wasn’t perfect because I had to brake in the first corner and lost a few positions. We had a good speed but then my ‘friend’ Stefan Mücke drove into my car – once more. This destroyed my steering system, which of course is a real pity for the whole team.”

## **Christian Abt**

**Audi Sport Team Phoenix, Playboy Audi A4 DTM #12**

**Retired on lap 13 (suspension damage, left rear)**

“The pace was extremely fast today. On the first laps I had the feeling we’d be able to drive a good race. The car was quick, the set-up was right. So we did work in the right direction, but unfortunately a technical defect prevented me from finishing the race. That is disappointing, but I’m looking forward to the next race already.”

**Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Director Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline):** “The way the team worked and pulled Tom (Kristensen) and Heinz-Harald (Frentzen) so far to the front with a perfect strategy was sensational. We achieved a great team result. Of course it was too bad that Mattias (Ekström) retired. But our friends from Stuttgart had a few problems today, as well ... In any event it’s been a thrilling race. I wouldn’t mind if things continued this way.”

**Ernst Moser (Team Director Audi Sport Team Phoenix):** “I’m elated about the cooperation with Audi Sport during our first joint race weekend. It’s really fun to work this way. I hope our team will be more fortunate in the next race, though. I’m very happy about Audi’s two podium places.”

**Arno Zensen (Team Direcot Audi Sport Team Rosberg):** “On the one hand, I’m very happy with the outcome of the race because we scored the first point in our first race for Audi with Timo Scheider. On the other hand, Frank Stippler had been among the top ten for a long time but then ran short on fuel because we apparently made a mistake while refuelling his car. Altogether, I’m not unhappy but we need to continue to work in order to move further towards the front.”

## The result

- 1 Bernd Schneider (Mercedes), 37 laps in 59 m51.850s
- 2 Tom Kristensen (Siemens Audi A4 DTM), + 4.286s
- 3 Heinz-Harald Frentzen (Veltins Audi A4 DTM), + 6.279s
- 4 Mika Häkkinen (Mercedes), + 7.067s
- 5 Alexandros Margaritis (Mercedes), + 11.276s
- 6 Jean Alesi (Mercedes), + 17.399s
- 7 Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM), + 19.397s
- 8 Timo Scheider (Gebrauchtwagen:plus Audi A4 DTM), + 23.482s
- 9 Bruno Spengler (Mercedes), + 40.626s
- 10 Susie Stoddart (Mercedes), + 44.918s
- 11 Mathias Lauda (Mercedes), + 53.284s
- 12 Frank Stippler (S line Audi A4 DTM), + 1m 02.638s
- 13 Olivier Tielemans (Futurecom Audi A4 DTM), + 1m 30.373s
- 14 Daniel la Rosa (Mercedes), – 1 lap
- 15 Vanina Ickx (Original Zubehör Audi A4 DTM), – 1 lap

### **Not classified:**

- Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM), – 12 laps
- Stefan Mücke (Mercedes), – 14 laps
- Pierre Kaffer (Castrol Audi A4 DTM), – 23 laps
- Christian Abt (Playboy Audi A4 DTM), - 25 laps
- Jamie Green (Mercedes), – 35 laps

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