



Motorsport Communications

Virginia Brusch

Phone: +49 151 52817968

E-mail: virginia.brusch@audi.de

www.audi-mediacycenter.com/en

Audi driver Nico Müller: “I don’t feel like the hunted”

- **Interview with the current DTM leader from Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline**

Neuburg a. d. Donau, September 16, 2020 – Swiss Audi DTM driver Nico Müller takes stock after ten of a total of 18 races in the 2020 season. The 28-year-old also talks about his relationship with his teammate and closest pursuer in the drivers’ championship, Robin Frijns, and shares more about his family life.

More than half of the 2020 DTM season has already been completed. What is your take on the season so far?

Very positive, of course. My team and I have achieved four victories and there could have been more. I think that speaks for itself. I am very happy with the work that we have done as a team so far. Everyone is highly motivated and doing an excellent job and I just feel good in the car and can deliver the results. So, it was a very positive first half of the season for me and I can build on that.

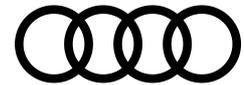
Was the first race weekend at the Nürburgring enough for you to make peace with the race track?

I think it was the strongest weekend of my DTM career as far as my performance is concerned, but also that of my crew. We were actually the fastest car in the field in every single session from Friday to Sunday. There is no better way to make peace with the track. The only thing was the incident in Sunday’s race, when the problem with the defective sensor began on the fifth lap. Of course, that hurts when you have to lose out on points like that, but in the end, there are a lot more positive things to take away from this weekend than what we should mourn over from Sunday for a long time. We don’t have time for that in this compact season.

How does it feel holding up the Swiss flag in Parc Fermé?

It’s an amazing feeling. To be able to represent our small country on an international platform like the DTM is simply great. It definitely makes me proud to be one of the Swiss racing drivers who hold up our flag, alongside big names like Marcel Fässler, Sébastien Buemi and Neel Jani.

You have been on the podium in eight of the ten races so far. Are you annoyed by the two fifth-place finishes among those results?



I would be lying if I said that I wasn't annoyed by them. Fifth place last Sunday was annoying in particular. Simply because I'm sure we would have won that race. The car felt perfect in terms of its balance, but technical problems are part of motorsport. At the Lausitzring, on the other hand, others were smarter than us, especially the brand from Munich. I need to acknowledge that and then I can live with it.

Are you the type of person who analyzes the past or do you orientate yourself more towards what lies ahead of you?

I do believe that it is important to look back, in order to better evaluate what happened and to move forward. But, you have to keep in mind that we hardly have any time between races this season. You may have a day to reflect and then you have to flip the switch again. I think this change is very important and it is also one of our strengths at the moment. We are able to recognize relatively quickly where we still have potential and how we can maintain our advantage at the same time.

On Saturdays, you have always been in the top three in both qualifying and the races. How is it that you are so successful on the first day of each weekend?

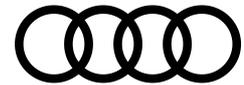
Even if it's just free practice, it's already apparent for me on Friday. I think I have always been at least second in free practice and set the fastest time on seven or eight occasions. It shows that we are doing a good job in terms of our preparation. From the first session on, we've always had a car that works well, which makes our work easier, especially on Saturdays. This means that we don't have to make extensive setup or driving style adjustments in order to get the most out of our package. That has definitely been our greatest strength so far and I hope we can keep it up. The field of course moves closer together by Sunday, but even then, we were able to also improve every time.

Your teammate Robin (Frijns) is hot on your heels in the championship. How do you deal with the fact that you are both fighting for the title?

It's a fun situation. We really have a very good relationship. That is not normally the case. I've never had anything like this in my career and then in the same team. We push each other extremely hard. Of course, we want to beat each other on track, that has to be the case, but it's not like a bad mood arises when one of us loses out. We have two very strong crews in the team and whoever does the better job has simply earned it. In my opinion, this is a very healthy basis. I am convinced that Robin is one of the most talented racing drivers on the planet and I'm proud every time I am able to beat him. But, I'm also happy for him when he wins a race. I believe that at the moment our good relationship within the team is contributing to our strengths. We'll see if either of us still have a chance in the title fight at the finale in Hockenheim. And then we hope for a hot showdown.

How do you deal with being the one that everyone else is hunting?

In fact, it doesn't feel like that. For me, it is René, as the reigning champion, who is still the one to beat. He and his team have done such an impressive job over the past three years and he's a



fierce opponent for the title again this year. Even if he's not leading the championship at the moment, he's always up there with you. We still have four weekends ahead of us, a lot can still happen.

You confidently refuted the rumor that racing drivers who become fathers are slower. Has anything changed in your approach since there are now three of you at home?

I've also heard of this myth, but I think we were able to prove that rather the opposite is true. In my opinion, last weekend was the strongest I have ever delivered. And I am thinking more that our happiness with Fynn inspires us more than anything else. I've never felt as grounded as I currently do and I am very grateful that I have such a beautiful little family at home that supports me perfectly in my passion. So, I'm sure it makes me better rather than worse.

Is motorsport a taboo subject in your home given the short amount of time you spend at home?

No, we talk about it a lot, sometimes too much. I think that it is also necessary in order to process what happened, be it positive or negative. I often sit down with Vicky or my parents, who live next door, in the evening a day or two after the races. And then we also talk about what happened. They are all extremely excited and are probably more nervous than me on the weekends.

You also moved into your new home in August. Have you planned enough space for trophies?

There will always be enough space. And if there isn't, that would be a first-world problem that I'm happy to take care of. It was an intense phase during the move. Everything happened at about the same time. House building, moving and the birth of our child, but we had great support from our families, which also gave me the freedom to concentrate on my job. That worked out great.

You are active on social media and also share private insights in your weekly "Driver's Diary." How important is it for you to keep in touch with your fans?

Social media is a good tool to give fans insights, even between races, in order to get them excited about our sport and to share our passion with them. This also means sharing some aspects of one's private life. I try to find a healthy mix and hope that people are happy with what they see and that it helps to build anticipation for the races.

What is your schedule like for the upcoming weeks?

It remains very intense. The next important pair of DTM races on the Nürburgring sprint circuit are on the program this week. And then I'll probably stay in the Eifel, because the 24-hour race on the Nordschleife is taking place during the week thereafter, which is always a big highlight of the year for me. After our success in 2015, my goal is to be able to fight for the overall victory again. And only after that will I have my first weekend off since the DTM opener, before we drive back to Zolder on the second weekend of October.



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