

Communication Motorsport

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## Audi driver Mattias Ekström masters “Wasa Run”

- Place 3,692 for two-time DTM Champion at the “Vasaloppet”
- 90 kilometers through Swedish woods on cross-country skies
- Ekström: “Proud to have taken on this challenge”

**Ingolstadt/Malung – Mattias Ekström has been the DTM champion twice. Now, the 30-year-old Swede tackled a completely different kind of challenge – and mastered it with flying colors: Ekström finished the famous “Wasa Run” for cross-country skiers in 3,692th place in a field of 15 000 contenders last weekend.**

Normally, Mattias Ekström - at best – deals with hundredths and thousandths of a second. But on Sunday even a gap of two and a half hours to the winner amounted to a great exploit for the 2004 and 2007 DTM Champion: after a total time of 6h35m41s, the Audi factory driver crossed the finish line of the 85th “Wasa Run” covering a 90-kilometer distance through Swedish woods and landscapes.

“I’m really bushed but also extremely proud about having taken on – and mastered – this challenge,” said Mattias Ekström. Unlike most of the other participants in Scandinavia’s biggest skiing event he encountered pitiful training conditions in Switzerland where he now resides: “There was hardly any snow in and around Salenstein, so I always had to drive for an hour before being able to finally put on my skies.”

Ekström nonetheless was in top shape at the classic run, which was staged for the 85th time and started just 150 kilometers from Falun where Ekström was born. “I went to Sweden more than a week ago and participated in all the shorter preliminary runs. That way I was able to continually improve and prepare for the



main event,” he said. Yet his top athletic performance was just one aspect of his excursion into unknown territory. Ekström: “I was with some friends in Sweden whom I hardly get to see during the racing season. Spending time with the boys and contesting the ‘Vasaloppet’ with them was a great change of pace from my daily routines as a racer.”

Yet his DTM rivals should not pin any hopes on him switching to competitive skiing because prior to his ninth DTM season Mattias Ekström is as ready to attack as always: “We’ve had two great years with titles for Timo and me. Now, our big goal is to achieve the hat-trick for Audi. And, needless to say, I’d love to take care of that personally.”

The 2009 DTM season starts at the Hockenheimring on May 17. As early as on April 19, the vehicles and drivers will present themselves on Düsseldorf’s “Kö.” Tickets and schedules are also available at [www.dtm.com](http://www.dtm.com).

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**Photographs and information available at [www.audi-motorsport.info](http://www.audi-motorsport.info)**

AUDI AG sold around 1,003,400 cars in 2008 and thus achieved its thirteenth consecutive record year. Audi produces vehicles in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Changchun (China) and Brussels (Belgium). Aurangabad in India saw the start of local production of the Audi A6 at the end of 2007 and of the Audi A4 in early October 2008. 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 currently employs around 57,000 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 significantly increase the number of models in its portfolio by 2015 to 40. The Audi brand celebrates its 100th birthday in 2009. The company was founded by August Horch in Zwickau on July 16, 1909; he named it Audi after the Latin translation of his surname (“hark!”).

AUDI AG will present the complete results for the 2008 business year at its Annual Press Conference on March 10, 2009 in Ingolstadt.