

Mugello, 15 July 2007

## Motorsport

### Audi re-captures lead in the DTM

- **Mattias Ekström back at the top of the table**
- **Safety car deprives Audi of victory at Mugello**
- **Four Audi drivers in the points**

With a second place at Mugello (Italy), Mattias Ekström re-captured the DTM lead for Audi. After six of ten races, the Swede from Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline has a 6.5-point advantage to title defender Bernd Schneider, who scored no points in Italy.

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However, after the dominant qualifying performance with grid positions one to five, the race in blazing heat (air 37 degrees, track 52 degrees) only went according to plan for Audi in the starting phase. With consistently fast lap times, Mattias Ekström, Martin Tomczyk and Tom Kristensen in their Audi A4 DTM cars put an ever greater distance between themselves and their immediate rivals, clearly headed for a triple victory.

Tom Kristensen lost his chances for a podium result on account of a problem during the first tyre change. Then a safety car deployment shortly before the race's midpoint frustrated the plans of the Audi squad once more: Martin Tomczyk dropped back from second to tenth place because he had to wait in the pitlane until his team colleague Mattias Ekström was taken care of and, what is more, the refuelling can got stuck on the vehicle. After the race was re-started again, the young German spun and was hit so unfortunately by Gary Paffett, who was behind him, that he had to retire from the race with a damaged suspension.

Mattias Ekström during the safety car phase dropped behind Mika Häkkinen, who had decided on a daring gamble, being the only driver to pit for his second mandatory stop even before the safety car went out on the track. While all the other drivers pitted during the yellow flag phase, the Fin inherited the lead.

Mattias Ekström put massive pressure on the subsequent winner in the second half of the race, but on account of the dirty track, saw no chance to overtake the Mercedes despite the fact that he clearly had the quicker car. His fastest lap was eight tenths of a second faster than Mika Häkkinen's best lap. With a merely 0.371-second gap, the Red Bull Audi A4 DTM crossed the finish line in position two.

Mike Rockenfeller (Audi Sport Team Rosberg), Alexandre Prémat (Audi Sport Team Phoenix) and Tom Kristensen (Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline) were three further Audi drivers to score points. After his misfortune during the pit stop, Kristensen fought to make up ground from 16th to eighth place. Rockenfeller and Prémat clinched points although they – like Christian Abt – had to perform drive-through penalties as they had clocked personal best times in a sector in which yellow flags were being waved.

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Markus Winkelhock in his first race for Audi's customer team Futurecom TME finished ninth, barely missing his first DTM points. Martin Tomczyk, Christian Abt, Vanina Ickx, Lucas Luhr and Timo Scheider retired due to collisions and spins. Altogether, only twelve of the 20 cars that had started to the turbulent race finished.

## Quotes after the race

**Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport):** “We were not able to realise the potential of our accomplishments on Friday and Saturday in the race. Too many minor mistakes were made. This ended up in a result which, considering the starting positions, is very disappointing. Mattias (Ekström) drove a very good and flawless race. It is nice that he is leading the Championship. But today a lot more would simply have been possible.”

## **Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #3)**

**2nd place, + 0.371s**

“My start was very good, the car was incredibly fast. The first pit stop, too, was perfect. Unfortunately, we didn’t do our second stop before the safety car went out. That’s why we didn’t win the race. I tried to overtake Mika (Häkkinen). The problem was that there was so much gravel alongside the racing line that I would have had to take an excessive risk. In the end, I’m satisfied with second place and the lead in the Championship.”

## **Mike Rockenfeller (S line Audi A4 DTM #11)**

**6th place, + 10.073s**

“After starting from eighth place, finishing in sixth – that doesn’t sound so bad. A few races ago, I would have been satisfied with that, but looking at today’s race, it’s not okay. I made a mistake. In the second sector during a yellow phase on new tyres I must have driven a bit faster than before, although I deliberately paid attention to this. The problem is that at Mugello the tyre degrades so much after one lap. On old tyres you’re so slow that even driving with one hand on new tyres would make you faster. For this, the regulations impose a drive-through penalty. I’m very sorry for the team. They performed strong pit stops and implemented a great strategy. We fought to make up ground again on sixth place – my thanks go to the team for this.”

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## **Alexandre Prémat (Audi Bank Audi A4 DTM #17)**

**7th place, + 11.975s**

“I’m very disappointed because decisions were made against several drivers, which had to do with the yellow flags. In the first chicanes I was quicker than before, but then lifted in the danger zone. In total, the sector time was better nevertheless. I do not agree with the penalty. Without the drive-through the podium would have been within reach, because the speed was good today.”

## **Tom Kristensen (Siemens Audi A4 DTM #7)**

**8th place, + 12.251s**

“That was a basket full of surprise eggs today! Everything was looking good, the car was strong and the start was good – only the first pit stop wasn’t. We lost a lot of time because there were problems with one of the

wheels. After that, I had to attack fiercely. I fought with Lauda. He's not at fault – instead I drove across one of the red markers, which damaged my car pretty seriously. After that, it was a tough race.“

### **Markus Winkelhock (Audi A4 DTM #20)**

#### **9th place, + 16.558s**

“The race was pretty good. The start was great, but I couldn't take advantage of it fully because Bernd Schneider pulled over and I had to lift. Despite this, I moved forwards from 13th to tenth place. During the second pit stop we lost a bit of time. After the second stop I was eighth in front of Tom Kristensen. He closed up to me and we were competing for a point. He's driving a factory car, so I let him pass. I then gave everything and put too much of a strain on the tyres. On the last laps I just made sure to finish the race.”

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### **Christian Abt (Playboy Audi A4 DTM #16)**

#### **Retired (accident), lap 17**

“I cannot understand the drive-through penalty. How am I supposed to feel in the car whether I'm slow enough in the sector concerned? In the safety car phase we even lost more. After the re-start, Gary Paffett unfortunately hit my car, It's too bad for the team, because today quite a good result would have been possible.”

### **Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #4)**

#### **Retired (accident), lap 17**

“The start and the speed in the beginning showed that, actually, we were unbeatable. My and Mattias's (Ekström) pace were truly fantastic, the car was holding to the track like a charm. The safety car phase was a bit hard to understand because the car causing the incident was in a safe location. I entered the pitlane behind Mattias and had wait behind him. During the pit stop the refuelling can got stuck. On the track, this cost me seven positions. During the re-start I overtook Tom but the tyres were probably too cold from the safety car lap, and I simply spun.”

**Vanina Ickx (Audi A4 DTM #21)**

**Retired (spin), lap 5**

“My race only lasted five laps. After a mistake in a fast passage I slid into the gravel trap – that was the end.”

**Lucas Luhr (Philips Audi A4 DTM #12)**

**Retired (collision), lap 2**

“Unfortunately, my race was over very early. I was hit twice by other cars. Then something broke at the front and the car was not steerable any longer. I’m very disappointed.”

**Timo Scheider (Gebrauchtwagen:plus/Top Service Audi A4 DTM #8)**

**Retired (collision), lap 1**

“We knew that we had little grip at the start, that’s why I started with low rpm. My engine speed dropped and I lost several positions. In the first turn everyone was driving on the inside and I tried it on the outside, where I was also able to make up a few places. Then there was a collision with several cars. The suspension on my car broke and I flew into the gravel trap while going downhill. After the good qualifying that was very disappointing. This was the third race in a row where I was struck by misfortune on the first lap.”

**Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Director Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline):**

“There were ups and downs in our system. The safety car phase frustrated our plans. We weren’t the only ones to whom this happened. I’m sorry about Martin Tomczyk’s spin but these things happen. We’re leading the Championship with a good advantage and need to concentrate on the next race. At Zandvoort we need to do a better job than today. We didn’t make any mistakes lately, but today we did. That’s something we have to admit.”

**Ernst Moser (Team Director Audi Sport Team Phoenix):** “We were on good positions and had fast cars, but today we were our own worst enemy. We made mistakes: Both drivers received drive-through penalties because they achieved sector best times under yellow flags. That made the race difficult. Christian (Abt) suffered a misfortune. His first set of tyres was not so good, and on the second he was very quick. Then he was forced to retire as a result of an accident that was not his fault.”

**Arno Zensen (Team Director Audi Sport Team Rosberg):** “Lucas (Luhr) was involved in an accident that was no fault of his, and that ended his race early. After the tyre change, ‘Rocky’ drove a best time in a sector although it was under yellow flags. This resulted in the drive-through penalty which cost him third place. On the other hand, I’m happy that we finished the race and collected three points. My thanks to the team for the great pit stops.”

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## The result at Mugello

- 1 Mika Häkkinen (Mercedes), 33 laps in 1h03m10.117s
- 2 Mattias Ekström (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM), + 0.371s
- 3 Paul di Resta (Mercedes), + 3.198s
- 4 Bruno Spengler (Mercedes), + 8.722s
- 5 Daniel la Rosa (Mercedes), + 9.420s
- 6 Mike Rockenfeller (S line Audi A4 DTM), + 10.073s
- 7 Alexandre Prémat (Audi Bank Audi A4 DTM), 11.975s
- 8 Tom Kristensen (Siemens Audi A4 DTM), + 12.251s
- 9 Markus Winkelhock (Audi A4 DTM), + 16.558s
- 10 Susie Stoddart (Mercedes), + 22.144s
- 11 Bernd Schneider (Mercedes), + 26.877s
- 12 Mathias Lauda (Mercedes), - 7 laps

### **Not classified:**

- Martin Tomczyk (Red Bull Audi A4 DTM), - 17 laps (accident)
- Gary Paffett (Mercedes), - 17 laps
- Christian Abt (Playboy Audi A4 DTM), - 17 laps (accident)
- Alexandros Margaritis (Mercedes), - 21 laps (accident)
- Vanina Ickx (Audi A4 DTM), - 29 laps (spin)
- Jamie Green (Mercedes), - 30 laps
- Lucas Luhr (Philips Audi A4 DTM), - 32 laps (collision)
- Timo Scheider (GW:plus/Top Service Audi A4 DTM), - 33 laps (collision)

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