



Communications Motorsport

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Audi driver René Rast: “Starting from the first row was a highlight”

- **Positive conclusion from the spectacular start to the DTM season in Hockenheim**
- **Fight-back on Saturday, strong qualifying on Sunday**
- **High anticipation for the second DTM event at the Lausitzring**

Neuburg, May 11, 2017 – Fight-back, first row on the grid and a Sunday of shocks: Audi driver René Rast experienced a turbulent season-opening weekend in Hockenheim. In an interview, the 30-year-old reviews the racing highlights, his premature exit from the Sunday race and assesses the DTM’s new features from a driver’s perspective.

In Hockenheim you experienced the new features of the DTM for the first time at a race weekend. What affected you the most as a driver?

René Rast: “We are directly affected by, for example, the one-sided team radio. During the races we are now making decisions on our own, and so you find yourself more alone. Therefore we have to master another component that can have a considerable impact on the race. You have to think more tactically. Personally, I think it’s a positive addition, because the driver’s performance is now brought much more to the fore. The softer tires have a similar effect as well. They mean I have to adapt my driving style as a driver and weigh up several tactical possibilities during the race. Apart from that, personally I find the pit-view boxes very cool. The fans get much better insights and can now follow the way the team and I prepare for the sessions. This was definitely a step in the right direction.”

What were the race highlights of the weekend for you personally?

“Firstly, the fight-back on Saturday, when I drove to sixth place from last on the grid. We had one of the fastest cars in the field – this is a definite highlight of the weekend. And then qualifying for the first row on Sunday on my first race weekend as a permanent driver – despite the race not ending well for me. I will certainly take this positive feeling from qualifying into the coming weekends.”

A few minutes after your race on Sunday you wore a brace around your neck instead of the HANS system. Can you describe why this was?

“The collision after the Indy-restart was not at all the cause. It had already happened shortly after the regular start, and in the TV footage it was almost unnoticeable. Before the first turn, I had underestimated the situation somewhat and was fighting with understeer. I went wide and hit the curb too sharply. At that moment I got a vertical jolt into my spine and then again when I



landed. These together led to my issue after the race.”

How does it feel currently?

“Fortunately, better every day. But of course there are enormous forces that act on the body in moments like that. My mobility is somewhat restricted in my neck, but otherwise I already feel very well.”

What are your expectations for the coming weekend at the Lausitzring?

“It would be great if we could achieve a qualifying result like Sunday again, and then to also see the finish line. At Lausitz, however, we expect different conditions: we were able to test at the Hockenheimring a month in advance before the opening race, whereas I have never driven a DTM car on the Lausitzring. We will have to wait and see how first practice goes. The goal should be to score points again. However, in the DTM this is not a given – the level is too balanced to expect this. So far we have been able to adapt the car to my driving style quite well. I also feel very comfortable within my team. So I’m looking forward to the next races.”

– End –

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