



Communications Motorsport

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Audi driver Ekström continues to lead standings

- **Rallycross world champion Mattias Ekström finishes fourth in Belgium**
- **Ekström: "Records are only of interest to others, I'm leader of the standings"**

Mettet, May 14, 2017 – Mattias Ekström and his team, EKS, suffered a minor setback in round four of the 2017 FIA World Rallycross Championship. At Mettet, Belgium, in an all-Scandinavian final, the reigning world champion finished in position four but, for the first time this season, had to yield to the competition on podium, but still defended his lead in the drivers' classification.

Initially, events at the Circuit Jules Tacheny seemed to be a repetition of the most recent rounds. Ekström and his teammates, Toomas Heikkinen and Reinis Nitišs, were struggling to keep pace with the front runners in the first sessions. "Saturday was rough," says Ekström, who after two of four qualifying rounds was only ranked in position seven. "Q3 and Q4 were highs and lows then – a really good result and a really bad one after we suffered suspension damage in Q4. That cost us a better grid position in the semi-final." There, Ekström took position three and, as a result, qualified for the final of the top six drivers. "From the third row, I tried everything, but overtaking here is near-impossible. Fourth place was the best I could do." A victory would have made Ekström the first driver in World RX history to have won four rounds in a row. "I'm not interested in records. I'm still the leader of the standings and that's what matters," says the 38-year-old.

His teammate Heikkinen for the fourth time this season qualified for the semi-final where he fought a number of fierce position battles and was ultimately eliminated in sixth place. "This is not the result I was hoping for. I've won twice before in Belgium, but this weekend I was lacking that little bit of fortune you need in rallycross." Nitišs was in a similar situation. In the third Audi S1 EKS RX quattro, he won two of his four qualifying rounds, but in position 13 barely missed the opportunity to compete in the semi-final. "Absolutely disappointing. The semi-final is always the minimum aim, but I'm going to learn from my mistakes and go for all-out attack again in England," says the Latvian. At Lydden Hill, round five of the season will be held on May 27 and 28. Last year, Ekström won the round on the oldest track in rallycross history.



2017 World RX – round 4, Mettet – results of final

1 Johan Kristoffersson (S)	4m 02.316s
2 Timmy Hansen (S)	+0.924s
3 Petter Solberg (N)	+0.935s
4 Mattias Ekström (S)	+3.057s
5 Kevin Eriksson (S)	+11.269s
6 Andreas Bakkerud (N)	+4 laps

2017 FIA World RX drivers' standings (after 4 of 12 rounds)

1 Mattias Ekström (S)	101 points
2 Johan Kristoffersson (S)	98 points
3 Petter Solberg (N)	87 points
4 Timmy Hansen (S)	72 points
5 Sébastien Loeb (F)	62 points
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8 Toomas Heikkinen (FIN)	40 points
10 Reinis Nitišs (LV)	37 points

2017 FIA World RX teams' standings (after 4 of 12 rounds)

1 PSRX Volkswagen Sweden	185 points
2 EKS	141 points
3 Team Peugeot Hansen	134 points

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