



Press Information

Nürburgring, 30 July 2004

Audi driver Ekström is quickest by far

Mattias Ekström has impressively affirmed his stated intention to recapture Audi's lead in the DTM. On Friday, the 26-year old Swede in his Audi A4 DTM was the quickest contender far ahead of the competition. In the morning, he relegated team-mate Tom Kristensen to second place by 0.045 seconds, in the second test in the afternoon the Audi works driver topped the competition by nearly half a second. Five of the six Audi drivers managed to make it into the top ten.

Prior to the qualifying session (starting at 1 p.m. local time) the Audi drivers will be receiving a group of distinguished visitors: the football team of FC Bayern München will be dropping round at the Nürburgring. A tour of the Audi pits is on the agenda to provide the team with a backstage impression of Europe's most popular touring car series.

Quotes after Friday's tests

Mattias Ekström (Audi Sport Team Abt / Audi A4 DTM #5)

1st / 1st place, 1m 24.466s (67 laps)

"So far, everything has been running exactly according to plan. Irrespective of my two best times, which have to be taken with a grain of salt, considering it's only Friday, we have diligently worked our way down our whole to-do list. Tomorrow, it'll be all about turning today's exploit into a place on the first row of the grid."

Christian Abt (Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline / Audi A4 DTM #11)

7th / 6th place, 1m 25.129s (59 laps)

"I'm quite satisfied with my places today, but Mattias is clearly quicker – particularly across the long run. I still need to explore why that is and continue to work on the setup."

Tom Kristensen (Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline / Audi A4 DTM #12)

2nd / 8th place, 1m 25.199s (46 laps)

"The first test went very well, we tried out a lot of different things. In the second test, my car suddenly lost oil. I immediately shut off the engine to prevent any subsequent damage. Although this made me lose a lot of time today, the fact that the engine is okay is a lot more important. I'm convinced that I'll be at the very front of the field again tomorrow."

Emanuele Pirro (Audi Sport Infineon Team Joest / Audi A4 DTM #44)

16th / 7th place, 1m 25.252s (77 laps)

"It's been a good day. We've definitely made progress over the past few weeks and confirmed our trend of moving forwards. The car feels great, we have a good setup for the qualifying and the race as well."

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Frank Biela (Audi Sport Infineon Team Joest / Audi A4 DTM #45)

17th / 10th place, 1m 25.330s (69 laps)

“What we tried today was good. There are still a few minor things left, though, for us to improve tomorrow morning. This was not at all a bad start to the weekend. It’ll probably be hard to make it into the top ten in the qualifying – but of course I’m going to give my level best.”

Martin Tomczyk (Audi Sport Team Abt / Audi A4 DTM #6)

12th / 14th place, 1m 25.570s (47 laps)

“I’m not completely happy yet with the setup of my A4. After all, though, Friday’s practice serves to give you the chance of trying out different approaches. We worked intensively for three hours today, so I’m sure that tomorrow we’ll be ready for the qualifying session and among the front runners.”

Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Director Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline): “The work we did today was clearly focused, and we tried out different things with our four cars to collect as much data as possible. Mattias was the quickest in both tests, and his long run was very good, too. This makes me feel very confident.”

Ralf Jüttner (Technical Director Audi Sport Infineon Team Joest): “Compliments to the squad who had only a short time to prepare the cars after our trip to China. Today was very productive, and we consistently worked in the right direction. Mattias – yet again – is in a class by himself, but the rest are incredibly close to each other. Nevertheless, we had both cars make it into the top ten. If we can manage to do that tomorrow as well, I’ll be happy.”

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “Five cars among the top ten – that’s a very good result. Today, we focused on working our way through our whole programme. I think we’ll have a very good setup for tomorrow. It would be nice if tomorrow we could show the same strength we demonstrated today.”

Find photos and further information on the Internet:

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