

Audi Motorsport Newsletter 8/ 2003

2003-04-29 07:51:54 by audioc

Latest Motorsport news from Audi, covering DTM, A4 in the STCC and Le Mans pre-test and historic racers.

Audi driver Laurent Aiello third in DTM opener

DTM: 57,000 spectators witnessed the successful start of the new DTM season and the strong debut of the fourth generation Abt-Audi TT-R at Hockenheim. With third position defending champion Laurent Aiello successfully managed to finish on the podium. Mattias Ekström also finished in the points in eighth position. Both Audi Juniors were unlucky: After an excellent qualifying performance, Martin Tomczyk (21) had to be satisfied with twelfth place. The 19-year-old Peter Terting ended his DTM debut on the opening lap of the race after a spin. The track and weather conditions during his debut in the Touring Car "Top Class" could hardly have been more difficult for the youngest DTM driver of all time. It started to rain Hockenheim punctually at the start in Hockenheim at 2 p.m. Even the most seasoned campaigners had difficulty keeping the touring cars, with over 450 hp running on slick tyres, on a circuit that was as slippery as ice. "I touched the damp kerbs, the car snapped out of line and I had no chance to correct and prevent the spin," said Terting who was forced to retire after touching a wall. "Obviously I'm very disappointed, but have learnt a terrific amount this weekend – that I will try to use to my advantage during the next race in Italy."

Martin Tomczyk, his team colleague in the S line Audi Junior Team, excelled in single lap qualifying ("Super Pole"), which was held for the first time, with a perfect lap and second on the grid. Initially, and as best Audi driver, he held third place during the tricky opening laps before having to make way for his team colleague Laurent Aiello. "I didn't take any risks in the rain," explained Tomczyk. His tactics seemed to work out: The 21-year-old was lying safely in fourth position before the first compulsory pit stop. However, there was a problem changing the left hand front wheel at both compulsory pit stops. "As a result, I lost many time and my chances of a better finish were over."

Defending champion Laurent Aiello impressed the spectators with exciting duels on the drying track. First of all he overcame Jean Alesi, his countryman, before hunting down the second placed Mercedes driver Marcel Fässler in the closing stages of the race. Fässler and Aiello took the chequered flag side-by-side and separated by a mere 0.290 seconds. "Our new car is quick and was very consistent in the race. We just need to get to know it a bit better to exploit the full potential," mentioned Aiello.

Three Audi R8 racers at Le Mans pre-test

Le Mans: Preparations for the 2003 Le Mans 24 Hours is entering the next level on Sunday with the pre-test. The Audi customer teams, Audi Sport Japan Team Goh, Audi Sport UK and Team ADT Champion Racing start at the French endurance classic with three Audi R8 racers. The nine drivers of the three teams are all on duty at Le Mans on Sunday. "Although there are eight hours available during the pre-test, time is of a premium, because the track is as usual very dirty and slippery in the morning," said Audi driver Marco Werner. This year, the customer teams are able to use the resources of data and experience established by the Audi works team, which won the 24 Hours of Le Mans three times in succession between 2000 and 2002. "We will start

the pre-test with exactly the same set-up which proved so successful last year,” explained Frank Biela who drives for Audi Sport UK and has his sights firmly set on his fourth Le Mans victory in succession.

Race debut of the Audi A4 in Sweden

STCC: The race version of the new Audi A4 will celebrate its race debut at the opening round of the Swedish Touring Car Championship (STCC) in Falkenberg. Team Director Tommy Kristoffersson is confident following successful tests: “The new A4 is reliable and fast, and I think that we will be fighting for podium positions.” In addition to Fredrik Ekblom and Tommy Kristoffersson, youngster Tobias Johansson (20) should race a third A4 currently being built by KMS Motorsport.

Audi S corner in Zandvoort

DTM: The Audi drivers will be pleased to race through their own corner when Zandvoort, in Holland, hosts the DTM from September 19 to 21. Like the “Audi S” on the Nürburgring Grand Prix circuit, since last week there is also an “Audi S” at Zandvoort. “S” stands for “S line”, the quattro GmbH’s sport equipment brand name.

Historic racecars on the Donauring

History: Motorsport fans can see historic Audi racecars in action on a 1.6 kilometre long circuit on the outskirts of Ingolstadt’s historic centre on Saturday and Sunday (3-4 May). In Audi’s home town, Audi Tradition presents nine legendary successful racing cars, including the Auto Union Rennwagen Type C with the 16-cylinder engine and the Audi 90 IMSA-GTO which won seven races in the USA in 1989.

Audi Motorsport in figures

Hockenheim (D), DTM round 1, 27 April

1. Bernd Schneider (Mercedes) 37 laps in 1h 11m 06.451s
2. Marcel Fässler (Mercedes) + 28.002s
3. Laurent Aiello (Abt-Audi TT-R) + 28.292s
4. Jean Alesi (Mercedes) + 38.467s
5. Christijan Albers (Mercedes) + 1m 01.237s
6. Peter Dumbreck (Opel) + 1m 16.749s
7. Timo Scheider (Opel) + 1m 19.342s
8. Mattias Ekström (Abt-Audi TT-R) + 1m 22.578s

Positions after 1 of 10 races:

1. Schneider, 10 points;
2. Fässler, 8;
3. Aiello, 6;
4. Alesi, 5;
5. Albers, 4;
6. Dumbreck, 3;
7. Scheider, 2;
8. Ekström, 1.

Next race: Adria (I), May 11

Coming up this week

Audi Sport UK tests at Snetterton on Wednesday; Frank Biela drives the “British” Audi R8 for the first time... 24 Hours of Le Mans pre test (Sunday 9 am to 1 pm and 2 pm to 6 pm) ... Paul Frère, journalist and Le Mans winner in 1960 tests the Audi R8 between 1 pm and 2 pm at the pre-test... Race debut of the new Audi R4 at the opening round of the Swedish Touring Car Championship (STCC) in Falkenberg ... In preparation for the 24 Hours Race, Kris Nissen, Martin Tomczyk and Karl Wendlinger contest the fourth round of the Endurance Championship at the Nürburgring on Saturday in the Abt-Audi TT-R ... DTM driver Christian Abt is guest of honour at the “Bild Race Day” on Thursday (1 May) at the trotting course in Gelsenkirchen ... Tommy Kristoffersson will be 44-years-old on Thursday ...

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