

## ABT Sportsline 2021 – Press Release – Week 35

### **DTM in Austria: Fans return, an unforgettable final lap, a clown show and many trophies for ABT**

After a two-year break, the DTM is returning to **Austria** and with it also the **fans**: For the first time since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, spectators will again be allowed in the DTM paddock. The proximity to the fans has always been a special feature of the popular racing series, which has been sorely missed lately.

Accordingly, the ABT Sportsline team is **looking forward** to the two races at the Red Bull Ring (Live on SAT.1 and ran.de from 1 PM on Saturday and Sunday).

ABT Sportsline's main goal for the weekend is to defend its **lead** in the **teams' and drivers' standings**. At the same time, the team located at Johann-Abt-Strasse in Kempten knows very well that a lot can always happen on the picturesque race track near Spielberg in Styria.

At the first event in Spielberg in 2001, Laurent Aiello clinched a **podium** for ABT Sportsline at its first attempt with second place in the compact Abt-Audi TT-R. At that time, he was the only one of the three ABT drivers to see the checkered flag in a turbulent race.

One year later, the fans witnessed one of the **most spectacular races in DTM history**, in which Laurent Aiello would have needed just two points more than Bernd Schneider to secure an early DTM title. After a memorable last lap and an accident in the final corner, Aiello and ABT Sportsline had to wait another three weeks for their first DTM title triumph.

The champagne for the **championship title** was already chilled in the pits at that time and the ABT house band Fire44 was waiting outside the gates of the race track.

In 2003, Aiello narrowly missed the podium in fourth place. After that, the **A1 Ring** was rebuilt and did not play host to any DTM races for quite some time.

In 2011, Oliver Jarvis took the first podium for ABT Sportsline at the **newly opened Red Bull Ring**. Memories of qualifying that year are not so positive in Kempten: Miguel Molina and Mattias Ekström crashed in the pit lane (!) on slicks in the rain and both drivers had to start the race from the last row of the grid.

ABT Sportsline celebrated its first race win at the Red Bull Ring with **Edoardo Mortara** in Saturday's race in 2015. **Mattias Ekström** was victorious one day later. Until then, the Swede had been denied a podium at the race track of his long-time partner Red Bull, of all places.

Ekström triumphed again in 2017. Nico Müller made it a perfect double podium for ABT Sportsline with third place, which was a great **birthday present for Thomas Biermaier**, who celebrated his 40th birthday on race day.



A year earlier, Ekström lost his cool following Saturday's race, after he had already been "flipped" in the first corner and, from his point of view, unfairly blocked during his pursuit to catch up. "It's always the same **clowns**," 'Eki' exclaimed on television at the time.

Most recently, **Nico Müller** scored four podiums in a row for ABT Sportsline at the Red Bull Ring. In 2018, the Swiss could even have won, but in both races he made way for his Audi teammate René Rast, who still had a chance of winning the title shortly before the end of the season.

Team ABT Sportsline has raced in Spielberg twelve times with the DTM so far. In 15 races, the team has achieved **three victories** and **a total of eleven podium finishes**. At the last four events at the Red Bull Ring, ABT Sportsline always brought back at least two trophies to Kempten.

### Quotes before the DTM races at the Red Bull Ring

**Thomas Biermaier (Team Principal Team ABT Sportsline):** "We have already experienced a lot at the Red Bull Ring. I still remember the last lap in 2002 as if it happened yesterday. The Red Bull Ring usually guarantees spectacular races, but there are also corners where you regularly see crashes. I hope that our race director will say a few words at the drivers' meeting on Friday, so that scenes like the last one at the Nürburgring are not repeated. Apart from that, we're happy to have Sophia back in the team."

**Kelvin van der Linde (ABT Audi R8 LMS #3):** "I'm very happy to arrive at the Red Bull Ring as the championship leader. Of course, we want to build on ABT Sportsline's 70th win in the DTM and be successful again. We have tested at the Red Bull Ring and therefore have a good basis to work from. But, we also know that the track with its long straights will be particularly tough for our Audi. Nevertheless, we want to attack again, get the maximum out of the weekend and defend our championship lead."

**Mike Rockenfeller (ABT Audi R8 LMS #9):** "The Red Bull Ring is clearly one of the most beautiful tracks on the calendar. The track is beautifully situated and the facility is one of the most modern. It's extremely good fun to get there. The Red Bull Ring is beautiful to drive on. Very fluid, uphill, downhill. Very fast. I'm curious to see what the starts and restarts will be like up the hill there. I think there will be a lot of opportunities to overtake or to be overtaken. That will be exciting. We also know that the weather can change extremely quickly in the mountains. I am excited and looking forward to it. I hope to score a lot of points and make up ground in the championship."

**Sophia Flörsch (ABT Audi R8 LMS #99):** "After watching the Nürburgring weekend from Le Mans, I'm happy to be back in the DTM. The Red Bull Ring is one of my favorite race tracks and I always really look forward to it. We had a test day there, so I definitely know a bit about what the track feels like in the GT3 car. The weather is also supposed to be good, although you never really know at the Red Bull Ring with the mountains. I'm just excited and looking forward to working with ABT again."



## Did you know that ...

... Kelvin van der Linde's ABT Audi R8 LMS is equipped with **onboard cameras** for the TV broadcast at the Red Bull Ring?

... **Sophia Flörsch** did demo laps with her ABT Audi R8 LMS during the Formula 1 Grand Prix at the Red Bull Ring?

... **René Rast**, a driver for Audi Sport ABT Schaeffler in Formula E, will be working as an expert for the SAT.1 television broadcaster in the DTM for the first time?

## ABT dates for the media

### Media talk with Sophia, Kelvin and Mike via Zoom

Sunday, September 5, 08:30 AM CEST

Zoom link: <https://bit.ly/ABTDTMRedBullRing2021>

Text/photos at: [www.abt-sportsline.com/company/media/press-releases](http://www.abt-sportsline.com/company/media/press-releases)

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