**Hankook and Audi making young drivers faster**

**The Audi Sport TT Cup concluded this weekend with the grand finale at the Hockenheimring. The iconic circuit was the seventh and final race location for the Audi one-make cup, which debuted in 2015. The 16 regular drivers from eleven different nations competed in a total of 14 races with their 310-hp cars. The starting field could be expanded to 24 and regularly welcomed a range of guest drivers, former racing drivers, VIPs and journalists. Premium tyre maker Hankook provided the Ventus Race to the junior series for the second year, guaranteeing consistently fast and reliable race tyres that helped all the drivers embarking on their careers in professional racing.**

***Hockenheimring/Germany, 16 October* *2016*** – The selection procedure from the inaugural year was repeated before the start of this season, to test the driving skills, media work and sponsoring of 125 participants and then select the best of the best to compete in the Audi one-make cup. “It is important that we check the potential of the drivers in detail. That is why all the cars are the same and we only allow the tyre pressure, the anti-roll bars and the traction control to be adjusted,” explains project lead Philipp Mondelaers.

After some initial difficulties adjusting to the new environment, the field moved closer together as the season progressed and the young drivers were increasingly able to adjust their cars and their driving style to each circuit. “In the last qualifying session at the Hockenheimring, the first ten drivers were all within five tenths of a second of one another. In the first race of the year, they were spread over one second,” says Philipp Mondelaers. The project lead is particularly proud of the feedback from fans about the enjoyable, refreshing style of the young “wild ones”, who provided plenty of action on the track with countless overtaking manoeuvres and tough battles.

This season, there were fewer accidents than in the first year, thanks to the detailed training provided by the Audi instructors. However, the young drivers did need some time to get used to Audi TTs weighing just 1,125 kilograms, with a performance that can easily reach 22 kW (30 hp) with the Push-to-Pass function.

Philipp Mondelaers: “It takes a while to develop a feeling for our front-wheel drive car. The tyres on the front axle are always working at the limit as they steer, brake and transfer power. The rear-axle tyres simply follow them. This means that the front tyres reach their ideal operating temperature more quickly than those on the rear axle. A lot of driver training was required to get the perfect balance.”

For this reason, the race tyres from premium tyre maker Hankook played an important role for the young drivers in the Audi Sport TT Cup. “We have not had tyre problems since the debut of the Audi one-make cup in 2015, even though our drivers don’t treat the Hankook tyres too gently at the start of the season. The extremely high reliability and predictability of the race tyres help all our drivers to test their limits,” says Philipp Mondelaers.

Although the 2017 motorsport season is not yet over, the first talent scouting for the 2017 season has already taken place. This will continue over the coming months. Interested drivers can register online to compete: <http://www.audi-motorsport.com/de/de/tt-cup.html>.

Manfred Sandbichler, Hankook Motorsport Director Europe: “The Audi Sport TT Cup is extremely important as a springboard for young drivers and is the ideal platform for Hankook. The cars are at the highest technical level and our Ventus Race tyre is a perfect fit for the Audi TT. Our cooperation with Audi was, and remains, outstanding.”

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| **Contact:****Hankook Tire Europe GmbH |** Corporate Communications Europe/CIS **|** Siemensstr. 5a, 63263 Neu-Isenburg **|** Germany |
| **Anna Magdalena Pasternak**PR ManagerTel.: +49 (0) 6102 8149 – 173a.pasternak@hankookreifen.de**Sven Kaatz**Media RelationsTel: +49 (0) 171 8609730sk@9pm-media.com | **Sabine Riedel**Public RelationsTel.: +49 (0) 6102 8149 – 174s.riedel@hankookreifen.de |  |  |