**Berlin Rookie: starting out in professional motorsport**

**with Hankook**

**The Audi Sport TT Cup enters the second half of its season this weekend at Circuit Zandvoort. The 16 young drivers from eleven countries will contest races seven and eight at the 4.307-kilometre racetrack on the Dutch coast as part of the support programme for the DTM. As the wind constantly blows sand onto the track, the circuit in the dunes is regarded as one of the most demanding on the race calendar. Faced with these tough conditions, the talented youngsters benefit from the performance potential of the race tyre provided by premium tyre maker Hankook, who have supported the Audi Sport TT Cup with the *Ventus Race* since the series was launched in 2015.**

***Zandvoort/Netherlands, 19th August* 2017** – The Audi Sport TT Cup is new territory for Mike Beckhusen. The young man from Berlin is contesting his first season in the junior series, but has been involved in motorsport from a young age. “I first drove a kart when I was five. A friend of my father, a former rally driver, encouraged me. I also did a bit of motocross, before I entered my first kart races as a nine-year-old. Even back then, I already wanted to become a professional racing driver,” he says.

Beckhusen is supported by his father, who is a professional motor boat racing driver and has won titles at national and international level. The 17-year-old’s first major success came in 2010, when he finished tenth in the World Karting Championship. One year later, he was runner-up in the Easykart European Series. In 2016, Beckhusen finished third in the Junior class in the ADAC TCR Germany series, before taking his place at the wheel of the 340-hp Audi TT for the first time this season.

“Everything is unbelievably professionally organised at Audi. Not only do the coaches help you, but so does everyone involved. Last year I had my team in the TCR, but here I have Audi behind me. That really helps a newcomer like me, and you learn an incredible amount,” says Beckhusen. After taking a short time to find his feet in the junior series, the youngster from Berlin has improved consistently and has now established himself in the top ten. His goal is now to win the Rookie competition and to challenge for a podium position in the overall standings.

The 17-year-old is assisted on his way to the top by the Hankook race tyres. Beckhusen: “The Hankook tyres are very good. Even if you do not get the tyre pressure 100 per cent right, they adapt to your driving style, last a very long time, and are consistently quick. I can depend fully on the Hankook tyre and push hard throughout the entire race.”

The young driver from Berlin still has his sights set firmly on becoming a professional racing driver. Beckhusen: “I want to be a works driver, to have a regular seat in a team and earn my living from motor racing. Should that work out, my dream is to win the 24 Hours of Le Mans.”

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| **Contact:****Hankook Tire Europe GmbH |** Corporate Communications Europe/CIS **|** Siemensstr. 14, 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 | **Yara Willems**Public RelationsTel.: +49 (0) 6102 8149 – 172y.willems@hankookreifen.de |  |  |