

AUTOMOTIVE

Audi promotes electric plans through increased Formula E participation

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Team ABT Schaeffler Audi Sport

By STAFF REPORTS

German automaker Audi is putting more resources toward Formula E team ABT Schaeffler Audi Sport as the brand ramps up its focus on electric mobility.

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ABT Schaeffler has carried Audi's name since the 2014/2015 Formula E season, but starting in the 2016/2017 season, the automaker will give the team financial and technical support. As Audi looks to be a leader in electric vehicle production, having this increased association with its namesake team will help it raise awareness among fans of the sport.

Electric race

Since 2014, ABT Schaeffler has been able to use Audi Sport's Neuburg infrastructure.

Starting now, Audi's four ring logo will be positioned on the sides and rear wings of the ABT Schaeffler FE02. From Sept. 5-7 at Donington Park in the United Kingdom, as the final tests on the single-seater electric racecars will be undertaken, the Audi branding will be visible.

The Formula E season will kick off on Oct. 9 in Hong Kong. For 2016/2017, 12 races in 10 cities worldwide. Closing the season will be two final races in New York on July 29-30, 2017.

"Electric mobility is one of the key topics in our industry," says Dr. Stefan Knirsch, member of the board of management, technical development, at Audi. "We intend to evolve into one of the leading premium car manufacturers in this field.

"By 2025, every fourth Audi should be an electric vehicle," he said. "The first model for this is planned to be an SUV we're going to present in 2018. In the light of these plans, adapting our motorsport program and taking up a commitment in a fully electric racing series is only a logical move."



Audi Sportback e-tron hybrid

During the 2017/2018 season, Audi will move closer to a full factory commitment, taking part in the vehicle development alongside Schaeffler.

"Audi has consistently been using motorsport to test and develop new technologies further for subsequent use in production," said Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich, head of Audi Motorsport. "With quattro drive we revolutionized rally racing and subsequently set standards in circuit racing as well.

"In the 24 Hours of Le Mans, Audi was the first manufacturer to have achieved victories with a TFSI engine, a TDI and a hybrid race car, so writing motorsport history on several occasions," he said. "Now we intend to repeat this in fully electric racing. Formula E with its races being held in the hearts of major cities is an ideal stage for this purpose and Team ABT Schaeffler Audi Sport a logical partner for us."

As electric vehicles become more popular, Audi is not alone in its dedication to Formula E.

British automaker Jaguar is returning to the racetrack with its entry into the FIA Formula E Championship.

Throughout the brand's 70-year racing heritage, it has used competition as a chance to push its cars, learn more about them and fine-tune the vehicles. By participating in the third seasons of the Formula E, Jaguar will be able to design and develop electric technology, which may make it into consumer vehicles one day ([see story](#)).