



Opening of the truck racing season 2013: MAN teams go to the start with ideal preparation

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On this coming Whitsun weekend, the truck racers will be opening the European Championship season 2013 in Misano, Italy. The field for the FIA European Truck Racing Championship is a strong one with 21 drivers vying for individual honours.

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The MAN contingent was strengthened during winter, with the move of Markus Oestreich causing the biggest stir. This fast, experienced driver will be piloting Trucksport Bernau's MAN. There is going to be a tough fight for the team title in the course of this year's FIA European Truck Racing Championship. Eight teams have entered: five will be driving MAN trucks while three will be driving other brands, supported by the respective manufacturers.

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The MAN race trucks already bear the new design of the Euro VI generation. Björn Loose, Head of Marketing and Motor Sport at MAN, emphasises: "The new, bigger MAN lion with its clear contours is showing its teeth - on the race trucks, this represents the brand's reliable bite! We're proud to be heading to the start in 2013 with this new and strong brand presence!"

Pre-season tests demonstrate high technical level

At the race tracks, the private teams will receive central support from the MAN Service crew. The mechanics and telemetry specialists will be travelling to this year's European Championship races in new semitrailers and with a new team look. Their technical equipment and the new interiors of the race trailers were specially designed for the Service crew with the objective of maximum functionality. This year, the two MAN Service trucks will be operating with a new, generously sized canopy, which will be erected in the paddock to cover the area between the trailers. Motor sport boss Björn Loose underscores the factors for success: "We as a brand are starting the new season with optimised team structures. We're especially pleased that in Steffi Halm we also have a female driver going to the start for us in the European Championships. From a technical point of view as well we have greater presence. But it's primarily the high level of motivation in the MAN stable that provides the basis for continuing the success of recent years in 2013."



For the MAN drivers, official pre-season testing in Nogaro was an important aspect of preparation for the upcoming season. That's where the strengths of the new members first showed themselves, besides which the pre-season tests also provided an informed impression of the performance levels of trucks and drivers under race conditions. "The level is very high" says Artur Klein, the MAN Race Service team leader from the Engine Development Center in Nuremberg. He is responsible for MAN's activities on the race track and after the tests, he's convinced by the advanced stage of development shown by the teams. "Both the continued development of the six-cylinder racing engine and the performance of the new additions to the MAN teams promise to make this an exciting season." Klein was also clearly pleased that the teams had arrived ideally prepared and were thus able to concentrate fully on tuning the trucks and testing various configurations und components. The engine developers from Nuremberg focused on two aspects for the new season: firstly, the stability of the race engine (based on the MAN D2676) under extreme loads was optimised and secondly, intensive work was done on the performance parameters.

The new drivers for 2013

A first: two-time champion Jochen Hahn and Mika Mäkinen from Finland form a team. Multiple European champion Antonio Albacete will be racing together with Markus Oestreich. In his second season, René Reinert will be doing everything he can to improve on the results of his first. Czech Frankie Vojtisek's team saw some changes during the winter break and his second truck will now be driven by Gregory Ostaszewski from Poland. The new-comer's family runs a big transport company. Just like his German colleague Reinert, Ostaszewski thus continues a tradition that has taken rather a back seat recently: in the early years of the motor sport series, it was almost exclusively transport company operators with their drivers who participated in the races.

The Oxxo Racing Team from Hungary also has a new member, one who lowers the team's average age still further. In addition to fast regular driver Norbert Kiss, who won a number of races towards the end of last season, 17-year-old Benedek Major is being given the opportunity to make it as a truck pilot. The youngster has already gathered some experience in various different series.



In Steffi Halm, an ambitious driver returns to the European Championship in 2013. The German motor sportswoman competed in 2011, then moved to the French Lions team. Last year she restricted herself to the French Truck Championship - with spectacular success. She was not only adored by the race fans, she also succeeded in the feat of leaving old hands such as Noel Crozier behind her and winning that championship.

After each race you can find a video summary at:

www.mantruckandbus.com/truckrace

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