

Audi Sport TT Cup

Lady of the Rings



In the final season of competition in Volkswagen's Scirocco R-Cup, Mikaela Åhlin-Kottulinsky made history, becoming the series' first female winner with a hard-fought victory at Germany's tough Norisring circuit. The Swedish racer ended the season as the championship's highest placed female driver, finishing ninth overall.

With the Scirocco R-Cup coming to an end at the final round in Hockenheim, after 17-years of competition, Åhlin-Kottulinsky's next move was open to question.

However, determined to pursue a career in touring cars, the arrival of the new Audi Sport TT Cup competition made the choice simple.

Gaining a place in the Cup competition was not so easy, however, with Audi receiving 165 applications from 30 nations for just 18 seats in the series. The final choice was made by an expert panel featuring Audi Sport TT Cup coach Markus Winkelhock, Le Mans winner Marco Werner and former rally driver Sepp Haider.

"We intensively reviewed every single application and in a multi-stage selection process chose the 18 drivers who are now given the chance to prove themselves in the Audi Sport TT Cup," said series' Project Leader Rolf Michl. "Our aim was to have a very international and attractive field – and we've achieved this."

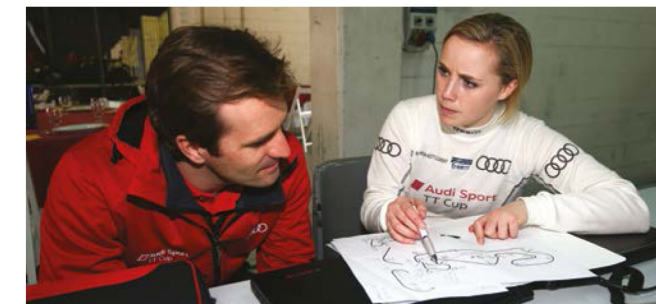
Kottulinsky will be one of two female drivers to line up for the first TT Cup event at Hockenheim on 2 May. The other is 22-year-old Polish driver Malgorzata Rdest. Hailing from the city of Krakow, Rdest took part in the final selection event for the FIA Women in Motorsport-supported drive in the VW Scirocco R-Cup in 2013.

In 2013 Rdest also competed in the BRDC Formula 4 Championship in the UK and won the series 'Who Zooms' award for completing the most overtaking moves during the season. Last year she raced in Poland's VW Golf Cup.

The new TT Cup series, using 2-litre, four cylinder engines putting out over 300hp, begins on May 2 and will be contested over six double-header rounds.

Best of all for Kottulinsky, the series runs on a number of tracks that she knows well from her R-Cup career and will also take place on the undercard of the massively popular DTM championship, the series that remains the 22-year-old's ultimate goal.

After last year becoming the first woman to win a race in the now discontinued VW Scirocco R-Cup, Sweden's Mikaela Åhlin-Kottulinsky has stepped up to race in Audi's new TT Cup and has high hopes for the future



Mikaela, let's take a quick look back at your progress last season. Do you feel now that it was a 'breakthrough' season for you?

Yes, it really was. For me it was the season where I really understood that I'm a good driver and I started to trust my abilities. It was a year where I really showed myself that I have good pace.

Of course, the major moment was that historic win at the Norisring. What did that mean to you?

At the moment I won it wasn't so much about making history that made me so insanely happy, it was more that I showed myself I really could do it!

The race before Norisring had been a tough one and I struggled a lot, so I really needed that win to boost my confidence; to show myself that "Yes, I can!"

It only became a bigger deal after the fact. Then I started to realise that I'd done something no one had done before, and that I would forever be the one, the only woman to win a race in Volkswagen's racing history. That was big.

At the end of the season what did you feel you had achieved and were you sure of your next move?

I felt that my pace throughout the season had been really good, even though it wasn't always shown in the results, plus I had also figured out a way to do better in qualifying, which I've always struggled with.

In terms of the next move, for me, ever since the Audi Sport TT Cup was officially announced, my target has been to be on the starting grid in 2015.

That's now a reality, so what are your hopes for this season?

To learn as much as possible and do my best every time, on every lap. What comes out of that, we'll see. I'm a slow learner and need some time. But, when I get that time, I know I'm a tough competitor.

How did the Audi Sport TT Cup drive come about?

My decision to apply for the Audi Sport TT Cup was because Audi is very close to my heart. My grandfather Freddy Kottulinsky was one of the founders of Quattro, and also the Audi Driving Experience. I am also working now for Audi Driving Experience, so as you understand Audi is very close to my heart. I also believe you can develop a lot within the Audi family, and hopefully all the way to the DTM.

How does the Audi Sport TT Cup compare with the Scirocco R-Cup in terms of the feel of the cars, racing, competition?

The concept is very similar, but the cars are completely different. I wouldn't say you have an advantage from driving the Scirocco R-Cup, since the cars are so different.

Is it important for your career that you will be racing alongside the very popular DTM series?

Definitely. Since my dream and goal is to drive the DTM, to drive at the same arenas, around the same people is of course very valuable.

