



ALTERNATIVE ENERGY MOTORSPORT

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ADAC 24h Race Nürburgring

### Hybrid racecar faces the ultimate challenge

Heinz-Harald Frentzen takes off with a racecar featuring an innovative propulsion concept.

A hybrid vehicle featuring both gasoline and electric motors brings 630 horsepower to the long-distance classic in May. The major motorsports event in Germany, the 24-hour race at the Nürburgring, will be the site of a spectacular premiere from May 22 - 25. Although Formula One regulations do not envision hybrid systems until 2009, a private team centered around onetime Formula One driver Heinz-Harald Frentzen took on a daunting challenge—racing a hybrid vehicle on the “Ring” marathon. An electric motor is charged by reclaiming energy normally lost every time the brakes are applied. This second power source helps the conventional engine give the racecar the necessary boost for speeding around the Nordschleife and Grand Prix course twice an hour.

“Motorsports cannot ignore the necessity of economizing energy. Moreover, I see the opportunity to make our sport a trailblazer in technological innovation once again, which will in turn make cars considerably more energy efficient off the racetrack,” explains Heinz-Harald Frentzen when asked about the reasons for his involvement in hybrid racing. Frentzen, who hails from Mönchengladbach, Germany, is not just a trophy driver in the project. More precisely, he is the driving force behind it, and is even responsible for financing the sizeable project costs. “The organizer of the 24-hour race, ADAC Nordrhein Auto Club, has been open to alternative propulsion concepts for years,” says Frentzen when asked why he was racing at the Nürburgring. Now, after consulting with Deutscher Motor Sport Bund e. V., German motor racing’s governing body, ADAC is giving our project a chance. This is really the only chance at the moment, as the project doesn’t conform with existing international regulations,” said Frentzen when asked why he is racing at the “Ring.” Otherwise referred to as the “Green Hell,” the Nürburgring racecourse is to become the site of a premiere for this eco racing project. For its first performance, the hybrid racer, based on a Gumpert Apollo sportscar, will not only face off against the 200-plus vehicles vying against it, but

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specifically such speedy powerhouses as the Porsche 911 GT3, Dodge Viper, Lamborghini Gallardo, BMW Z4 and the Chevrolet Corvette. The newcomer is not lacking in performance, however: the conventional power package features a 3.3 liter, V8 Twin Turbo engine. This is supplemented by an electric motor yielding a maximum of 100 kW, though full power is not always available. Altogether, the hybrid racer can achieve up to 630 horsepower for use on the hills and low portions of the Nürburgring. The downside is the added weight of the extra electrical components.

Nevertheless, the technician responsible for this project, Norbert Kreyer, is in good spirits: "We're very much aware of how difficult our task is. Needless to say, we're not among the favorites in terms of an overall win. As a private team, we just don't have the financial and technical resources available compared with major car manufacturers. We have to make up for it with a great deal of flexibility and pioneering spirit. The preparation time was very short as well, due to circumstances. But with this innovative concept, I'm convinced we'll be able to show what's possible with hybrid technology even today." For the engine specialist with years of experience in Rallye racing and management positions in Formula One under his belt, the performance at the Ring is only the beginning: "The hybrid concept we're pursuing here is only one stage in the development of a vehicle in which the electrical components continue to increase in significance." One look at the lineup of drivers assisting Heinz-Harald Frentzen is all it takes to see that the team is serious about the race. Along with Frentzen, Dirk Müller (Monaco), the 2007 FIA GT champ in the GT2 category, will sit behind the wheel. Müller, who drives a Ferrari 430 GT and is leading in points in the American Le Mans Series GT2 category, has recently garnered wins in St. Petersburg and Long Beach, is well known on the Nordschleife. As an official BMW driver, he was part of the winning team of the 24-hour race on the Nürburgring along with Hans-Joachim Stuck, Pedro Lamy and Jörg Müller. One or two additional solid drivers, ideally with experience on the difficult and demanding Nordschleife, will team up with Frentzen/Müller to round out the Hybrid Racing team.

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