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Inspiration ahead of standout fixture: ADAC Formula 4 drivers meet Sebastian Vettel

- The four-time world champion answers questions from talented young drivers
- ADAC Formula 4 contestants join the Formula 1 star for lunch
- Krütten: “That was super – he is really nice”

Hockenheim: Lunch with Sebastian Vettel sounds an unlikely scenario for most junior drivers, but seven of this year’s ADAC Formula 4 drivers enjoyed that very experience on Thursday. In the run-up to the standout fixture of the 2018 ADAC Formula 4 calendar when it shares the billing with the Emirates Grand Prix of Germany at Hockenheim, the talented youngsters were invited to meet the Formula 1 star. The Top Three in the championship – Lirim Zendeli, Liam Lawson and Enzo Fittipaldi – were joined by rookies Niklas Krütten, David Schumacher and Joey Alders plus Ferrari Junior Gianluca Petecof for Thursday’s meeting with Vettel in the paddock. During a visit to the Ferrari garage and a subsequent lunch, the ADAC Formula 4 patron allowed himself to be quizzed at length and had some good tips for the stars of tomorrow. Vettel himself started out in Formula BMW ADAC – a precursor to the current single-seater series – winning no fewer than 18 races out of 20 in the 2004 season, a record that stands to this day.

“I had a lot of fun meeting the ADAC Formula 4 drivers,” said Vettel: “I remember only too well my time in the junior series, and I would be delighted to see one of the guys competing in Formula 1 at some future stage.”

ADAC Formula 4 championship leader Zendeli was impressed by the sheer scale of everything in the highest echelon of motor racing. “From the outside, it’s difficult to appreciate how big the whole operation is,” said the 18-year-old from Bochum. “What a privilege it would be to one day make the step up to Formula 1. That thought has spurred me on to give 100 percent more over the weekend and show the Formula 1 spectators what I’m capable of. To go flat out and get results so as to set the standard in this class.”

It’s an aspiration shared by Niklas Krütten, who describes the meeting with Vettel as “super” and the four-time world champion as “totally likable and down-to-earth”. “Meeting him here has increased my motivation for the race weekend,” said the 15-year-old, who currently leads the rookie standings. “If you meet someone like him who has made the grade, then you want to do the same.”

David Schumacher, who is locked in combat with Krütten for the rookie title, was equally impressed. “It was a great experience,” said 16-year-old son of former Formula 1 and DTM driver Ralf Schumacher. “I saw a Formula 1 garage for the first time. It was great fun and most enjoyable. The hospitality suite is very impressive. The same goes for the size of the buildings, and also the marquees and garages. It’s a completely different world.”

A world in which Sebastian Vettel certainly knows his way around. The 31-year-old is a four-time world champion and is now challenging for his fifth title, this time for Ferrari. Vettel takes an abiding interest in the upcoming generation of drivers. As patron of the ADAC

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Formula 4 series, he was more than happy to welcome the youngsters from the ADAC High-Speed Academy.

“It was exciting to meet such a famous driver,” added Krütten. “I was quite nervous at the beginning, because I only know him from his TV appearances. We asked him a whole load of questions and he provided us with a plenty of insight. He said we should just do what we want. We shouldn’t allow ourselves to be influenced by others and we should go our own way. Also, we should work hard and believe in ourselves.”



The serious business for the ADAC High-Speed Academy starts with the first free practice session on Friday at 09:45 CEST. There will be two ADAC Formula 4 races at Hockenheim this weekend, one on Saturday at 17:00 CEST and the other on Sunday at 10:10 CEST. SPORT1 will be showing the races on TV and there will be livestream coverage on www.SPORT1.de and www.adac.de/motorsport.

ADAC Formula 4: 2018 calendar

13/04/18 - 15/04/18	Motorsport Arena Oschersleben
04/05/18 - 06/05/18	Hockenheimring (with DTM)
18/05/18 - 20/05/18	Lausitzring (with DTM)
08/06/18 - 10/06/18	Red Bull Ring Spielberg/AUT
20/07/18 - 22/07/18	Hockenheimring (with Formula 1)
03/08/18 - 05/08/18	Nürburgring
21/09/18 - 23/09/18	Hockenheimring

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