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Race week at the Sachsenring: Who will be the new “King of the Ring”?

- **Ducati and world champion Francesco Bagnaia are favourites**
- **Marc Marquez returns to the Sachsenring**
- **Lukas Tulovic lines up in Moto2, Randy Krummenacher in the MotoE World Championship**

Hohenstein-Ernstthal. Will we witness the crowning of a new “King of the Ring”? That is the question ahead of the 25th staging of the LIQUI MOLY Motorcycle Grand Prix of Germany at the new Sachsenring. Last year, it was Yamaha star Fabio Quartararo who donned the crown at the iconic circuit in Hohenstein-Ernstthal. The Frenchman won the MotoGP race in temperatures well above 30 degrees Celsius and in front of a record crowd of 232,202 spectators.

This year, Ducati is clearly setting the pace. Now six race weekends into the 2023 MotoGP season, the Italian manufacturer has won five Grands Prix and enjoyed four successes in the newly-introduced sprint races. In the Constructors world championship, Ducati is way out in front with almost twice as many points as second-placed KTM. The Ducati dominance can also be seen in the Riders’ Championship: five of the top six are on a Desmosedici, with only KTM factory rider breaking the Ducati stranglehold in fourth place in the standings.

The clear favourite to win the LIQUI MOLY Motorcycle Grand Prix of Germany is world champion Francesco Bagnaia. The 26-year-old Italian has won three Grands Prix and three sprint races so far this year and already holds a 21-point lead over his closest rival. Coming into the race at the Sachsenring, that is Bagnaia’s compatriot Marco Bezzecchi from the Ducati satellite team of MotoGP legend Valentino Rossi. Bezzecchi claimed his first two Grand Prix victories in the MotoGP class at Termas de Rio Hondo and in Le Mans.

As well as Bezzecchi, the other Ducati riders are also hoping to take their opportunity, should it arise. The two Pramac riders, Jorge Martin and Johann Zarco, have made it onto the podium five times already this year – but are yet to climb onto the very top step. Bezzecchi’s team-mate Luca Marini, the half-brother of Valentino Rossi, and Zarco both have their sights set on their maiden Grand Prix win in the pinnacle of motorcycle racing.

When it comes to the other manufacturers, KTM factory rider Binder is certainly one to keep an eye on. He has presented the Austrians with two victories in sprint races this year, and only narrowly missed out on his first Grand Prix win of the season at the Spanish Grand Prix in Jerez. Superstar Marc Marquez is a proven Sachsenring specialist and can never be underestimated at the LIQUI MOLY Motorcycle Grand Prix of Germany. Between 2010 and 2021, the Honda factory rider won eleven times in a row at the iconic circuit in Hohenstein-Ernstthal, meaning he is still undefeated in MotoGP on this

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track. Last year Marquez missed the race following an operation, but he is now fit again. However, Honda, like Yamaha, has fallen down the pecking order.

Lukas Tulovic and Randy Krummenacher fly the flag for the German speakers

Germany's Lukas Tulovic is a regular starter in the Moto2 class. Having won the Moto2 European Championship last year, this is now Tulovic's second season in the world championship. Riding for German team LIQUI MOLY Husqvarna Intact GP, Tulovic has twice finished in the points in the six races so far this season. On home soil at the Sachsenring, he is now looking to improve on his best result so far – eleventh place in Le Mans – and finish in the top ten for the first time in his world championship career. Meanwhile, the battle for the world championship title is developing into a two-man race between Italian Tony Arbolino (Elf Marc VDS Racing Team) and Spanish youngster Pedro Acosta (Red Bull KTM Ajo).

LIQUI MOLY Husqvarna Intact GP also lines up in Moto3 this year and, with experienced Japanese Ayumu Sasaki, has already caught the eye. However, it is Tech3 KTM rider Daniel Holgado who leads the world championship. The young Spaniard has won three of the six races so far and leads his experienced compatriot Jaume Masia (Leopard Racing) by 35 points. A second German team, CFMoto Racing Prüstel GP, starts in the smallest class. Spain's Xavi Artigas finished third in Austin to claim the only podium of the year so far for Florian Prüstel's team.

The MotoE World Championship is making its second appearance at the LIQUI MOLY Motorcycle Grand Prix of Germany. In 2019, the Sachsenring hosted the world premiere of the electric motorcycle racing series. After the first four of this season's 16 races, world cup winners Jordi Torres (ESP) and Matteo Ferrari (ITA), together with Hector Garzo (ESP), have pulled a little way clear of the chasing pack in the world championship. Lurking in fourth place is Switzerland's Randy Krummenacher, the only German-speaking rider in the field. The 2019 Supersport world champion finished third to claim a spot on the podium at the opening race in Le Mans.

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