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## **A blend of exuberance and experience: New ADAC GT Masters champions De Phillippi and Mies**

- Audi pair clinch title after roller-coaster of a season
- GT3 newcomer De Phillippi first American to win ADAC GT Masters championship
- Veteran sports car driver Mies celebrates major career success

Hockenheim: Two new names have entered the ADAC GT Masters list of champions as the series concludes its tenth anniversary season – Connor De Phillippi (23, USA) and Christopher Mies (27, DEU). In a drama-filled second race on the final weekend at Hockenheim, eighth place for the two Audi drivers from Team Montaplast by Land-Motorsport was enough to secure the ultimate prize.

Unlike so many of the other driver pairings in the Super Sports Car League which have been together for years, De Phillippi and Mies have taken very different career paths. While the German half of the duo was getting his first GT3 experience in the ADAC GT Masters, the American youngster was just about to graduate from karting to junior formula racing. The Skip Barber National Championship, Formula Ford 1600 the Star Mazda Championship – the stages in De Phillippi's career in the USA will probably strike a chord only with real motorsport aficionados. In 2013, his success was a factor in helping him move overseas with a place on the Porsche programme for juniors. De Phillippi's route into Europe was assured. He showed that he was ready for higher things by achieving good results in Porsche single-make cups and in the VLN Endurance Championship at the Nürburgring.

Christopher Mies is a GT3 specialist par excellence. He contested two races in the ADAC GT Masters in 2008 at the age of 19, just one year after the launch of the new sports car category in Germany. In 2009, he then helped team-mate Christian Abt to a title win with guest drives in the Audi R8. In the same year, he also won his first major sports car series, the GT3 European Championship. The following year, Mies completed his first full season in the ADAC GT Masters driving an Audi R8 entered by ABT Sportsline, a team managed by his former co-driver Christian Abt. He narrowly missed out on the title on the final weekend at Oschersleben, finishing the season as championship runner-up. In 2011, Mies came third, having been in championship contention right up to the final weekend. He registered his biggest success in a single race in 2015 when, as a member of a four-man squad and at his first attempt, he secured a win for the second generation Audi R8 in its trialling year in the ADAC Zurich 24-hour race on the Nürburgring.

The arrival of Team Montaplast by Land-Motorsport in the 2016 ADAC GT Masters line-up brought together two characters with completely different backgrounds. The American-German pairing showed that they were in perfect harmony as early as the season opener at Oschersleben. With a dash of youthful exuberance, Connor De Phillippi made an excellent start to GT3 racing by securing pole position for the first race. With his experience, Christopher Mies helped the team get to grips with the new Audi R8. Two further P2 finishes lifted De Phillippi and Mies into the top spot in the championship table. Unfazed by a subsequent lean period and the loss of their lead towards the middle of the season, they continued to diligently rack up the points. A first outright victory of 2016 at the Nürburgring and a strong performance on the penultimate weekend of the campaign at Zandvoort put the two Audi drivers back on top. The crowning glory came at Hockenheim.

Connor De Phillippi is the first driver from the American continent to secure a title win in the ADAC GT Masters. "What a season!" said De Phillippi, who commutes around 9,500 kilometres from his home in San Clemente California to every race weekend. "This is now my fourth year



## MEDIA INFORMATION

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competing in Europe. To have won such a major championship as an American means a lot to me. My thanks to everyone who contributed to this triumph, and I'm delighted for every single member of the Montaplast by Land-Motorsport team." In addition to the drivers' championship, Connor De Phillippi has also won the Junior title, a classification introduced this year for contestants under 25 years of age.

Sports car veteran and multi-talent Christopher Mies is equally delighted with his ADAC GT Masters title: "I've always wanted to win this series. I narrowly missed out in 2010 and 2011. Now I've done it at last. It's certainly one of my greatest achievements in motorsport. I'm grateful to the Montaplast by Land-Motorsport team."

Wolfgang Land, Team Principal at Montaplast by Land-Motorsport is full of praise for his protégés: "Christopher Mies and Connor De Phillippi – what can I say? That was the hottest driver combination in the entire field. Christopher is already an old fox on the GT3 scene, while Connor is still a very young driver. Both have been extremely professional in their dealings with our engineers and mechanics. I am very happy for both of them."

Further information at [www.adac.de/gt-masters](http://www.adac.de/gt-masters)

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