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Victory for Asch and Ludwig in ADAC GT Masters season opener

- Thrilling curtain-raiser to 2016 ADAC GT Masters at Oschersleben
- Defending champions Sebastian Asch and Luca Ludwig win first race
- Victory for De Phillippi and Mies in Junior classification and for Ineichen in the Trophy

Oschersleben: The ADAC GT Masters has its first winners of 2016. Defending champions Sebastian Asch (29, DEU) and Luca Ludwig (27, DEU, both AMG Team Zakspeed) came out on top in an exciting opening race as the tenth season of the Super Sports Car League got underway at the Motorsport Arena Oschersleben. The duo taking the new Mercedes-AMG out on its racing debut staged a last-minute overtaking manoeuvre to prevail over the Team Montaplast by Land-Motorsport Audi R8s of Connor De Phillippi (23, USA) and Christopher Mies (26, DEU) and of Peter Hoenenars (20, NL) and Marc Basseng (37, DEU). “We had hoped for a good start to the season but had not been expecting a victory” said a delighted Luca Ludwig after steering the Mercedes-AMG across the finish line. “With that final overtaking manoeuvre just before the end, I was risking everything, but it was enough by a hair’s breadth for me to take the lead.”

Key facts: Motorsport Arena Oschersleben, Round 1/14

Length of track: 3,696 metres

Weather: 11 °C, cloudy

Pole position: Connor de Phillippi (Montaplast by Land-Motorsport, Audi R8 LMS), 1.26.483 mins

Winners: Sebastian Asch and Luca Ludwig (AMG-Team Zakspeed, Mercedes-AMG GT3)

Fastest lap: Markus Winkelhock (Phoenix Racing, Audi R8 LMS), 1.28.093 mins

Bentley man Hamprecht takes lead in first stint of race

Having started from grid position four in the Bentley Continental, it was Fabian Hamprecht (20, DEU, Bentley Team ABT) who got the jump in the sprint to the first tight bend after the start at Oschersleben to take a surprise lead on Lap 1, followed by Asch in the Mercedes-AMG. Pole-sitter De Phillippi dropped back down to third place in the Audi R8. Markus Winkelhock (35, DEU, Phoenix Racing) in another R8, Patrick Kujala (19, FIN, Bonaldi Motorsport) in the Lamborghini Huracán and Patrick Assenheimer (23, DEU, Callaway Competition) in a Corvette C7 gave pursuit in positions four, five and six respectively.

Hamprecht led until the driver changeover but, like Asch, had to serve a five-second penalty for an infringement of the rules at the start, which enabled Mies in the Audi to take the lead in the second stint of the race. A safety car deployment following Mikaela Ahlin-Kottulinski's (23, S/Aust Motorsport) exit off track then added some spice to proceedings. Ludwig in the Mercedes-AMG managed to re-establish the connection to the leader and put the Audi driver under pressure in a battle that lasted an entire lap. He then mounted an attack on the penultimate lap and overtook his opponent in spectacular fashion. The title defender maintained his lead to the finish line, getting his team off to a superb start to the campaign with a win. De Phillippi and Mies followed in second place. Team Montaplast by Land-Motorsport turned in a strong team performance. A perfect pit stop and a strong race by Peter Hoenenars and Marc Basseng enabled the ADAC GT Masters newcomers to also secure the third podium spot. This was not the only success for the Audi squad. De Phillippi and Mies together with Hoenenars and Basseng booked the top two positions in the new Junior classification. The Bentley pairing of Hamprecht and Guy Smith (41, GB) were unable to challenge for the win, however, after breaking the speed limit in the pit lane, for which they duly received a drive-through penalty. Robert Renauer (31, DEU) and Martin Ragginger (27, A, both Precote Herberth Motorsport) in the Porsche 911 placed fourth, while Jesse Krohn (25, FIN) and Martin Tomczyk (34, DEU, both Schubert Motorsport) finished fifth in the BMW M6.

MEDIA INFORMATION

On Phoenix Racing's return to the ADAC GT Masters, Markus Winkelhock and Markus Pommer (25, DEU) took sixth place in the Audi, finishing ahead of the Corvette C7 of Jules Gounon (21, F) and record ADAC GT Masters championship winner Daniel Keilwitz (26, DEU, both Callaway Competition), who, apart from coming home seventh, also made a podium appearance for third place in the Junior classification. Rolf Ineichen (37, CH) and Christian Engelhart (29, DEU, GRT Grasser-Racing-Team) were eighth in a Lamborghini Huracán, clinching victory in the Trophy class, the former Gentlemen standings. The Audis of Christiaan Frankenhout (34, NL) and Christopher Haase (28, DEU, both Car Collection Motorsport) and of Florian Stoll (34, DEU) partnered by Laurens Vanthoor (24, BEL, both kfzteile24 - APR Motorsport) completed the Top Ten.

Comments from the winners

Sebastian Asch (AMG - Team Zakspeed, Mercedes-AMG): "To be honest, I was expecting this to turn into one big Audi fest. They had made the biggest impression so far this weekend. So I'm all the more delighted that we have achieved this victory. My start was a bit unfortunate. I let myself get pushed slightly off line jostling for position with an opponent. I got a penalty for that, but only found out about it during the driver changeover. I thought we then had no chance. But Luca gave it everything he'd got in the second half of the race and overtook one after another."

Luca Ludwig (AMG - Team Zakspeed, Mercedes-AMG): "Our pit stop worked well. After that, I made a couple of successful passes. I was coming to terms with finishing as runner-up. But then the safety car came out and I had the race leader in my sights. Without the safety car, we would have had no chance. On the final overtaking manoeuvre, I risked everything, but it worked out OK. This victory was hard fought."

Fans wishing to experience the ADAC GT Masters live at the racetrack can purchase tickets for all fixtures for the price of 20 euros, which includes access to the paddock, from www.adac.de/motorsport.

2016 ADAC GT Masters schedule

15/04/16 - 17/04/16	Motorsport Arena Oschersleben
29/04/16 - 01/05/16	Sachsenring
03/06/16 - 05/06/16	Lausitzring (with DTM)
22/07/16 - 24/07/16	Red Bull Ring/Austria
05/08/16 - 07/08/16	Nürburgring
19/08/16 - 21/08/16	Circuit Park Zandvoort/Netherlands
30/09/16 - 02/10/16	Hockenheimring Baden-Württemberg

Further information at: www.adac.de/gt-masters.

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