

19/09/2016 – No 81

Audi or Corvette? ADAC GT Masters title chase goes to the wire

- Closest championship in ten years of ADAC GT Masters history
- Audi duo Connor De Phillippi and Christopher Mies lead the table
- Corvette pairing of Gounon and Keilwitz just two points behind

Munich: The final showdown in Hockenheim is fast approaching. Tension is building ahead of the grand finale to the 2016 ADAC GT Masters (30th September - 2nd October) when the championship will be decided. Of the nine drivers still in with a mathematical chance of taking the title, the partnerships of Connor De Phillippi (23, USA) and Christopher Mies (27, DEU, both Montaplast by Land-Motorsport) in an Audi R8 and of Jules Gounon (21, F) and Daniel Keilwitz (27, DEU, both Callaway Competition) in a Corvette C7 are the clear favourites – there are just two points separating them in the table. In the ten years that the Super Sports Car League has been in existence, there has not been a closer competition for the title going into the final weekend. SPORT1 will be showing the two deciding races on 1st and 2nd October live, with coverage commencing at 1pm CEST.

The story so far: De Phillippi and Mies got their season off to a strong start with three runner-up spots in succession but then went through a lean patch. On race weekends 2, 3 and 4, Gounon and Keilwitz recorded three outright wins, scoring a hatful of points in the process, and moved up to first place. The Audi duo then closed the gap by claiming their first win of the season at the Nürburgring, and on the penultimate weekend of the 2016 campaign at Zandvoort, they scored more points than anyone else to reclaim the top spot.

“We are obviously satisfied with the way the season has gone so far,” says championship leader Christopher Mies. “We’ve put in some strong performances in the races themselves and made up for some mediocre qualifying results. The season has had its ups and downs. We’ve let points elude us here and there, but that’s only to be expected in motor racing. I’ve come close to winning the ADAC GT Masters twice in my career but have had to settle for either runner-up or third. It would mean a lot to me as German driver to win a German series.” His team-mate De Phillippi is feeling equally upbeat: “This has been my rookie season in GT3 racing, and I’m now a contender for the title at my first attempt. That’s quite extraordinary, especially considering that I’m an American. Ahead of the season, we had hoped that we would at least be competitive. Ultimately, we have already achieved a great deal more than that. Winning the title would be by far the greatest success of my career to date.”

Corvette man Daniel Keilwitz sees the season in an entirely positive light: “Going into that first race, we never thought that we would become competitive with the new Corvette C7 so early on. My first title win in the 2013 ADAC GT Masters season was very special, but this year the starting field has been much stronger, so to repeat that success would be really fantastic. Even if we don’t finish as champions, we will still have experienced an outstanding year.” Jules Gounon also looks forward to the upcoming finale: “I never expected us to have such a good chance of winning the title with just the Hockenheim weekend to go. To see my name and that of Daniel up there in the roll call of ADAC GT Masters champions would be superb. Even second place would be a huge success.”

Not only the drivers but also the team bosses are electrified by the prospect of the showdown. “Despite the fact that we’re a new team in the ADAC GT Masters, we’ve beaten all the established outfits,” says Wolfgang Land, principal at Montaplast by Land-Motorsport. “No matter how the season finishes, for us it’s been a fantastic time. At Hockenheim, we intend to reap the reward for our performance by taking the title. Everyone in our team is up for it and will



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be doing their very best. We respect and also accept the strength of our opponents and hope that it will be a fair fight. Whoever comes out top in the end will have deserved it.”

Land’s counterpart at Callaway Competition, Ernst Wöhr: “If someone had told me at the start of the season that we would be battling for the title on the final weekend, I wouldn’t have believed them. The first half of the season in particular went surprisingly well for us. It would be great to win the title with the new Corvette in its first campaign. My compliments to all of our drivers and to the entire team; without the immense joint effort, we could never have got ourselves into this good position. The closeness of the contest at Hockenheim is of course magnificent for the fans in the grandstands and for those watching at home on TV.”

The two-way battle for the title between drivers and between teams is at the same time a regional contest of super sports cars, because the factories where they are constructed are only ten kilometres apart. Both the Böllinger Höfe industrial complex where the Audi R8 is made and the town of Leingarten where Callaway Competition build their Corvettes are part of Greater Heilbronn.

Fans who want to attend the ADAC GT Masters season finale at Hockenheim in person can buy tickets in advance, starting at just 20 euros, including access to the paddock, at 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

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