

27/09/2016 – No 84

### No fewer than nine: These are the 2016 ADAC GT Masters championship contenders

- Clear favourites: De Phillippi and Mies versus Gounon and Keilwitz
- In-form Porsche man David Jahn waiting in the wings
- Outside chance for two other teams

Munich: The tenth season of the ADAC GT Masters reaches its climax at Hockenheim on the weekend of 30th September - 2nd October in what promises to be the most barnstorming grand finale yet. So who will be crowned champion in 2016? An Audi duo and a Corvette pairing are the favourites in the title race, but the opposition in the shape of Porsche and Mercedes-AMG are waiting to pounce if there are any slip-ups. In all, there are nine drivers who have a mathematical chance of claiming the title. A look at the contenders:

#### Top of the table

Connor De Phillippi (23, USA) and Christopher Mies (27, DEU, both Montaplast by Land-Motorsport), Audi R8, 146 points

Until 2013, Connor De Phillippi competed exclusively in the United States. He was then inducted into the Porsche Junior programme and spent the next two years contesting Porsche single-make cup competitions. His step up to the ADAC GT Masters in 2016 also marked a graduation to the GT3 class. Christopher Mies, on the other hand, is a sports car veteran and multi-talent. One of his many achievements last year was a victory in the ADAC Zurich 24-hour race at the Nürburgring. He has narrowly missed out on the ADAC GT Masters title in two previous campaigns: 2010 (runner-up) and 2011 (third). The partnership of De Phillippi and Mies is a strong fighting unit that has impressed most in the races, compensating for some less than spectacular qualifying results. The duo celebrated their first victory of the season in the second race at the Nürburgring, simultaneously registering a maiden win for the new Audi R8 in the Super Sports Car League. Currently topping the championship table, Montaplast by Land-Motorsport are well placed to win the team championship in their debut ADAC GT Masters season.

#### The pursuers

Jules Gounon (2, F) and Daniel Keilwitz (27, DEU, both Callaway Competition), Corvette C7, 144 points

The second-placed team also consists of a rookie and an ADAC GT Masters veteran. Jules Gounon signed up for the series only a few days before the official pre-season tests at Oschersleben. No doubt due to the talent he has inherited from father Jean-Marc Gounon, a former Formula 1 and sports car driver, the young Frenchman quickly acclimatised himself to the series, even though almost all of the venues were new to him. His co-driver is Daniel Keilwitz who has notched up 17 ADAC GT Masters race wins in his career, more than any other contestant in the history of the series. At Zandvoort, he joined the elite group of drivers who have competed in 100 races. Keilwitz has been a regular in the Callaway Competition squad contesting the ADAC GT Masters. He already won the title once for the Leingarten-based outfit in 2013. Gounon and Keilwitz secured the first win for the new Corvette C7 on the second weekend of the season at the Sachsenring. In the Junior standings for drivers aged under 25, Gounon is locked in a two-way battle with De Phillippi. Callaway Competition are currently second in the team classification and have an excellent chance of taking that title too.

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### The potential interloper

David Jahn (25, DEU, KÜS TEAM75 Bernhard), Porsche 911, 116 points

KÜS TEAM75 Bernhard is a joint venture between sports car champion Timo Bernhard and his Rüdiger with Klaus Graf acting as team manager. After a slow start to their debut season, they have mounted an impressive charge in the latter stages. Partnered by Porsche works driver Kévin Estre (27, F), who was absent from the first three race weekends due to other commitments, David Jahn won the Saturday races at the Red Bull Ring, at the Nürburgring and at Zandvoort. The performance of the team has been on a strong upwards trajectory thanks to skilled tuning of the Porsche under the watchful eye of legendary race engineer Roland Kussmaul and to the smooth working partnership of the two drivers. They have scored more points than any other team in the second half of the season, as a result of which Jahn has rocketed up the driver standings. Estre is mathematically also in the title race, but doesn't have a valid chance, as he is behind his partner Jahn in the driver's championship. The final weekend is a home fixture for Jahn. Although he works as an instructor at the Porsche factory in Leipzig, he comes from Speyer which is very close to the Hockenheim circuit.

### The defending champions

Sebastian Asch (30, DEU) and Luca Ludwig (27, DEU, both AMG team Zakspeed), Mercedes-AMG, 104 points

The reigning champions Sebastian Asch and Luca Ludwig got their title defence off to a magnificent start with two wins in the first three races. After a lean spell mid-season, the duo driving a new Mercedes-AMG entered by AMG team Zakspeed have hoisted themselves back into contention with two third-place finishes in recent races. Sebastian Asch, the son of DTM legend Roland Asch, is so far the only driver to have won the ADAC GT Masters title twice: in 2015 with Luca Ludwig and in 2012 with Maximilian Götz, each time in a Mercedes SLS AMG. In addition, he has now competed in more Super Sports Car League races than any other driver, a distinction previously held by Toni Seiler. Luca Ludwig also has a famous father, namely three-time DTM champion Klaus Ludwig. Ludwig Jnr secured his seventh ADAC GT Masters pole position this year, making him the most successful contestant in the current crop of drivers at beating the clock. At Hockenheim, he will contest his 100th race.

### The outsiders

Robert Renauer (31, DEU) and Martin Ragginger (28, A, both Precote Herberth Motorsport), Porsche 911, 98 points

Robert Renauer and Martin Ragginger have only an outside mathematical chance of winning the 2016 ADAC GT Masters title. After a strong opening to the season at Oschersleben and a first win of the campaign at the Lausitzring, they then suffered a sequence of setbacks. At the Nürburgring and at Zandvoort, the Porsche duo then came back strongly with four points-scoring finishes in four races. Robert Renauer is a thoroughbred Porsche specialist. As long ago as 2003, he was contesting the Porsche Carrera Cup on behalf of his current team Herberth Motorsport (the team principal is his twin brother Alfred). His greatest achievement to date in the ADAC GT Masters was lifting the runner-up trophy in the 2013 season. His team-mate Martin Ragginger is a real ace in qualifying, having secured six pole positions in 58 ADAC GT Masters outings. 'Raggi' has also been wedded to the Zuffenhausen-based automotive manufacturer since 2007 when he was recruited to the Porsche Junior Team.

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](http://www.adac.de/motorsport).

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### 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](http://www.adac.de/gt-masters).

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