

02/10/2016 – No 93

Connor De Phillippi and Christopher Mies win 2016 ADAC GT Masters

- Victory for Robert Renauer and Martin Ragginger in drama-filled final race
- Montaplast by Land-Motorsport clinch team title
- Remo Lips crowned champion in Trophy class

Hockenheim: Connor De Phillippi (23, USA) and Christopher Mies (27, DEU, both Montaplast by Land-Motorsport) are the new ADAC GT Masters champions. In a race that was on a knife-edge right up until the final seconds, the fans at Hockenheim (more than 20,000 spectators over the weekend) watched the Audi R8 duo finish in eighth place, which was enough to see them crowned champions. At one point, their main rivals Jules Gounon (21, F) and Daniel Keilwitz (27, DEU, both Callaway Competition) in a Corvette C7 seemed to be on course to pip them to the title, but a crash brought their race to a sudden end. “We are the champions – what a season!” said series newcomer De Phillippi. “This is definitely the best day of my motorsport career.” The race itself was won by Robert Renauer (31, DEU) and Martin Ragginger (28, A, both Precote Herberth Motorsport) in a Porsche 911. Team champions were Montaplast by Land-Motorsport, while the title in the Trophy class went to Remo Lips (33, CH, RWT Racing).

Key facts: Hockenheimring, Hockenheim, Round 14 of 14

Circuit length: 4,574 metres

Weather: 17°C, sunny

Pole position: Martin Ragginger (Precote Herberth Motorsport, Porsche 911), 1:39.613 mins

Winners: Robert Renauer and Martin Ragginger (Precote Herberth Motorsport, Porsche 911)

Fastest lap: Christian Engelhart (GRT Grasser Racing Team, Lamborghini Huracán), 1:40.395 mins

Two races for the price of one

Spectators at the final race of the season had the thrill of witnessing two different contests – the battle for the race win and the championship decider. Martin Ragginger in a Porsche comfortably defended his lead after the start from fellow Porsche driver, Kévin Estre (27, F, KÜS TEAM75 Bernhard). Daniel Keilwitz, who was second in the standings, moved up two places in his Corvette C7 at the start and was in fourth place behind Christian Engelhart (29, DEU, GRT Grasser Racing Team) in the Lamborghini Huracán. Audi driver Christopher Mies hung on to his P7 starting position, which as it stood would have been enough to retain the championship lead. Then came the heart-stopping moment shortly before the round of pit stops when he went off into the gravel and dropped out of the points.

Things got even more dramatic after the driver handover. Connor De Phillippi was still outside the Top Ten, while Gounon was fourth and on course to take the title. While scrapping for third place with the Lamborghini of Rolf Ineichen (38, CH, GRT Grasser Racing Team), the Frenchman spun off track and hit the crash barriers. The race was then red-flagged. Gounon survived the crash unhurt.

Audi on tenterhooks

The two Porsches of Robert Renauer and Estré’s team-mate David Jahn (25, DEU) remained in the lead after the restart. Jahn still had a mathematical chance of lifting the title, but an eighth-place finish by De Phillippi and Mies was enough for the Audi duo to emerge triumphant. Jahn finished the race in P2, depriving Gounon and Keilwitz of the runner-up spot in the drivers’ championship. This was De Phillippi’s second title win of the weekend after securing victory in



the Junior classification for drivers under 25 years on Saturday. Montaplast by Land-Motorsport also won the team title.

Robert Renauer and Martin Ragginger claimed the final race victory of the season and their second of the campaign. Taking the chequered flag behind second-placed Jahn and Estre were the Mercedes-AMG pairing of Nicolai Sylvest (19, DK) and Nikolaj Rogivue (20, CH, both AMG Team Zakspeed) for whom this represented a second podium finish of 2016. Rolf Ineichen and Christian Engelhart slotted into fourth place, giving Ineichen the race victory in the Trophy class. Yet another Porsche 911 with Marvin Dienst (19, DEU) and Christopher Zanella (26, CH, both bigFM Racing Team Schütz Motorsport) at the wheel finished fifth. Philip Geipel (29, DEU) and Rahel Frey (30, CH, both YACO Racing) were sixth in the best-placed Audi R8. Patrick Assenheimer (24, DEU) and Dominik Schwager (40, DEU, both Callaway Competition) came seventh in a Corvette C7. Jordan Pepper (20, ZA) and Daniel Abt (23, DEU, both Bentley Team ABT) in a Bentley Continental crossed the line behind De Phillippi and Mies to book P9. A very happy Remo Lips placed tenth in a Corvette GT3 Z06.R to take the Trophy for amateur drivers, ably assisted by team-mate Sven Barth (35, DEU, both RWT Racing).

Comments from the winners

Connor De Phillippi (Montaplast by Land-Motorsport, Audi R8): “What a race! This was definitely the best day of my racing career – and the most exciting as well. The situation kept changing for us. First we were heading for the title, then we weren’t, and then we were again. Over the radio, I was told that I needed to overtake two other cars. Totally frantic! My thanks to everyone who contributed to this triumph, and I’m delighted for every single team member.”

Christopher Mies (Montaplast by Land-Motorsport, Audi R8): “For quite a few laps at the beginning of the race, I was stuck behind a Porsche. If I’d been absolutely ruthless, I could have got past him, but I didn’t want to take any risks. Then, just before the pit stop, I made an unfortunate error. But the reactions of the team were brilliant, and they immediately called me into the pits. In the second half of the race, there was the accident involving Jules (Gounon). I wish him a speedy recovery. Towards the end, it got a bit tense again, but ultimately we did it. Now we can celebrate.”

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

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