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Mercedes-AMG duo Dontje and Buhk win Saturday's race at the Nürburgring

- First victory of season for Dutch-German pairing
- Corvette drivers Kirchhöfer and Keilwitz still 'half-time champions' despite DNF

Nürburg: In scorching conditions at the Nürburgring, Indy Dontje (25, NL) and Maximilian Buhk (25, GER, both Mann-Filter Team HTP Motorsport) drove their Mercedes-AMG to a first win of the season. The Lamborghini duo of Mirko Bortolotti (28, ITA) and Andrea Caldarelli (28, ITA, both ORANGE1 by GRT Grasser) came second in the seventh of 14 ADAC GT Masters races. Markus Pommer and Maximilian Götz completed a great day for Mann-Filter Team HTP Motorsport with a third place in their Mercedes-AMG. "A great race for us," said a jubilant first-time winner Dontje. "I am happy to have registered my maiden ADAC GT Masters victory. I hope to continue in the same vein two weeks from now in my home race at Zandvoort."

Key facts, Nürburgring, Nürburg, Round 7 of 14

Length of track: 3,629 metres

Weather: 32 °C, sunny

Pole position: Nicolai Sylvest (Team Zakspeed BKK Mobil Oil Racing, Mercedes-AMG GT3), 1:26.131 mins

Winners: Indy Dontje and Maximilian Buhk (Mann-Filter Team HTP Motorsport, Mercedes-AMG GT3)

Fastest race lap: Ricardo Feller (BWT Mücke Motorsport, Audi R8 LMS), 1:27.974 mins

Strong start puts Feller in the lead

Saturday's race at the Nürburgring got off to a fast and furious start. On the first corner, Audi man Ricardo Feller accelerated through from sixth to get past the Mercedes AMG of pole-sitter Nicolai Sylvest (21, DK, Zakspeed BKK Mobil Racing Team) and establish an immediate lead. The Swiss driver was followed through by the Mercedes-AMG of Indy Dontje and Maximilian Buhk, which had started from the front row, and by the Lamborghini Huracán GT3 of Mirko Bortolotti and Andrea Caldarelli, coming from ninth.

Feller continued to assert the lead until the driver changes midway through the race. But because he was judged to have jumped the lights in the flying start, the Audi duo were obliged to add five seconds to their mandatory pit stop. As a result, Feller and Haase dropped back to third place. This allowed Nicolai Sylvest and Kim-Luis Schramm (21, GER) to briefly reclaim the front position they had earned in qualifying. However, Schramm was soon overtaken by the eventual winner Buhk, who then proceeded to open up a gap to the pursuing bunch and claim a comfortable first victory of the season. For Buhk, it was a first triumph in the ADAC GT Masters since the Lausitzring in 2014, while for his Dutch team-mate Indy Dontje, it was the first time ever. Dontje also won the Pirelli Junior classification.

A late collision between Schramm and the Lamborghini of Ezequiel Perez Companc (24, RA) and Franck Perera (34, FRA, both GRT Grasser Racing Team) running second and third respectively, initially bequeathed second place to Feller and Haase. But following a investigation by the stewards, the Audi was subsequently handed a 30-second penalty for jumping the lights. This promoted Bortolotti and Caldarelli to second place.

Third place went to Markus Pommer (27, GER) and Maximilian Götz (32, GER) in the second of two Mercedes-AMGs entered by Mann-Filter Team HTP Motorsport ahead of fellow Mercedes drivers Luca Stolz (23, GER) and Sebastian Asch (32, GER, both Team Zakspeed BKK Mobil Oil Racing).

The best of the Porsche contingent were Timo Bernhard (37, GER) and Kévin Estre (29, FRA, both KÜS Team75 Bernhard) in P5. It was a special occasion for sixth-placed Christopher Dreyssing (20, GER) and Giorgio Maggi (20, CH, both Honda Team Schubert Motorsport) who were able to celebrate the first Top Ten result in the ADAC GT Masters for the Honda NSX GT3. The Audi duo of Oscar Tunjo (22, CO) and Ivan Lukashovich (27, RUS, both Phoenix Racing) finished seventh, followed by Michele Beretta (23, ITA) and Aaro Vainio (24, SF, both Team Rosberg). Team owner Keke Rosberg was present to see his outfit record its best result of the season. Dominik Schwager (41, GER) and Luca Ludwig (29, GER, both HB Racing) in the only Ferrari 488 GT3 finished ninth after starting from way back in P21. Victory in the Pirelli Trophy classification this time went to the Lamborghini duo of Rolf Ineichen (40, CH) and Christian Engelhart (31, GER, both GRT Grasser Racing Team), who finished tenth overall.

Championship leaders Marvin Kirchhöfer (24, GER) and Daniel Keilwitz (29, GER, both Callaway Competition) did not have the happiest of races. They collided with the Audi of Filip Salaquarda (34, CZ) and Frank Stippler (43, GER, both Team ISR) at the start and were handed a drive-through penalty. Despite having to park up their car later on, Kirchhöfer and Keilwitz still hung on for the unofficial title of ‘half-time champions’.

Comments from the winners

Indy Dontje (Mann-Filter Team HTP Motorsport, Mercedes-AMG GT3): “We had a good qualifying with P2. To be honest, we hadn’t expected to be so far forward. I was a bit hesitant at the start and found myself down in third place. But I stayed calm and finished my stint. After that, Maxi did a great job and passed Kim-Luis Schramm shortly after taking over the car. He then controlled the race.”

Maximilian Buhk (Mann-Filter Team HTP Motorsport, Mercedes-AMG GT3): “That was a good race. Indy kept himself out of everything that was going on at the start and handed over the car in third. The pit stop was almost perfect, so I quickly tried to pass Kim-Luis Schramm because I saw that he was having some problems. That worked. In fact, everything went well today.”

Calendar for the 2018 ADAC GT Masters

13/04/18 – 15/04/18	Motorsport Arena Oschersleben
27/04/18 – 29/04/18	Autodrom Most (CZ)
08/06/18 – 10/06/18	Red Bull Ring (AUT)
03/08/18 – 05/08/18	Nürburgring
17/08/18 – 19/08/18	Circuit Zandvoort (NL)
07/09/18 – 09/09/18	Sachsenring
21/09/18 – 23/09/18	Hockenheimring Baden-Württemberg

Further information can be found at www.adac.de/gt-masters

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