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ADAC GT Masters finale: Corvette win makes four-way battle for title even more exciting

- Porsche, Corvette, Mercedes-AMG and Audi in fight for the title on Sunday
- Mann-Filter Team HTP clinch win in team classification with one race left
- Sheldon van der Linde proclaimed champion in Pirelli Junior class
- Remo Lips takes his third consecutive title in the Pirelli Trophy classification

Hockenheim: Showdown in the last race of the season. Four driver pairings are still in the title race in the run-up to the final round on Sunday (at 1.00 pm live on SPORT1) following the victory by Corvette drivers, Marvin Kirchhöfer (24, GER) and Daniel Keilwitz (29, GER, both Callaway Competition) in the penultimate race of the season at Hockenheim. Thanks to their second place in Saturday's race, Porsche duo Robert Renauer (33, GER) and Mathieu Jaminet (23, F, both Precote Herberth Motorsport) continue to lead the overall standings. As Audi drivers, Sheldon (19, ZA) and Kelvin van der Linde (22, ZA, both Montaplast by Land-Motorsport) finished third and Markus Pommer (27, GER) together with Maximilian Götz (32, GER, both Mann-Filter Team HTP) were fourth in the Mercedes-AMG, they too have managed to keep alive their championship hopes. "I'm super happy," said Marvin Kirchhöfer. "It will be mega exciting tomorrow. We will do our utmost again." Mann-Filter Team HTP clinched the team title on Saturday before season's end while Sheldon van der Linde lifted the title in the Pirelli Junior class. With his victory in class, Remo Lips won the Pirelli Trophy classification for the third consecutive time.

Key facts, Hockenheimring, Hockenheim, Race 13 of 14

Track length: 4.57 km

Weather: 22 degrees, thin cloud cover

Pole position: Robert Renauer (Precote Herberth Motorsport, Porsche 911 GT3 R), 1:38.481 mins

Winners: Marvin Kirchhöfer and Daniel Keilwitz (Callaway Competition, Corvette C7 GT3-R)

Fastest lap: Marvin Kirchhöfer (Callaway Competition, Corvette C7 GT3-R), 1:40.336 mins

Title rivals fight it out

Eventual race winners Kirchhöfer and Keilwitz improved at the start, moving from third to second position. Kirchhöfer had taken the first stint and begun to hunt down pole-sitter and championship leader, Renauer. On Lap 9, he finally out-accelerated the Porsche driver on the exit from the hairpin to take the lead which he then extended until the pit stop to just under 2.5 seconds by posting a whole series of hot laps. His partner Keilwitz then remained ahead after the mandatory driver changeover. In the closing stages, Renauer's team-mate Jaminet put pressure on him once more, but Keilwitz was the first to take the chequered flag with a lead of 0.746 seconds after 36 laps. Thanks to their third victory of the season, Kirchhöfer and Keilwitz improved to take second place in the drivers' classification, are equal on points with Pommer and Götz and ten points down on the leaders, Renauer and Jaminet.

The other title contenders fought a close scrap for third place with Kelvin van der Linde just managing to hold off the Mercedes-AMG of Markus Pommer (27, GER) and Maximilian Götz (32, GER). Pommer had taken the first stint but dropped back from fourth on the grid to seventh place. Team-mate Götz fought his way back into fourth place. In the dying stages of the race, he attacked van der Linde several times but was unable to overtake. Thanks to their fourth place, their outfit, Mann-Filter Team HTP, clinched the team title. Sheldon and Kelvin van der Linde have now collected 114 points, are in fourth place in the standings and also still have a chance of taking the title. 25 points will be awarded on Sunday.

Fellow Audi drivers, Ricardo Feller (18, CH) and Christopher Haase (30, GER, both BWT Mücke Motorsport) were also involved in the battle for the final podium place but ultimately had to settle for P5. Finishing sixth, Sven Barth (37, GER) and Claudia Hürtgen (47, GER, both RWT Racing) not only achieved their best result of the season so far but also a third victory this year in the Pirelli Trophy classification.

Davide Rigon (32, ITA) and Luca Ludwig (29, GER, both HB Racing) came home in seventh place in the only Ferrari in the field, finishing ahead of Florian Spengler (30, GER) and Dries Vanthoor (20, B, both EFP by TECE).

Timo Bernhard (37, GER) and Kévin Estre (29, F, both KÜS Team75 Bernhard) went on a strong charge to secure P9. The Porsche drivers had started out from 34th on the grid following Bernhard's involvement in a crash in qualifying. The final championship point went to Patrick Assenheimer (26, GER) and Dominik Baumann (25, A, both AutoArenA Motorsport) in the Mercedes-AMG.

Thanks to his second place in the Pirelli Trophy classification, Audi driver Remo Lips claimed the overall win in the class for amateur drivers for the third time in a row.

Comments from the winners

Marvin Kirchhöfer (Callaway Competition, Corvette C7 GT3-R): "We've had a pretty long fallow period until our next podium finish came along. The last time we managed to pull it off was at the Red Bull Ring. I knew our car would be excellent in the race, so I was very pleased with third place in qualifying. As I was making an overtaking manoeuvre for P1, I moved to go through on the inside of the exit to the hairpin and then found myself ahead on the approach to the fast right-hander that follows."

Daniel Keilwitz (Callaway Competition, Corvette C7 GT3-R): "It was clear to us before the race that we would have to win in order to still have a chance in the title fight. Marvin did a great job. He was meant to attack at the start and did that really well. I had to fight a lot towards the end, because the rear tires were pretty worn. It wasn't all that easy."

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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