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Porsche drivers Renauer and Jaminet win the 2018 ADAC GT Masters

- Fifth place enough for German-French duo to secure first title
- Sheldon and Kelvin van der Linde win the race to finish series runners-up
- Mercedes-AMG and BMW also on the podium

Hockenheim: A one-point margin ultimately proved to be enough. Thanks to their fifth-place finish in the second of the two races on the final weekend of the 2018 ADAC GT Masters at Hockenheim, the Porsche pairing of Robert Renauer (33, GER) and Mathieu Jaminet (23, FRA, both Precote Herberth Motorsport) secured their first title in the series, at the same time relegating race winners Sheldon van der Linde (19, ZA) and Kelvin van der Linde (22, ZA, both Montaplast by Land-Motorsport) to the runner-up spot. Second place in the 14th and final race of the season went to the Lamborghini partnership of Rolf Ineichen (40, CH) and Christian Engelhart (31, GER, both GRT Grasser Racing Team). Completing the podium party were Indy Dontje (25, NL) and Maximilian Buhk (25, GER, both Mann-Filter Team HTP). “A mega day,” said newly crowned champion Renauer. “It’s unbelievable that we’ve got the title. I’m still a bit stunned.”

Key facts Hockenheimring, Hockenheim, Round 14 of 14

Length of circuit: 4,574 metres

Weather: 24 °C, cloudy

Pole position: Maximilian Götz (Mann-Filter-Team HTP, Mercedes-AMG GT3), 1:41.590 mins

Winners: Sheldon van der Linde and Kevin van der Linde (Montaplast by Land-Motorsport, Audi R8 LMS)

Fastest race lap: Christian Engelhart (GRT Grasser Racing Team, Lamborghini Huracán GT3), 1:40.758 mins

Number of spectators: 25,000+ over the entire weekend

Chaotic start to title showdown

The final chapter in the title fight, a race that would decide everything, got off to a highly dramatic start as pole-sitter Maximilian Götz, who was at that time third in the table, and Dries Vanthoor (20, BEL, EFP by TECE) in an Audi collided going into the first turn. The 2012 champion and team-mate Markus Pommer thus became the first of the four remaining title contenders to be eliminated from the running.

The restart got underway after a short break to remove the debris. Lamborghini works driver Christian Engelhart then gradually pulled away from the field over the ensuing laps, extending his lead to almost six seconds. Audi driver Kelvin van der Linde had meanwhile moved up to second place in front of the BMW of Timo Scheider (BMW Team Schnitzer) and championship leader Mathieu Jaminet, who had started out from tenth place. That order was to remain unchanged until the pit stop window.

Sheldon van der Linde took over from his brother, Kelvin, and then began to make huge inroads into the lead held by Rolf Ineichen in the Lamborghini. He caught up with the Swiss driver towards the end of the race and finally overtook him with three laps remaining to claim a second win of the season by a margin of 2.2 seconds. Despite the win, the two South Africans missed out on the title they had aspired to by only one point. That was because Renauer and Jaminet had secured fifth place and just enough championship points. They came home behind the third-placed Mercedes-AMG of Dontje and Buhk, who had gained ground thanks to a canny pit stop strategy, and the BMW of Timo Scheider and BMW Junior Mikkel Jensen (23, DK) in P4. The two team-mates in the 911 thus won the drivers’ title in the ADAC GT Masters for the first time by 137 points to 136.

Corvette duo lose out in battle for title despite mounting strong charge

Timo Bernhard (37, GER) and Kévin Estre (29, FRA, both KÜS Team75 Bernhard) finished sixth in their Porsche 911 GT3 R, followed by the Corvette of Marvin Kirchhöfer (24, GER) and Daniel Keilwitz (29, GER, both Callaway Competition) in P7. The latter pair of drivers had also been in title contention, having occupied P2 in the table going into the race. However, they could qualify no higher than 27th, and despite going on a heroic charge, the three-time race winners in 2018 had to settle for third place overall in the championship.

The two Ferrari drivers, Davide Rigon (33, ITA) and Luca Ludwig (29, GER, both HB Racing), were eighth for the second time this weekend. Mirko Bortolotti (28, ITA) and Andrea Caldarelli (28, ITA, both ORANGE1 by GRT Grasser) in a Lamborghini finished ninth. The remaining championship point went to Mike David Ortmann (18, GER) and Markus Winkelhock (38, GER, both BWT Mücke Motorsport).

Comments from the new champions

Robert Renauer (Precote Herberth Motorsport, Porsche 911 GT3 R): “After we qualified in tenth place and Maxi Götz on pole, we feared that everything was lost. We feel so sorry for him and Markus after they got caught up in the collision at the start. They would have been worthy championship winners. We had luck on our side this time.”

Mathieu Jaminet (Precote Herberth Motorsport, Porsche 911 GT3 R): “I stayed absolutely calm in the car. I wanted to gain as many places as possible at the start, and I finished the first lap in P4 having started from tenth. I then wanted to overtake the BMW as well, to close the gap to the Land Audi, but I couldn't get past. When I got out of the cockpit, I could hardly bear the tension. Robert fought for every position on the track, with the Audi in first place and the Corvette coming up fast from behind. But in the end, we did enough. It's great to have won my first title in GT racing. I'm proud of the whole team. My thanks go to the entire crew, to Porsche, to our sponsors and of course to our fans.”

Comments from the race winners

Sheldon van der Linde (Montaplast by Land Motorsport, Audi R8 LMS): “The race was very good. I wasn't expecting to win either race this weekend. It obviously hurts to lose the championship by just a single point, but we at least won the race. For that reason, we are delighted. I am very satisfied with my first season in the ADAC GT Masters. We gave it everything we'd got.”

Kelvin van der Linde (Montaplast by Land-Motorsport, Audi R8 LMS): “We are very proud to have secured our second win of the season. Montaplast by Land-Motorsport did a great job throughout the entire year – my brother too. It certainly wasn't the second half of the campaign when we lost the championship. Let's see what next year brings. We definitely want to return.”

Calendar for the 2019 ADAC GT Masters

26/04/19 – 28/04/19	Motorsport Arena Oschersleben
17/05/19 – 19/05/19	Most (CZ)
07/06/19 – 09/06/19	Red Bull Ring (AUT)
09/08/19 – 11/08/19	Circuit Zandvoort (NL)
16/08/19 – 18/08/19	Nürburgring
13/09/19 – 15/09/19	Hockenheimring Baden-Württemberg
27/09/19 – 29/09/19	Sachsenring

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

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ADAC Vorteilsprogramm

