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ADAC GT Masters in Zandvoort: Dutch drivers hoping for home advantage

- Indy Dontje in P4 overall currently best-placed local driver
- Team Zakspeed will field two 'local heroes'
- Four drivers and one team from the Netherlands have already won at Zandvoort

Munich: Zandvoort, one of the most popular circuits in the ADAC GT Masters is next up on the schedule this weekend. The three Dutch drivers, who compete in the Super Sports Car League are really looking forward to their home fixture at the circuit in the dunes. Led primarily by Indy Dontje (26, NL, Mann-Filter Team HTP), currently in fourth place in the standings driving the Mercedes-AMG GT3, our local heroes that include Jeroen Bleekemolen (37, NL) and Kelvin Snoeks (31, NL, both Zakspeed BKK Mobil Oil Racing) will be out to have a really good showing in front of their home crowd. SPORT1 will broadcast the races live and in full. Race start on Saturday is at 2.45 pm. Sunday's round will get under way at 1.00 pm. Racing can also be watched online as livestream at sport1.de, adac.de/motorsport and youtube.com/adac. The Dune Ticket for the Zandvoort round of the ADAC GT Masters gives free access to the standing areas on the track's outer ring. The circuit will be back on the Formula 1 calendar next year.

"It's always nice to drive at Zandvoort," said Indy Dontje, who shares a Mercedes-AMG GT3 with former champion Maximilian Götz (33, GER). Thanks to Sunday's second place last time out at Spielberg, they improved to take fourth place in the drivers' standings and hope to continue on an upward trend this weekend. "I have high hopes," added Dontje. "I finished on the podium there in 2017 in my debut season in the ADAC GT Masters. After narrowly missing out last year, I want to be back among the front-runners this year and finish in the Top Three. Maybe I can even take my first win of the season." The Dutchman has already secured one win in the ADAC GT Masters and is a big fan of the Circuit Zandvoort: "It's really great. However, overtaking can be tricky, so a good grid slot is vital to get a decent result."

Two Dutchmen are in the line-up at Zakspeed BKK Mobil Oil Racing. Kelvin Snoeks shares the #20 Mercedes-AMG GT3 with Mick Wishofer (19, A), who has just moved up from the ADAC Formula 4, while Jeroen Bleekemolen partners Jimmy Eriksson (28, S) in car number 21. "I'm really looking forward to this home fixture," said Snoeks. "I live just a few miles from the circuit. The track has everything you could wish for as a driver and should suit our car. It's important to have a good weekend this time around after our rotten luck during the first race weekend." He's very pleased to have another Dutchman, 37-year-old Jeroen Bleekemolen, as team-mate. "Jeroen has a lot of experience and knows Zandvoort really well. That will help the whole team."

At 37 years old, Bleekemolen is the most experienced of the three Dutch drivers and contested his first race at Zandvoort more than 20 years ago. "I practically grew up there," said the sports car veteran. "Unfortunately, I've did not been able to race at Zandvoort these past five years because of other commitments, so being able to finally drive there once again is going to be really special. It should be a terrific weekend." Bleekemolen is very familiar with the circuit's key sections: "Zandvoort has many interesting passages. The first turn, Tarzanbocht, affords the best overtaking opportunity of the whole track, because there are so many different lines you can take. The very narrow section that follows always sees plenty of action, especially after the start. You then go very fast uphill, reaching about 220, 230 km/h at the top of the incline. This passage is very demanding. You need courage to take it flat out. It can be taken at full chat, but you have to be careful. Scheivlak then

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follows and is the most difficult turn on the track. You can't afford to make a mistake there, otherwise you'll end up in the gravel and practice or the race will be over. Mistakes everywhere get punished immediately, because Zandvoort is still very much a real 'old-school' circuit."

We have already seen in the past that Dutch drivers in the ADAC GT Masters can benefit from their excellent knowledge of the Zandvoort track – especially when it rains, which often happens at the circuit on the North Sea coast. The Super Sports Car League made its first appearance at the track back in 2012, and local drivers, Simon Knap and Jeroen den Boer, won the second race in a BMW Z4 GT3 prepared by Dutch outfit, DB Racing, from the south of the Netherlands. Jaap van Lagen, teammate to Kévin Estre, notched up two wins in 2013. Renger van der Zande was the last Dutchman to win at Zandvoort in 2017, achieving success in the first round, partnered by Jules Gounon, who went on to become champion.

ADAC GT Masters race calendar for 2019

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 (A)
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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