

ADAC GT Masters title fight goes into next round at the Nürburgring

- Audi duo Patric Niederhauser and Kelvin van der Linde top the championship table
- Various drivers from the region seeking glory in their home race
- ADAC GT Masters Esports Championship to stage first live event

Munich: These are busy times in the ADAC GT Masters. Just one week after Zandvoort, the teams are due to line up again next weekend (16th - 18th August) at the Nürburgring. With only three fixtures remaining on the calendar, the title fight is entering a decisive phase. The contestants heading for the circuit in the Eifel will be looking to close the gap on 'half-time champions' Patric Niederhauser (27, CH) and Kelvin van der Linde (23, ZA, both HCB-Rutronik Racing). SPORT1 will be showing both races live and in full length. The race on Saturday starts at 14:45 CEST and on Sunday at 13:05 CEST. Alternatively, they can be watched online via the livestream services of sport1.de, adac.de/motorsport and youtube.com/adac.

Key facts, Nürburgring, Nürburg, Rounds 9 and 10 of 14

Length of track: 3,629 metres

Layout: 11 turns (seven right-hand, four left-hand), driven clockwise

Winners in 2018, Race 1: Indy Dontje and Maximilian Buhk (Mann-Filter Team HTP Motorsport-Mercedes-AMG GT3)

Winners in 2018, Race 2: Filip Salaquarda and Frank Stippler (Team ISR-Audi R8 LMS)

TV coverage of the ADAC GT Masters at the Nürburgring: Both races (Saturday and Sunday) will be shown live on SPORT1. For details of broadcast times, see attachment.

The contest in the Eifel marks the start of the sprint finish in the Super Sports Car League. The current championship leaders, Patric Niederhauser and Kelvin van der Linde, had their least productive weekend of the campaign at Zandvoort, with a meagre eight-point haul. Meanwhile, their closest pursuers, the Corvette C7 GT3-R pairing of Markus Pommer (28, GER) and Marvin Kirchhöfer (25, GER, both Callaway Competition), did even worse, failing to score any points at all in the Netherlands – despite having won three races earlier in the season. The net result was that the 'half-time champions' actually increased their points cushion at the top of the table to 18 (i.e. 108 to 90). "I have high hopes for the two races at the Nürburgring," says Niederhauser. "The performance of all cars should be very evenly matched. I've had some good weekends there in recent years, including my first season in the ADAC GT Masters when I was also driving an Audi. For that reason, I think we're going to have a better weekend than we did at Zandvoort."

After impressing at Zandvoort with a pole position and a second place, Christopher Mies (30) travels to the Nürburgring as overall third and thus the best placed of the local favourites. He is also competing in an Audi, the marque that has won five of the past eight ADAC GT Masters races at the Ring. In 2016, Mies not only won there but subsequently went on to claim the title. "I'm looking forward to the weekend," says Mies, who shares the cockpit of an R8 LMS with Max Hofer (20, AUT). "The Nürburgring is my home track. There is nowhere else that I've driven in so many races. We want to take forward the momentum of last weekend and score as many points as possible. In fact, the track should suit us, but in the ADAC GT Masters, it is always very difficult to make any predictions. I hope the weather will be good so that the fans have a nice race weekend."

Another 'local hero' who can also look back with satisfaction on a win in his home race is Frank Stippler from nearby Bad Münstereifel. Last year's winner, who is partnered by Filip Salaquarda

MEDIA INFORMATION

(35, CZ) in the Audi R8 LMS of Team ISR, is hoping for an equally gratifying outcome this time. Just a few weeks ago, the 44-year-old celebrated success at the Nürburgring in a different context. Together with fellow ADAC GT Masters drivers Pierre Kaffer (42, GER), Dries Vanthoor (21, BEL) and Frédéric Vervisch (33, BEL), he won the ADAC Total 24-hour race. "I always enjoy competing at the Nürburgring because it's my home track," says Stippler. "I feel at home and in my element. Last year, we looked pretty good there. We're having a few teething problems this year, so I hope we can make the breakthrough in the Eifel."

Luca Ludwig (30, GER), who lives near Bonn, is another contestant who has had the thrill of standing on the top rung of the podium at the Nürburgring. "There will be a lot of friends and fans there, so the expectations are high," says the 2015 ADAC GT Masters champion. "On this track, it's not so much about the aerodynamics as the mechanical aspects. As on any other track, you have to get it just right in crucial situations. Unfortunately, that's something we've not always succeeded in doing. It would be nice if we had two fault-free races and could say afterwards that we gave our best and that we got the maximum out of it."

In addition to the numerous local drivers, there are several teams based in the surrounding area of the Nürburgring. They include the highly respected Team Zakspeed BKK Mobil Oil Racing from Niederrissen, who will be fielding two Mercedes-AMGs. Also hopeful of capitalising on home advantage are Propeak Performance. 2019 is the debut ADAC GT Masters season for the Wiesemscheid-based outfit who have pinned their hopes on the new Aston Martin Vantage GT3. Their driver squad includes record race winner Daniel Keilwitz (29, GER). Making a guest start next weekend will be Toksport WRT from Quiddelbach; they caused a minor sensation on their ADAC GT Masters debut with a P5 finish for Luca Stolz (24, GER) and Maro Engel (33, MON) on Sunday. Iron Force Racing from Erkelenz fielding a Porsche 911 GT3 R also consider the occasion to be their home race.

First live event of the ADAC GT Masters Esports Championship

Fans of virtual motorsports can look forward to a special premiere at the Nürburgring. On Saturday, the first of four live events in the new ADAC GT Masters Esports Championship will be held in the RaceRoom Café on Ringboulevard at the Nürburgring. The eight permanent starters and four wildcard contestants will compete against each other in a 40-minute race. The SimRacing event will be broadcast live on the ADAC GT Masters Facebook page as well as on the RaceRoom YouTube and Twitch channels. SPORT1 and the pay-TV channel eSPORTS1 will also be delivering detailed reports.

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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