

Press Release – 7th September 2012 / No. 69

Four-way title fight:

ADAC GT Masters ‘semi-final’ at the Nürburgring

- Porsche under pressure from Mercedes-Benz, Corvette and BMW ALPINA
- Porsche driver Engelhart leads championship by 25 points
- Home race for ex-Formula 1 driver Heinz-Harald Frentzen

The battle for the ADAC GT Masters’ title is hotting up. The final sprint for the championship in the League of Super Sports Cars gets underway at the Nürburgring (14th to 16th September). It is the penultimate race weekend of the season, hence, ‘semi-finals’ in football parlance. A four-way fight for the title is in prospect at the Nürburgring as Mercedes-Benz, Corvette and BMW ALPINA chase Porsche. At the Nürburgring, championship leader Christian Engelhart (25, Kösching / Team Geyer & Weinig EDP - Schütz Motorsport) in the Porsche 911 has the first match point en route to the title. Just 25 points separate Engelhart from his closest rivals, Sebastian Asch (25, Ammerbuch) and Maximilian Götz (26, Uffenheim / kfzteile24 MS RACING team) in the Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG.

Key facts, Nürburgring, Races 13 and 14

Track length: 5.137kilometres (Grand Prix Circuit)

Layout: 7 left-handers, 10 right-handers, racing in a clockwise direction

Winners, Race 1, Nürburgring Truck Grand Prix, July: René Rast/Christian Mamerow (Mamerow Racing Audi R8)

Winners, Race 2, Nürburgring Truck Grand Prix, July: Dino Lunardi/Maxime Martin (ALPINA BMW ALPINA B6)

Championship leader Engelhart expects tough weekend

This will be the second time this season that the ADAC GT Masters has been contested at the Nürburgring. After the first series of races around the short sprint track in July, the almost 40 strong supercar field will now utilise the long circuit which is also used for Formula 1 grand prix events. For championship leader, Christian Engelhart, it is vitally important in the Eifel not to lose any points if at all possible on the other drivers in hot pursuit. After the strong showing by the Porsche teams recently at the Red Bull Ring and at the Lausitzring, Engelhart expects that the drivers at the top of the table will become more tightly bunched once again in the Eifel: “The weekend will be very tricky for us. I think that Mercedes-Benz, Corvette and BMW ALPINA will be the main front-runners. However, if it rains, we have a good chance in our Porsche which has plenty of rear-wheel traction.”

At least on paper, Engelhart’s team-mate Nick Tandy (27, GB) is in with a shout but in reality has no chance of securing the title. Since the British driver had to miss the July Nürburgring races, the reigning Carrera Cup champion is ranked third in the championship table and is giving Engelhart his full backing. “If Christian Engelhart secures the title, Nick Tandy has a very good chance of finishing runner-up,” said team boss Christian Schütz, musing on the possibilities of a dream result for his drivers in the championship.

Oschersleben
30/03/12 – 01/04/12

Zandvoort (NL)
04/05/12 – 06/05/12

Sachsenring
08/06/12 – 10/06/12

Nürburgring *
13/07/12 – 15/07/12

Red Bull Ring (A)
10/08/12 – 12/08/12

Lausitzring
24/08/12 – 26/08/12

Nürburgring
14/09/12 – 16/09/12

Hockenheim
28/09/12 – 30/09/12

* same weekend as
ADAC Truck Grand Prix



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Rivals Asch/Götz hope to be in with a chance in their Mercedes-Benz

Sebastian Asch and Maximilian Götz, the Porsche duo's closest rivals for the title, threw down the gauntlet at the first Nürburgring outing in July, making it clear that victory at the Ring would only ever go to the black Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG; last July, the two drivers, currently placed second in the championship, secured pole position for both races. Maximilian Götz: "We have shown that we are fast around the Nürburgring, and now we will see to it that we finish ahead of our title rivals in both races. Qualifying will be the deciding factor. If we get another good result there, then we have every chance of taking points out of our opponents."

Also hoping for a successful weekend in the Eifel: Diego Alessi (40, Italy) and Daniel Keilwitz (23, Villingen / Callaway Competition), lying in fourth place in the championship table. Keilwitz: "I am confident that we'll achieve a good result in the Eifel. We had a good lead at the top of the standings for a while this season and know from experience how quickly the situation can change. Therefore, we still have a good chance in the title fight."

Dino Lunardi (33, France) and Maxime Martin (26, Belgium / ALPINA) in the BMW ALPINA B6 must use their last chance of securing the championship at the Nürburgring. Last July, the title defender and the Belgian sports car rising star achieved a second place and a win in the Eifel, which gave them practically maximum points. Since then, the ALPINA duo have failed to finish in the points, but a glance at the statistics shows that the bright green coupé from Bavaria has been almost unbeatable on the Grand Prix circuit. Three of the four previous ADAC GT Masters races over the long distance track went to the B6. And there will be no shortage of motivation for the ALPINA driver in the Eifel: BMW is about to reward Martin with a DTM test in the BMW M3 DTM in view of his strong performances this season.

Home race for ex-Formula 1 driver Heinz-Harald Frentzen

Andreas Wirth (27, Heidelberg / Callaway Competition) can also point to an excellent set of statistics at the Nürburgring: The Corvette driver, who lines up on the grid with ex-Formula 1 driver Heinz-Harald Frentzen (45, Neuss), is the most successful ADAC GT Masters driver so far at the Nürburgring, having achieved four wins there. The Nürburgring is a home race for Wirth's teammate Frentzen. Although Frentzen originally comes from the Ruhr area, he now lives in Neuss, which is not too far from the Nürburgring. Corvette driver Frank Schmickler (47 / Callaway Competition) is from Cologne and so is even closer. Also from Cologne, title defender Alexandros Margaritis (27), who co-drives a Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG with Lance David Arnold (26 / SCHÖNER WOHNEN Polarweiss Team HEICO), from Duisburg. In July, the Mercedes duo achieved their best result of the season so far at the Nürburgring. Now, Margaritis/Arnold aim to secure their first joint podium.

Three-way fight for the amateurs' title

The final stages of the battle for the amateurs' title are equally as exciting. Porsche driver Swen Dolenc (44, Maulbronn / FACH AUTO TECH) has a 24-point lead at the top of the standings but cannot afford to relax, however, because rival Kristian Poulsen (36, Denmark / Young Driver AMR) aims to reduce the gap in his Aston Martin V12 Vantage at the Nürburgring. Two-time amateur champion Toni Seiler (54, Switzerland / Callaway) in the Corvette has also thrown his hat back into the ring in the title fight. After achieving two wins in the last three races, the Swiss veteran has secured plenty of points, moving up the rankings into third place in the amateur stakes.

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ADAC GT Masters on TV: All 16 races of the ADAC GT Masters are broadcast live at 12.15pm on Saturdays and Sundays in Germany, Austria and Switzerland on free-to-air TV channel *kabel eins*. Sports channel SPORT1 will feature highlights of the ADAC GT Masters from the Nürburgring in the ADAC Masters Weekend Magazine on 22nd September at 10.15am. In addition, live timing from all practice sessions and races to supplement live TV broadcasts can be found at www.adac-gt-masters.de.

Note for press: ADAC GT Masters Web site: access to Press Area via the 'Press' in the top menu bar at www.adac.de/motorsport/. Further information available at www.adac.de/motorsport and www.adac-gt-masters.de

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