

3.10.2021 – ADAC GT Masters

Gounon/Waliŕko win at the Sachsenring, Mies/Feller see their championship lead shrink

- **Second triumph of the season for Mercedes-AMG drivers, Waliŕko is also the best Junior**
- **Audi duo Feller/Mies retain their lead in the championship**
- **Pirelli Trophy winner Rolf Ineichen narrowly misses out on the podium**

Hohenstein-Ernstthal. The title race in the German GT Championship is moving towards a thrilling climax: four races before the end of the season, championship leaders Ricardo Feller (21/CH) and Christopher Mies (31/Düsseldorf, both Montaplast by Land-Motorsport) have seen their advantage cut to just two points after finishing fifth in their Audi R8 in the Sunday race at the Sachsenring. Whilst they may not have won the race, the real winners on Sunday were Luca Stolz (26/Brachbach) and Maro Engel (36/Monte Carlo, both Mercedes-AMG Team Toksport WRT), who thrilled the many spectators with an impressive manoeuvre in the final corner, which earned them second place in the race and the championship standings. With their fourth runner-up finish in a row, the two Mercedes-AMG works drivers completed a one-two for their employers, as fellow Mercedes men Igor Waliŕko (24/PL) and Jules Gounon (26/F, both Zakspeed Mobil Krankenkasse Racing team) converted pole position into a commanding victory. Third place went to the Porsche duo of Thomas Preining (23/A) and Christian Engelhart (34/Starnberg, both Kŕs Team Bernhard). “A really great day,” celebrated the victorious Gounon. “I just love this circuit. It was here that I claimed my maiden GT3 victory in 2016. That kick-started my career. To win here again is fantastic. Everything came together. Pole, fastest lap and victory – it doesn’t get any better. We are now the outsiders in the title race!”

Key facts, Sachsenring, Hohenstein-Ernstthal, race 10 of 14

Circuit length: 3,645 metres

Weather: 20 degrees, cloudy

Pole position: Jules Gounon (Team Zakspeed Mobil Krankenkasse Racing, Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo), 1:18.871 min.

Winners: Jules Gounon/Igor Waliŕko (Team Zakspeed Mobil Krankenkasse Racing, Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo)

Fastest lap: Jules Gounon (Team Zakspeed Mobil Krankenkasse Racing, Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo), 1:20.517 min.

Zakspeed duo dominates

The tenth race of this season’s ADAC GT Masters got off to a turbulent start: while pole-sitter Jules Gounon defended his position, ahead of Lamborghini driver Franck Perera (37/F, GRT Grasser Racing Team), Maximilian Buhk (28/Hamburg, Mann-Filter Team Landgraf – HTP/WWR), who lay third in the championship and started from third on the grid, was spun by Lamborghini works driver Albert Costa Balboa (31/E, GRT Grasser Racing Team). Buhk was then hit by another car and forced out of the race, Costa Balboa had to take a drive-through penalty. Saturday’s winner Michael Ammermŕller (35/Rotthalmŕnster, SSR Performance) was also involved in a collision in his Porsche on the opening

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lap and dropped out of the top 20. After an appearance from the safety car, Gounon pulled clear at the front and handed the car over to Igor Waliŕko with a lead of almost five seconds. The Pole extended his advantage and took the chequered flag with a cushion of approaching 16 seconds. This was the second win in a row on a Sunday for Gounon and Waliŕko, who also won race two at the Lausitzring. Waliŕko also added a second class victory in the Pirelli Junior competition.

The thrilling battle for the runner-up spot went right down to the wire. Rolf Ineichen, who had taken over from Franck Perera, defended second place right through to the last lap, when he was overtaken by Luca Stolz in the final corner. Thomas Preining and defending champion Christian Engelhart in the best-placed Porsche also managed to slip past Ineichen/Perera for their first podium of the season. The Lamborghini drivers had to settle for a thankless fourth place. There was a small consolation for Ineichen: the Swiss won the Pirelli Trophy competition.

Championship leaders Ricardo Feller and Christopher Mies were embroiled in a fierce battle for fifth place with fellow Audi drivers Jusuf Owega (19/Cologne) and Patric Niederhauser (29/CH, both Phoenix Racing) in the second half of the race. With three laps remaining, Feller finally made it through to take fifth place.

Florian Spengler (33/Ellwangen) and Markus Winkelhock (41/Zdimŕice, both Car Collection Motorsport) finished seventh in their Audi, ahead of the Audi duo of Elia Erhart (33/Rŕttenbach) and Mattia Drudi (23/I, both Rutronik Racing by Tece) in eighth. Ninth place went to the Corvette C7 GT3-R of Jeffrey Schmidt (27/CH) and Marvin Kirchhŕfer (27/Luzern, both Callaway Competition).

Michael Ammermŕller and his partner Mathieu Jaminet (26/F) battled back to tenth place after the incident on the start lap, and now lie third in the table, eleven points behind leaders Feller and Mies.

Quotes from the winners

Jules Gounon: "This morning's pole was fantastic. In my stint, I wanted to open a five-second gap for Igor – and I managed that. He then did a fantastic job of controlling the race. With a 25-point gap to the leaders, we are now in the title race. But there is no pressure on us, we'll just see what happens. Thank you to Mercedes-AMG and Zakspeed for the awesome car."

Igor Waliŕko: "It feels fantastic to win on a Sunday again! I actually did not come into this season expecting to achieve such great results. I tried to manage the tyres well and bring the car home safely. I am still learning a lot, this is my first full season in a GT3 car. Fortunately, I was able to relax a little more at the front today and did not have to push the car to its limits."

2021 ADAC GT Masters calendar, subject to amendment

14.05. – 16.05.2021	Motorsport Arena Oschersleben
11.06. – 13.06.2021	Red Bull Ring (A)
09.07. – 11.07.2021	CM.com Circuit Zandvoort (NL)
10.09. – 12.09.2021	DEKRA Lausitzring
01.10. – 03.10.2021	Sachsenring
22.10. – 24.10.2021	Hockenheimring Baden-Wŕrtemberg
05.11. – 07.11.2021	Nŕrburgring



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