

21.10.2023

Victory for Hites and Mapelli: Title race goes down to final Sunday

- **Second success of the season for Benjamin Hites and Marco Mapelli**
- **Title race still wide open: four duos still with a chance of the title at the finale**
- **Salman Owega and Elias Seppänen crowned champions in the Pirelli Junior competition**

Hockenheim. That was a really important victory for Benjamin Hites (CHL) and Marco Mapelli (I/GRT Grasser-Racing-Team) in the ADAC GT Masters. Having secured pole position, the Lamborghini duo went on to win race eleven of the season on Saturday afternoon at the Hockenheimring Baden-Württemberg. In doing so, the victorious pair reduced their deficit in the overall standings to ten points. "We lost a bit of time at the pit stop. For that reason, I had to work really hard on the track to defend the lead. After a hard battle with Ralf Aron, I managed to do precisely that. Compliments to him, that was great motorsport with mutual respect. I am very happy that we are now right back in the title race," said Mapelli. Second over the finish line was the Mercedes-AMG GT3 of Alain Valente (CH) and Ralf Aron (EST/both Haupt Racing Team). Third place went to Porsche drivers Jannes Fittje (Langenhain) and Nico Menzel (Kelberg/both Huber Motorsport). The question of who will be crowned champions will have to wait until the final race of this season's ADAC GT Masters on Sunday.

The start, in sunshine and temperatures around 18 degrees Celsius, went to plan for pole-sitter Hites in the Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo2. The Lamborghini Junior maintained his lead until the driver changeover at the 4.574-kilometre circuit. After the pit stop, a captivating battle for the lead developed between Mapelli and Aron. Lamborghini works driver Mapelli used all his experience and went on to lift the winner's trophy together with team-mate Hites for the second time this season. Runner-up Aron was pleased to claim his third ADAC GT Masters podium with Valente. "I really enjoyed my stint. Alain put a lot of pressure on the leaders in the first part of the race. I was able to overtake Marco Mapelli, but had to give the position back due to track limits. We were driving at an extremely high standard. I did not have any more opportunity to close the small gap to him," said Aron.

Fittje and Menzel hit back in the title race with third place on Saturday. Before what promises to be a tense finale on Sunday, the Huber duo lies third in the table. "Third place was definitely the best we could have done. The chance of winning the title is still alive, which was our goal. However, there are still a lot of driver pairings in with a shout. It will be tasty and extremely exciting," said Menzel, looking ahead to the finale. Fourth place went to Finn Gehrsitz (Stuttgart) and Sven Müller (Bingen/both Team Joos by Racemotion). The Porsche duo is fourth in the overall standings with 151 points and also goes into Sunday's decider with realistic chances of winning the title. In fifth place were Luca Arnold (Pfronstetten) and Christer Jöns (Ingelheim/both Schnitzelalm Racing) in a Mercedes-AMG GT3. Moritz Wiskirchen (Euskirchen) and Marcel Marchewicz (Schwetzingen) ended the race in sixth place in a second Schnitzelalm Racing Mercedes-AMG. Seventh across the finish line was Ben Green (Schubert Motorsport). The Brit shares the cockpit of the BMW M4 GT3 with Eduardo Coseteng (PHL). The Mercedes-AMG duo of Petru Umbrurescu (RO) and Maximilian Götz (Uffenheim/both Haupt Racing Team) finished eighth, meaning they remained ahead of Salman Owega (Cologne) and Elias Seppänen

Media Information

(FIN/both Landgraf) in a Mercedes-AMG GT3. The championship leaders endured a difficult race after a mistake by Owega and now lead the new second-placed pair of Hites and Mapelli by just ten points. In the Pirelli Junior competition, however, Owega and Seppänen have amassed an unassailable lead and have already been crowned champions ahead of the final race. Michael Joos (Vöhringen) and Nico Bastian (Ludwigsburg/both Team Joos by Racemotion) rounded out the top ten in a Porsche 911 GT3 R.

All this means that the 2023 ADAC GT Masters champions will not be crowned until after the twelfth and final race of the season on Sunday. With 28 points still up for grabs, four duos could still end the season at the top of the table. TV partner Sport1 will broadcast the big showdown live from 15:15. Before that, qualifying will be streamed live on the free YouTube channel @adacmotorsports from 09:00.

ADAC GT Masters calendar

09.06. – 11.06.2023	Hockenheimring Baden-Württemberg (“Festival of Dreams”)
07.07. – 09.07.2023	Norisring (DTM)
14.07. – 16.07.2023	Nürburgring (ADAC Truck Grand Prix)
08.09. – 10.09.2023	Sachsenring (DTM)
22.09. – 24.09.2023	Red Bull Ring /A (DTM)
20.10. – 22.10.2023	Hockenheimring Baden-Württemberg (DTM)

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