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Endurance thriller at the Nürburgring: First win of the season for Schumacher and Owega

- **New endurance format delivers dramatic motorsport right through to the finish**
- **David Schumacher celebrates his maiden victory in the ADAC GT Masters**
- **Kalender and Seppänen finish second to extend their lead in the championship**

Nürburgring. Impressive premiere for the endurance format in the ADAC GT Masters: Perfect tactics and the right tyre strategy helped last year's champion Salman Owega (Cologne) and David Schumacher (Salzburg/both Haupt Racing Team) claim their first win of the season at the Nürburgring. This was 22-year-old Schumacher's maiden victory in the ADAC GT Masters. They emerged triumphant at the end of an all Mercedes-AMG duel with championship leaders Tom Kalender (Hamm/Sieg) and Elias Sepänen (FIN/both Landgraf Motorsport), who came home second. "After taking the lead in the second stint, I was able to consistently produce fast laps and pull clear of the field. It is fantastic to finally make it onto the top step of the podium," said Schumacher, describing his race. Team-mate Owega was also delighted: "We have finally got that monkey off our back. My engineer was pushing me really hard over the radio, which gave me an extra boost of motivation. I am very happy that all the hard work has finally paid dividends."

With temperatures around 17 degrees Celsius, the 3.629-kilometre sprint layout of the Nürburgring hosted the very first endurance race in the ADAC GT Masters. The fifth race of the season lasted 80 minutes for the first time, and featured two mandatory pit stops. The many spectators in the grandstands for the ADAC Truck Grand Prix witnessed a successful start from pole-sitter Tim Zimmermann (Langenargen/Grasser Racing Team), who immediately opened a lead of a few car lengths over second-placed Finn Wiebelhaus (Obertshausen/Haupt Racing Team). However, just one lap later a safety car phase saw that lead disappear. When the race resumed, there was still no stopping the Lamborghini driver, as he continued to set the early pace. As the teams were running different tyre strategies, the first round of pit stops saw a few changes of position throughout the field. When Zimmermann handed over to team-mate Benjamin Hites, it initially looked as though he was going to hold onto the lead. However, just a short while later, Schumacher pressurised the Chilean into a mistake and overtook the Lamborghini at the end of the finish straight. The Mercedes-AMG driver came into the pits for a second time with a lead of ten seconds. Owega took over on a new set of tyres for his second stint. A smart move, as last year's champion soon got the fresh Pirelli tyres up to the ideal temperature and defeated Kalender in a thrilling finish. "I am not entirely happy with my performance today. The deteriorating tyres were a disaster in the final few laps, and meant I could not really offer Salman any resistance. There was definitely more in it for us today, but we'll be back stronger tomorrow," said Kalender.

The third step of the podium was occupied by guest starters Marcel Marchewicz (Schwetzingen) and Julian Hanses (Hilden/both Schnitzelalm Racing) in another Mercedes-AMG GT3. It was a successful guest appearance for 28-year-old Marchewicz: "It was a mega race. Julian was making his debut in the ADAC GT Masters and did a super job. Everything went perfectly, and the battles out on the track were

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a lot of fun.” Fourth across the finish line were the FK Performance duo of Leon Köhler (Erlenbach am Main) and Maxime Oosten (NL) in their BMW M4 GT3. Pole-sitters Zimmermann and Hites ended the race in fifth place. The battle of the twins was won by Michael and Johannes Kapfinger (both Passau/Team Joos Sportwagenteknik), who came home sixth in their Porsche 911 GT3 R. They were followed over the line in seventh place by the second pair of twins, Sandro and Juliano Holzem in an Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo2 run by Land Motorsport. Mike David Ortmann (Ahrensfelde) and Denis Bulatov (Cologne/both Walkenhorst Motorsport) ended the race in ninth place in an Aston Martin Vantage GT3. Rounding out the top ten were Simon Connor Primm (Großschirma) and Jonas Greif (Coswig) from Paul Motorsport in a Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo2.

As in the inaugural season back in 2007, the Nürburgring will be the venue for another special ADAC GT Masters moment on Sunday. The 250th race in the iconic GT3 series will treat the crowds in the Eifel to an exciting 40-minute sprint. The action promises to come thick and fast from 15:10, as the shorter format gives the drivers less time to improve their position. Qualifying gets underway at 09:55 and will provide the first indication of who to look out for.

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