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### Victory for Hirsiger and Zulauf in photo finish at the Red Bull Ring

- **Felix Hirsiger and Finn Zulauf win the ADAC GT Masters opener in a Lamborghini**
- **Breath-taking finale: Victory decided in the final corner**
- **Pro-AM Cup win for guest starter Baron Motorsport with Kirchmayr and Jefferies in a Ferrari**

Knittelfeld. What an incredible finale to the opening round of this season's ADAC GT Masters at the Red Bull Ring: Felix Hirsiger (27/CHE) and Finn Zulauf (21/Königstein im Taunus/both Liqui Moly Team Engstler Motorsport) secured victory in the Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo 2 in the final seconds. A lap-long battle with the second-placed Ford Mustang GT3 of Niklas Kalus (20/Duisburg) and Kiano Blum (18/AUT/both Haupt Racing Team) ended with the winners crossing the finish line just 0.143 seconds ahead of the runners-up. "I have never been so delighted, and believe that was the best final lap of my life. There were so many cries of celebration in the car, the onboard footage must have been funny," said the beaming Hirsiger after claiming his maiden victory in the ADAC GT Masters and the first for Liqui Moly Team Engstler Motorsport since 2011. Team-mate Zulauf added: "I had a resting pulse at first, but the final two laps were just unbelievable. I have never experienced anything like that before. We were shouting at least as loudly in the garage as Felix was in the car. Thank you to the team, the car was mega." Max Cuccarese (19/ITA) and Alain Valente (29/CHE/both Haupt Racing Team) completed the podium in another Ford.

With the sun shining and temperatures around 22 degrees, Zulauf started the race from pole position. He initially held onto the lead, until he was powerless to prevent the rapidly approaching Blum from passing him. "I saw that I could not match the pace of the Ford, so let him through. I knew that our long-run pace is good, so trusted that Felix would be able to attack again at the end," said Zulauf. Rival and local favourite Blum had started from third on the grid but soon found himself behind the Engstler Lamborghini after the opening lap. Not long after that, Blum moved into the lead. "I had a mega start and was able to maintain a good gap after taking the lead," said Blum. "My pulse was racing again on the final two laps. It was exciting to watch. Unfortunately, we did not win – but tomorrow is a new day."

After Blum had handed the car over to his team-mate Kalus, it initially looked as though the Ford was going to be able to stay out in front, although Hirsiger, who had taken over from Zulauf, was never out of striking distance. "The differences in performance between the cars do not make overtaking easier. The Lamborghini is a little stronger in the middle sector, but the Ford is a bit faster in the other two," explained Hirsiger. "It was clear to me that I had to manage the car well, in order to apply pressure again towards the end. That worked very well." Kalus had maintained his lead, and could have been mistaken for breathing a little easier, when the table turned on the penultimate lap. "I saw that he was closing in. All of a sudden, he was right behind me, and I had to go defensive. I had hoped that I would be able to shake him off, but he did very well and I had no chance in the final corner." Kalus went a little wide and Hirsiger dived to the inside to pass him and take a spectacular last-minute victory at the Red Bull Ring.

## Media Information



In the slipstream of this captivating battle, Valente and rookie Cuccarese came home third in another Ford. This was the first podium for Italian Cuccarese in his first ADAC GT Masters race. “I am very pleased with this fantastic result. Alain did a super job in his stint, and gained many positions. I had to bring the result home, which I managed to do,” said the Ford driver.

HGL Racing enjoyed a very impressive debut in the ADAC’s GT3 series. Robin Rogalski (25/POL) and Simon Connor Primm (21/Großschirna) started the race from 13<sup>th</sup> place in an Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo 2, and worked their way into fourth place with a flawless performance. Rounding out the top five was the third Ford, with Max Reis (19/Ramstein) and Emil Gjerdrum (19/NOR/both Haupt Racing Team) at the wheel. They were followed home in sixth by the best-placed BMW duo of Storm Gjerdrum (16/NOR) and Fabio Rauer (19/Stolberg/both FK Performance Motorsport). Seventh place and victory in the Pro-AM Cup went to the guest starters from Baron Motorsport, with Ernst Kirchmayr (70/AUT) and Axcil Jefferies (34/ZWE) sharing the driving duties in a Ferrari 296 GT3. Newcomers Jamie Day (20/GBR) and Baudouin Detout (25/FRA) from Comtoy Racing, who had started from the front row of the grid, dropped back to eighth place in their Aston Martin Vantage GT3 over the course of the race. Tim Zimmermann (29/Langenargen) and Leyton Fourie (20/ZAF/both FK Performance Motorsport) were ninth in the second BMW. The top ten was completed by Austrian team Razoon – more than racing, who were plagued by bad luck. Mark Kastelic (18/SLO) and Pavel Lefterov (28/BGR) were spun at the very start of the race, but managed to fight their way back to tenth place. Their team-mates Leo Pichler (24/AUT) and Colin Bönighausen (21/Isernhagen) retired from fourth place with a technical issue.

Qualifying for the second race of the weekend takes place at 08:10 on Sunday and will be streamed live on Joyn and Youtube.com/ADACMotorsports. The race starts at 15:10 and will be broadcast live on free-to-air TV station Sport1. Free livestreams are also available on [Joyn](#), [ServusTV On](#) and [YouTube](#).

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