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Commanding victory for Hirsiger and Zulauf at the Nürburgring

- **Lamborghini duo from Liqui Moly Team Engstler Motorsport claims third win**
- **Podium for Kalus and Blum in a Ford at the home event for Haupt Racing Team**
- **DTM team principal Grasser and Tweraser win Pro-AM class in a Lamborghini**

Nürburg. Pole position perfectly converted. Felix Hirsiger (28/CHE) and Finn Zulauf (21/Königstein im Taunus/both Liqui Moly Team Engstler Motorsport) claimed their third win of this season's ADAC GT Masters in the opening race at the Nürburgring. The duo, at the wheel of a Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo 2, crossed the finish line 5.737 seconds ahead of Niklas Kalus (21/Duisburg) and Kiano Blum (19/AUT/both Haupt Racing Team) in a Ford Mustang GT3. In doing so, they also regained the lead in the championship. Their closest rivals in the table, Tim Zimmermann (29/Langenargen) and Leyton Fourie (20/ZAF/both FK Performance Motorsport), were third. "We are very happy. We really got everything possible out of the car. I had a good start and knew that the first ten to twenty minutes of the race would be key, in order to have a cushion towards the end, which would allow us to look after the tyres," said Hirsiger. Team-mate Zulauf added: "Tyre wear is extreme in these temperatures, which is why I tried to bring the win home safely in my half of the race. It feels good to lead the championship again. I like being the hunted. However, what really matters to us, is to be top of the table after the final race of the season."

In temperatures around 28 degrees and glorious sunshine, Hirsiger started from pole position and successfully held onto first place in the Lamborghini. Behind him, a three-way battle was developing between Fourie, Kalus and his Ford team-mate Emil Gjerdrum (19/NOR). As the race progressed, Kalus took second place ahead of Gjerdrum, while Fourie's BMW dropped back to fourth. Kalus, and later Blum, went on to take second place at the home event of their team, Haupt Racing Team, which is based in nearby Drees. After a few difficult weeks, they were overjoyed with the podium finish. "It is a very big relief to be back on the podium. We are all extremely happy," said a beaming Kalus. "When I was told after qualifying that I was third, I could hardly believe it, because none of us had expected to be that far up the grid. At the start, I was determined to gain a position this time, and I managed to do so. From there on, Kiano and I pushed on every lap, but first place was out of reach. A big thank you to HRT, who worked overnight to change the whole set-up and, in doing so, made the podium possible."

Gjerdrum initially slotted in behind Kalus, but was unable to prevent Fourie from passing him after the first quarter of the race. "The start was a bit tricky, because the outside line was still dirty from the trucks," said Fourie, explaining how Kalus and Gjerdrum were able to overtake him. "I tried to be aggressive, in order to perhaps have a chance towards the Lamborghini. Unfortunately, that ended up with me going backwards and the two Fords came past. When the Ford made a mistake, I was able to overtake them again, but I could do no more than that. With that third place, we got the maximum out of today with regard to the championship."

Twins Sandro and Juliano Holzem (22/Polch/both Schubert Motorsport) came home fourth in another BMW. The best-placed guest starters were Enrico Förderer (19/Leuterod) and Jay Mo Härtling (23/Sprockhövel/both SR Motorsport by Schnitzelalm) in fifth in a Mercedes-AMG GT3. That made

Förderer the pick of the rookies on his GT3 debut. Härtling won a remarkable battle to fight his way past Fabio Rauer (19/Stolberg), who finished sixth alongside Storm Gjerdrum (16/NOR) in a BMW. Leo Pichler (24/AUT) and Alexander Tauscher (23/Mitterfels/both Razoon - more than Racing) crossed the finish line seventh, ahead of Robin Rogalski (25/POL) and Simon Connor Primm (21/Großschirma/both HGL Racing) in eighth place. Tauscher in a Porsche and Primm in an Audi had produced a spectacular battle, as they hurtled round the track door to door for virtually a full lap. Primm initially got his nose in front, but then surrendered the position again shortly thereafter. DTM team principal Gottfried Grasser (47/AUT) and Gerhard Tweraser (37/AUT/both GRT Grasser Racing Team) were the top Pro-AM team in ninth place in their Lamborghini. Rounding out the top ten were Mark Kastelic (18/SLO) and Pavel Lefterov (28/BGR/both Razoon - more than Racing) in a Porsche.

Race two of the ADAC GT Masters at the Int. ADAC Truck Grand Prix starts at 14:25 on Sunday and will be broadcast live on free-to-air TV on Sport1. [Joyn](#) and [ServusTV](#) will also show the second race in full. Qualifying takes place at 08:30 on Sunday morning and - like the race later - is available at youtube.com/ADACMotorsports.

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