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Ford Mustang triumphs: First win of the season for Kalus and Blum

- **Title thriller: Five points separate Hirsiger/Zulauf and Zimmermann/Fourie**
- **Haupt Racing Team drivers win the Saturday race in Hockenheim**
- **Second podium of the season for HGL Racing Team drivers Primm and Rogalski in an Audi**

Hockenheimring. First win of the season for the Ford Mustang GT3 in the ADAC GT Masters: Niklas Kalus (21/Duisburg) and Kiano Blum (19/AUT/both Haupt Racing Team) claimed their maiden victory in the ADAC's GT3 series at the Hockenheimring. The duo finished 1.891 seconds ahead of the new championship leaders Felix Hirsiger (28/CHE) and Finn Zulauf (22/Königstein im Taunus/both Liqui Moly Team Engstler Motorsport) in a Lamborghini. Third place went to Audi drivers Robin Rogalski (26/POL) and Simon Connor Primm (21/Großschirma/both HGL Racing). "The relief is huge. We really wanted to get a win this year," said a beaming Kalus. "We have worked so incredibly hard, and always been unlucky. That makes it all the nicer to now experience a race, which ran smoothly from start to finish. I am delighted." Team-mate Blum was similarly thrilled: "Our first win, at last. I had a very good start and climbed into second place, but realised that we were not quite able to match the pace of the Audi. With that in mind, I tried to give Niklas the tyres in the best possible condition, so that he could go on the attack."

Title to be decided in Sunday's race

Second place for Hirsiger and Zulauf has seen the situation at the top of the table turned on its head. The Lamborghini duo from Liqui Moly Team Engstler Motorsport now leads the championship ahead of the final race of the season, with a five-point advantage over BMW drivers Tim Zimmermann (30/Langenargen) and Leyton Fourie (21/ZAF/both FK Performance Motorsport). They battled their way back to sixth place, having started eleventh after a difficult qualifying. Despite winning Saturday's race, Kalus and Blum now trail the leaders by 33 points and can no longer have a say in the title race. The Team Championship will also be decided on Sunday. Here, FK Performance Motorsport now lead Haupt Racing Team by 26 points and Engstler Motorsport by 42 points.

The opening race of the weekend started in sunny conditions and 17 degrees Celsius. Pole-sitter Leo Pichler (24/AUT/Razoon - More than Racing) led off the line in his Porsche, but soon came under attack from the Audi of Primm, who took the lead in the Spitzkehre hairpin. By the time he came into the pits, Primm had opened a ten-second lead. Behind him, Blum leapfrogged ahead of his team-mate Fabian Dybionka (17/POL) into second place, while Pichler gradually slipped back through the field. Hirsiger opted for maximum caution in the early stages, in order to avoid risking a DNF that could prove fatal in the title race. As a result, he dropped back to sixth place. However, the Swiss had worked his way back into fourth by the pit stop.

In the second half of the race, Rogalski tried to manage the Audi's lead at the front. However, Kalus was closing in quickly in the Ford Mustang. Colin Bönighausen (21/Isernhagen), who had taken over from pole-sitter Pichler in the Porsche, then came off the track and caused a Full Course Yellow. When the race resumed, it took just a few laps for Kalus to catch the Audi and then pass it to take the lead. At this point, both Rogalski and Kalus were struggling with the tyre pressure on their cars after the

slow laps. That allowed Zulauf, who had rejoined the track in third place after a very early stop, to make up ground on the leaders and, ultimately, to overtake Rogalski. "The way Felix approached the start of the race was exactly right. I was also rather more cautious today, as you had the points in the back of your mind with every overtaking manoeuvre. I am very happy that we are now top of the table again on the back of this good result, and can now go into tomorrow feeling a little more relaxed," said Zulauf.

Having led for such a long time, the Audi drivers were less delighted with third place. "I struggled with tyre pressure the whole time during my stint. I was skidding a lot, and felt like I was driving on ice. Third place is obviously a nice result, but I would have really liked to hold onto the lead," said Rogalski. Team-mate Primm added: "I am pleased that we have achieved another podium for Audi. I had a super start and a fair battle for the lead with Leo. As soon as I was out in front, I was able to consistently increase my lead. I would like to thank Audi Sport, my team and the engineers for that."

Fourth place eventually went to Fabian Dybionka (17/POL) and Emil Gjerdrum (19/NOR/both Haupt Racing Team) in a second Ford Mustang GT3, ahead of Mark Kastelic (18/SLO) and Pavel Lefterov (28/BGR/both Razoon - more than Racing) in a Porsche. Zimmermann and Fourie came home sixth in the BMW. The guest starters from Fulinrace Academy, Gerhard Tweraser (37/AUT) and Petr Fulin (49/CZE), finished seventh in an Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo 2 and took victory in the Pro-AM competition. Sandro and Juliano Holzem (22/Polch/both Schubert Motorsport) were eighth in another BMW, ahead of fellow BMW racers Storm Gjerdrum (16/NOR) and Fabio Rauer (19/Stolberg/both FK Performance Motorsport). Tim Hütter (19/AUT) and Ethan Brown (21/SGP/both Liqui Moly Team Engstler Motorsport) completed the top ten in their Lamborghini.

The final race of the weekend takes place at 14:30 on Sunday and will be streamed live on [Joyn](#), [ServusTV On](#) and youtube.com/ADACMotorsports. Qualifying begins at 09:00 and is also available via livestream.

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