

### Diego Alessi and Daniel Keilwitz: Interview with the champions

- Alessi and Keilwitz talk about the thrilling Hockenheim finale
- Corvette drivers reveal secret behind strong season second half

Diego Alessi (41, Italy) and Daniel Keilwitz (24, Germany/Callaway Competition) have finally done it in their third season together in the ADAC GT Masters: the two Corvette drivers were well down the table mid-season but the five-time race winners produced a strong second half to the season in the Super Sports Car League to clinch the title. In this interview, the new champions look back on their feelings and emotions during the finale and account for their strong showing in the final sprint for the title.

**How did you celebrate the title win and what were your reactions after the finale at Hockenheim?**

**Diego Alessi:** “We celebrated with the team at the ADAC championship celebrations on Sunday evening after the race at Hockenheim. That was great, but I did not stick around too long, because I was pretty tired after a hard weekend. I was on cloud nine for the first two days after the finale, but then I came down with a bump; after all, the season is now over, and we have a long winter break ahead of us.”

**Daniel Keilwitz:** “The main championship celebrations have still to come for me. I think that this year’s Christmas bash will be a really grand affair. Winning the title was amazing; I got tons of congratulations from pretty much all the people I know and even from people that I don’t know. Unfortunately, everyday life soon catches up with you again. But the good feeling of having won the ADAC GT Masters remains.”

**In the final race, the Mercedes-Benz of your title rivals Buhk und Götz was stopped by a blown engine. What went through your head when you saw the Mercedes-Benz stationary at the side of the track?**

**Keilwitz:** “The team had already briefed me on the radio that the Mercedes had a problem. At that precise moment, you feel greatly relieved, but as a racing driver, you always prefer to defeat your opponent on the track. It’s a pity that we were unable to resolve the title fight on the track before the race finished. I felt sorry for Buhk and Götz, because I know from personal experience what losing the championship in the final race is like.”

**What did you feel when crossing the finish line in the Corvette, knowing that you are the new champions?**

**Alessi:** “It was as if someone had flipped a switch inside my head. One minute, I was concentrating hard, the next minute, I was totally overcome with elation. I was so overwhelmed at that moment and did not know if it was all really true. In the nights prior to the event, I’d dreamed of different endings to the title fight. So I was afraid of suddenly waking up and finding that it was all really just a dream and that the whole weekend still lie ahead of me.”

**After the race weekend at the Sachsenring you were in eleventh place in the table and did not secure any points in three of four races. Did you think at the time that you could still win the title?**

**Alessi:** “I had already written off the title. Our performance was not good, we were not competitive and luck was not on our side. We then got our hopes up because our engineers and the whole Callaway team were able to tremendously improve the car during intensive testing in June and July.”

## Media information

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**Keilwitz:** "I knew that the tracks where we are strong were still to come. However, I thought we were out of the title race, as we were already quite far behind. It must be said that we were very lucky in the end and benefited a fair bit from our competitors' mistakes."

**What was the turning point for you in the title fight?**

**Alessi:** "That was our double victory at the Red Bull Ring. We were fast at the Nürburgring weekend, but luck was not really on our side. Things were absolutely perfect in Austria, though, and after securing victory in both races, I began to hope again that we might be able to do something with the title."

**Keilwitz:** "After the Red Bull Ring race, I knew that it would still be possible. I was quite sceptical prior to that. While our speed was good at the Nürburgring, we made one or two small mistakes."

**You then won four of six races and secured points in nine of the last ten races. What was the secret behind your strong second half to the season?**

**Keilwitz:** "We tested constantly throughout the summer. I've lost count of how many times we went to Hockenheim in our efforts to improve the car. We got tremendous support both from YOKOHAMA and Bilstein, our suspension partner. The team's hard work paid off."

**You finished runners-up last year, missing the title by a whisker, so are familiar with what fighting for the ADAC GT Masters championship entails. Which season did you find harder, last year or your championship year?**

**Keilwitz:** "Making comparisons like that is not easy, because the starting point was very different. We were at the top of the table quite early on last year and so drove in a controlled manner with an eye to our situation in the standings, but we also made some mistakes. However, this year, we were only eleventh after six races. We had to go all-out in each race, attack hard and take plenty of risks."

**Do you have any plans already for the coming season?**

**Keilwitz:** "I don't think that much will change for me and hope that I can line up again for another season with Callaway. I feel quite at home with them and would like to defend the title. Callaway are developing a GT3 version of the Corvette C7 Stingray for the 2015 season. It's a fascinating project and I would like to be part of it."

**Alessi:** "I too hope that I can contest the ADAC GT Masters with Callaway next year. Competing in some long distance races would be brilliant and complement what we already do. I also think the Callaway C7 Stingray project sounds very exciting."

**ADAC GT Masters website:** Access to Press Area via 'Press' in the top menu bar at [www.adac.de/motorsport](http://www.adac.de/motorsport).

Further information at: [www.adac.de/motorsport](http://www.adac.de/motorsport) and [www.adac-gt-masters.de](http://www.adac-gt-masters.de)

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