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Win for Ford in ADAC GT Masters title thriller at Hockenheim

- Frank Kechele and Dominik Schwager win penultimate race of season in Ford GT
- Mercedes-Benz duo Buhk and Götz reduce deficit on championship leaders Alessi and Keilwitz
- Christina Nielsen wraps up Gentlemen classification ahead of time

The final weekend of the 2013 ADAC GT Masters at Hockenheim is turning into a real thriller: a second-place finish in the last-but-one race of the season for the Polarweiss Racing duo of Maximilian Buhk (20) and Maximilian Götz (27) has closed the gap on championship leaders Diego Alessi (41) and Daniel Keilwitz (24) of Callaway Competition to a mere six points. Victory on the day went to Frank Kechele (27) and Dominik Schwager (37) of Lambda Performance, although the Ford pairing are already out of contention for the title. Robert Renauer (28), who still has aspirations of picking up the championship trophy on Sunday, came third together with co-driver Martin Ragginger (25) in their Tonino powered by Herberth Motorsport Porsche 911. Kechele: "That may have looked straightforward, but it's not always easy maintaining your concentration when you've built up such a solid lead."

Key facts, Hockenheimring, Hockenheim, Race 1 (15/16)

Length of track: 4,574 metres

Weather: 20°C, overcast

Pole position for Race 2: Frank Kechele (Lambda Performance-Ford GT), 1:39.744 mins

Winners of Race 1: Frank Kechele & Dominik Schwager (Lambda Performance, Ford GT)

Fastest race lap: Frank Kechele (Lambda Performance, Ford GT), 1:40.418 mins

Kechele and Schwager cruise to victory

The penultimate race of the 2013 ADAC GT Masters got off to a shaky start. After separate accidents involving Gerd Beisel (55) in an RWT Racing Corvette on the start-finish straight and Swiss driver Rahel Frey (27) in her Prosperia C Abt Racing Audi R8 on the Parabolika turn, the race was red-flagged after Lap 1. Frey escaped unhurt, Beisel was admitted to hospital for medical examination. After a 32-minute interruption, the race was re-started behind the safety car for a 40-minute distance. Kechele successfully defended pole position from reigning champion Götz in his Mercedes-Benz at the re-start. The Ford man steadily built up a lead, handing over to Schwager with five seconds to spare. The co-driver from Munich was the winner of last year's penultimate race in Hockenheim; this year, he crossed the finish line with a 7.3-second margin, securing a second victory in 2013 for the Ford GT, and even more satisfyingly, a home win for Wiesbaden-based Lambda Performance.

"I pushed hard on the first few laps to open up a gap and to make the race as stress-free as possible," said Kechele. Schwager was the beneficiary in the second stint: "Frank handed over with a comfortable lead, which made this race considerably easier than some of my previous ones. Still, it wasn't easy to maintain that gap, and anything can happen as the finish line approaches. But the main thing is not the race win: instead, we should be relieved that the two accidents on the first lap didn't have worse consequences."

Saturday's result means that the top of the table is now bunched together even more tightly. The seven remaining contenders driving either a Corvette, a Mercedes-Benz, a Porsche or a BMW all finished in the Top Five. Mercedes-Benz duo Götz and Buhk were pleased to make it onto the podium in second place, a result that cuts their deficit on current leaders Alessi and Keilwitz to eight points. The Corvette pairing finished in fifth place. Defending champion Maximilian Götz: "Tomorrow's final race will decide the outcome of the championship. It won't be easy, but my hopes are high."

Media information

Robert Renauer is currently third in line for the title, with nine points to make up in his Porsche 911. Claudia Hürtgen (42) and Dominik Baumann (20) in a PIXUM Team Schubert BMW Z4 are fourth up for the trophy; they are currently 23 points adrift, and a win on Sunday is worth 25 points. Jeroen den Boer (26) and Simon Knapp (24) of the Dutch DB Motorsport team are now out of the running, having finished sixth in front of the Farnbacher Racing Porsche 911 driven by local favourite David Jahn (22) and Jürg Aeberhard (27). Christopher Mies (24) and René Rast (26) were also knocked out of the championship reckoning after having to retire their Prosperia C Abt Racing Audi R8 with electronics-related issues.

Tense situation in the team stakes

Going into the final day, the competition for the team title is even closer than that for the drivers' championship. Callaway Competition (Corvette) and PIXUM Team Schubert (BMW) are on level pegging at the head of the standings on identical points. Prosperia C Abt Racing (Audi) are hot on their heels, just a single point behind, with Polarweiss Racing (Mercedes-Benz) four points adrift.

Danish driver Christina Nielsen takes Gentlemen title

Christina Nielsen in a Farnbacher Racing Porsche 911 has wrapped up the Gentlemen championship ahead of time. The 21-year-old, supported by Polish co-driver Kuba Giermaziak (23), won in her class in Saturday's race, and this fourth victory of the season proved to be the championship decider. Her main rival for the trophy, René Bourdeaux (38, Tonino powered by Herberth Motorsport), had to retire on Lap 4 after his own Porsche 911 developed gearbox problems. With Bourdeaux's failure to score any points, Nielsen now goes into the final race of the season with an unassailable lead in the Gentlemen stakes. Callaway Competition Corvette drivers Toni Seiler (55) and Remo Lips (31), both from Switzerland, finished second and third in their class.

Title decision on hold, Buhk and Götz are best placed

Going into the deciding race of the 2013 ADAC GT Masters season on Sunday, Buhk and Götz clearly have the strongest hand. The Mercedes duo start on the front row alongside pole-setter Jeroen Bleekemolen (31, NL) in a Callaway Competition Corvette. Behind them on Row 2 are Dominik Schwager in the Ford GT and championship leader Daniel Keilwitz, also in a Corvette. Dominik Baumann (BMW) starts from P7 while Martin Ragginger, team-mate of Porsche driver Robert Renauer, lines up in eleventh.

Hockenheimring: Result of Race 1 (15/16):

1. Frank Kechele & Dominik Schwager (Lambda Performance, Ford GT), 24 laps
2. Maximilian Götz & Maximilian Buhk (Polarweiss Racing, Mercedes Benz SLS AMG GT3), +7.345 sec
3. Robert Renauer & Martin Ragginger (Tonino powered by Herberth Motorsport, Porsche 911 GT3 R), +19.425 sec
4. Claudia Hürtgen & Dominik Baumann (PIXUM Team Schubert, BMW Z4 GT3), +24.004 sec
5. Diego Alessi & Daniel Keilwitz (Callaway Competition, Corvette Z06.R GT3), +29.440 sec

The ADAC GT Masters again has eight events and 16 races scheduled for the 2013 season. All 16 races of the ADAC GT Masters are broadcast live in Germany, Austria and Switzerland on free-to-air TV channel kabel eins on Saturdays and Sundays, beginning at 12.00 noon. Super Sports Car League drivers line up for the first time on the Spa-Francorchamps Formula 1 circuit and at the Slovakia Ring in Slovakia.

Media information

Dates and venues: 2013 ADAC GT Masters

26th - 28th April:	etropolis Motorsport Arena Oschersleben
10th - 12th May:	Circuit Spa-Francorchamps (Belgium)
7th - 9th June:	Sachsenring
2nd - 4th August:	Nürburgring
9th - 11th August:	Red Bull Ring (Austria)
30th August - 1st September:	Lausitzring
13th - 15th September:	Slovakia Ring (Slovakia)
27th - 29th September:	Hockenheimring, Baden-Württemberg

ADAC GT Masters website: Access to Press Area via 'Press' in the top menu bar at www.adac.de/motorsport.

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