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Championship leader René Rast: Fantastic season first half

- Audi driver René Rast has had an exciting three weeks
- Rast leads ADAC GT Masters standings along with Kelvin van der Linde
- Overall winner of ADAC Zurich 24-hour race and good result at Le Mans

René Rast (27, Germany) experienced what were probably the most exciting three weeks of his racing career to date this June. The Audi driver finished the first half of the ADAC GT Masters season at the Red Bull Ring at the top of the standings together with team-mate Kelvin van der Linde (18, South Africa, both Prosperia C Abt Racing). A week later on his debut in the 24-Hours of Le Mans, he finished fourth in the LMP2 class, competing in an open prototype, and placed eighth overall in the standings. Last weekend, he won the ADAC Zurich 24-hour race at the Nürburgring in the Audi R8 along with ADAC GT Masters team-mate Markus Winkelhock, the first ADAC GT Masters champion Christopher Haase, and ADAC GT Masters race winner Chris Mamerow. Rast spoke about his 'half-time' ADAC GT Masters title and the successes of the past three weeks in the run-up to the second half of the Super Sports Car League season at the Slovakia Ring near the Slovakian capital city of Bratislava (August 8th-10th).

You lead the ADAC GT Masters standings and have successfully competed in two 24-hour races in one week. How have you found the past three weeks?

René Rast: "I had hardly any time to think during the races and it's only now that I've found a moment or two to reflect on events. I expected a very tough and exhausting three weeks, but it all passed by so very quickly. You always have one or two jobs to do at the race track and the time went by in a flash. I never expected that the three weekends would turn out so well for me, though. If someone had told me beforehand what was to happen, I would have jumped at the chance to be this successful. We weren't fancied to win at the Red Bull Ring in our Audi R8 and yet we came second in the second race, which unexpectedly gave us the lead in the rankings. We had an inferior car at Le Mans but still achieved a good result. The success at the Nürburgring was a terrific team effort. We had a great package, made no mistakes and did not allow pressure from the competition to blow us off course."

You and Kelvin van der Linde are now 'half-time champions'. What does it mean to you to head the rankings in the ADAC GT Masters mid-season?

"It's very important to us. No one can take away the points that we've secured so far and we are now well on our way to clinching the title. We're on 120 points, while a year ago, the championship leaders had around 40 points fewer in the middle of the season. Consequently, that puts our position in a very positive light as we head into the second half of the season. Things are extremely close at the top this year, but we've had an almost perfect season so far. We've secured points in every race, finished on the podium in six out of eight races, made no mistakes and didn't incur any penalties. Team Prosperia C Abt have also done an absolutely first-class job. That has been the key to success so far, but our closest rivals in the championship have also had a similar experience, so it's very close at the top and the second half of the season should prove extremely exciting."

Your team-mate Kelvin van der Linde has just turned 18 and is already considered to be one of the finds of the 2014 season. What's it like, working with such a young rookie?

"I'd never met Kelvin before the start of the season and had not heard of him previously either. He was extremely quick the first time that he took out our Audi R8. He's not only fast but also very willing to learn and has made no mistakes so far. Even though he's only just had his 18th

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birthday, he's very calm and collected. He also brings some experience to the table in our bid to win the title as he lifted the Volkswagen Scirocco R Cup last year."

The second half of the ADAC GT Masters season gets under way at the Slovakia Ring in early August. What can we expect then?

"In the second half of the season, we'll be lining up on tracks that should suit us even better than the four circuits did at the start of the year, and so I'm optimistic about the season second half. The Slovakia Ring and the Sachsenring are both tracks on which our Audi R8 has been very fast so far, and we also had a good showing last year at the Nürburgring and in Hockenheim. We must continue to work just as well as we did in the first half of the season. Barring mistakes, we should then have a good chance of fighting for the title ultimately."

Tickets (including access to the paddock) start at €20.00.

Fans who prefer to experience the ADAC GT Masters live at the track can obtain tickets in advance starting at 20 euros (includes access to the paddock). Tickets are available online at www.adac.de/motorsport from all ADAC branch offices, online at www.eventim.de or from one of the more than 20,000 Eventim outlets in Europe.

All 16 races of the ADAC GT Masters will again be broadcast live and in full throughout Germany, Austria and Switzerland on *kabel eins* during 2014.

Calendar for the 2014 ADAC GT Masters

25/04 – 27/04/14	etropolis Motorsport Arena Oschersleben
09/05 – 11/05/14	Circuit Park Zandvoort (NL)
23/05 – 25/05/14	Lausitzring
06/06 – 08/06/14	Red Bull Ring (A)
08/08 – 10/08/14	Slovakia Ring (SVK)
29/08 – 31/08/14	Nürburgring
19/09 – 21/09/14	Sachsenring
03/10 – 05/10/14	Hockenheimring Baden-Württemberg

For further information, visit www.adac.de/gt-masters

Media Contact

ADAC GT Masters

Oliver Runschke

Mobile: +49 (0) 176 222 18308, email: oliver.runschke@mac.com

ADAC e.V.

Kay-Oliver Langendorff, Head of Motorsport and Classic Communication

Tel: +49 (0) 89 7676 6936, Mobile: +49 (0) 171 555 5936, email: kay.langendorff@adac.de

www.adac.de/gt-masters