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### New ADAC GT Masters champions van der Linde and Rast: Cool, calm and collected

- Kelvin van der Linde and René Rast clinch title in Audi R8
- Audi duo win three races and finish among the points in all 15 races so far
- Following two 24-hour victories, Rast crowns perfect season with ADAC GT Masters title

Hockenheim: The 2014 ADAC GT Masters champions are Kelvin van der Linde (18) from South Africa and René Rast (27) from Frankfurt, who share the cockpit of a Prosperia C Abt Racing Audi R8. They wrapped up the title with one race to go on the final weekend of the season at Hockenheim. At the same time, this represents a stroke of genius by team boss Christian Abt, who combined the experience of René Rast with the precocious talent displayed by van der Linde. That the partnership was destined for success became apparent as early as the season opener at Oschersleben when the 17-year-old South African, making his ADAC GT Masters debut, became the youngest pole-setter and race winner in the history of the series. In fact, he was following in the footsteps of his illustrious partner who had also posted a race win on his first ADAC GT Masters outing four years ago, likewise on the first weekend of the campaign at Oschersleben.

Not only did the pair of them get their career in the Super Sports Car League off to a similar start, but they also displayed the same character traits during the season. When it came to staying cool, calm and collected, van der Linde was only a little behind his considerably more experienced team-mate, and neither of them was distracted by upsets along the way. That was a decisive factor in the title fight, together with the excellent race pace which brought the Audi duo three victories. The Audi pair did not put a foot wrong on their way to the title, made the best of difficult situations and added to their points tally in each of the 15 races staged so far.

The careers of the new champions have taken similar paths. They both achieved their first successes in GT and touring cars rather than in single-seater racing. Rast made his debut in Formula BMW ADAC, coming up against the likes of Sebastian Vettel, Adrian Sutil and Nico Hülkenberg. He then ran out of the funds needed to pursue a single-seater career any further and switched to the ADAC Volkswagen Polo Cup which he won in his first season. Rast subsequently found his way via the Seat Leon Supercopa to the Porsche one-make trophy series where he developed into one of the most successful contestants, winning two titles in the Porsche Carrera Cup and three in the Porsche Supercup.

The ADAC GT Masters title is the culmination of a dream season for Rast, a native of Steyerberg near Minden who has lived in Frankfurt for some years now. Within a 106-day period, he drove an Audi R8 to race wins in the ADAC Zurich 24-hours at the Nürburgring and in the 24 Hours of Spa (Belgium), as well as to the title in the ADAC GT Masters. In addition, he put down a first marker at the 24 Hours of Le Mans, where he narrowly missed a class podium on his debut.

Kelvin van der Linde celebrated his 18th birthday in June but can already boast an impressive track record. During 2011 and 2012, he raced in Volkswagen one-make cups in South Africa, winning the title in both campaigns. Last year, he won the Volkswagen Scirocco R-Cup, a support series to the DTM, and subsequently switched to the ADAC GT Masters. That the 18-year-old student would take to motorsport was more or less genetically preordained: "My grandfather, my father, my uncle and my brother have all been active in the motor racing scene at one time or another. There is enormous enthusiasm for motorsport in South Africa, and almost every major city has a racetrack. But most drivers don't have the money to make the step up to the higher echelons."

## Media information

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Van der Linde was at a crossroads before the start of the season: “I had to prove myself this year, otherwise my future in motorsport would have been uncertain.” He no longer needs to have any more worries on that score after his brilliant season in the ADAC GT Masters. Van der Linde was impressive not just in the ADAC GT Masters. During the summer, he won a place on an international youth training programme run by the FIA, the sport’s governing body.

Both champions have a similar goal after clinching the ADAC GT Masters title. Rast: “After my success in GT Sport, I now hope that I can take the next step and make a permanent move to Le Mans prototypes. That’s my next objective after my first start at Le Mans this year.” Van der Linde also dreams of competing in the legendary endurance race in France. “As a first step next year, I’d like to gain more experience in various series. I want to establish myself in GT racing and contest the 24 Hours of Le Mans at some point in the future.”

For further information, visit [www.adac.de/gt-masters](http://www.adac.de/gt-masters)

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