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Wirth/Keilwitz win gamble with tyres at Nürburgring

- Corvette duo Andreas Wirth/Daniel Keilwitz win on drying track
- This victory now makes Keilwitz most successful ADAC GT Masters driver
- Porsche driver Handlos takes seventh win of season in Gentlemen class

Nürburg – A shower of rain shortly before the race, a gamble with slicks/full wets and a safety car period in the second half of the race, those were the ingredients that went to make up one of the most exciting ADAC GT Masters races of the year. Andreas Wirth (29, Germany) and Daniel Keilwitz (29, Germany / both Callaway Competition) made a good gamble at the Nürburgring and went onto slicks despite the wet track. Consequently, on a drying track, the Corvette drivers moved to the very front of the field from grid position 17. This twelfth race win in total makes title defender Keilwitz the most successful driver ever in the ADAC GT Masters. A happy Keilwitz said: “We didn’t have a great deal to lose today in view of our P17 on the grid, so we were prepared to take the risk and start on slicks. That was exactly the right decision. Second place went to Kelvin van der Linde (18, South Africa) and René Rast (27, Germany / Prosperia C Abt Racing) in the Audi R8, who now become the new leaders in the standings with four races still to come. On his first weekend in the ADAC GT Masters, former DTM driver Renger van der Zande (26, Netherlands) in third place finished on the podium in the Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG along with Maximilian Götz (28, Germany / both HTP Motorsport). The Mercedes pair missed a possible victory through a pit-stop mistake.

Key facts, Nürburgring, Nürburg, Race 12

Track length: 3.629 km (Nürburgring Sprint Circuit)

Weather: 18 degrees, cloudy

Pole Position Race 2: Nicki Thiim (Prosperia C Abt Racing, Audi R8 LMS ultra), 1:39.853 mins

Winner Race 2: Andreas Wirth/Daniel Keilwitz (Callaway Competition, Corvette Z06.R GT3)

Fastest Race Lap: Jens Klingmann (PIXUM Team Schubert, BMW Z4 GT3), 1:29.640 mins

Rast and Götz set pace in first half of race

A brief shower of rain just a few minutes before the start made tyre choice a lottery at the Nürburgring. Pole-setter Nicki Thiim (25, Denmark, Prosperia C Abt Racing) went for YOKOHAMA wet weather tyres, as did fellow Audi driver Rast and Götz in the Mercedes. Thiim converted his pole position to P1 in the sprint to the first turn but coasted to a stop a few hundred metres later with a defective alternator. Rast took the lead from Götz and maintained P1 until the driver changeover, closely followed by the Mercedes on a track that was quickly drying out.

However, danger threatened from behind: Keilwitz and Jaap van Lagen (37, Netherlands / GW IT Racing Team, Schütz Motorsport) in the Porsche 911 took the gamble of starting on slicks and consequently were as much as seven seconds quicker than the front-runners on wets until the mid-way point of the race. After the driver changeover, the impressive charge of Keilwitz saw his team-mate Wirth emerge on the track as the new front-runner in front of van der Linde, whose team, Prosperia C Abt Racing, used the driver changeover to also switch to slicks. Corvette and Audi had an action-packed scrap for the lead, which was interrupted 22 minutes before the end of the race by a seven-minute long safety car period that was brought about by the need to repair a crash barrier damaged when the McLaren 12C driven by Florian Spengler (26, Germany / MRS GT-Racing) went into a spin.

Media information

Ten seconds cover Top Ten

The scrap continued into the dying minutes of the race until Wirth secured his fifth Nürburgring victory in the ADAC GT Masters with a lead of 0.6 seconds on the South African driver. Wirth: "I had to really push myself after the scrap with the Audi following the driver changeover, since I first had to find my bearings on a track that was still damp in parts. Audi, Mercedes-Benz and Porsche were all at an advantage in the slippery conditions, but after a few laps, I was able to control the lead well in close scraps with my pursuers and use our Corvette's strengths to the full.

Keilwitz said: "We were not in the best of moods, as the rain set in as it came down so heavily. After a few laps, though, we were quicker than the opposition on wets. Things kept getting better and the gamble soon paid off. Once the track had dried out, I was able to pull well ahead.

These wins for the Corvette in the two Nürburgring races make the American sports car that has taken part in every race in the series so far the most successful super sportscar ever in the ADAC GT Masters with a total of 21 race wins to its name.

The battle for the remaining positions was equally as gripping. Just ten seconds covered the Top Ten at the finish line. Mercedes driver van der Zande won through in a scrap for P3, consigning van Lagen and Christian Engelhart (27, Germany) to fourth place. Van Lagen in second place in the standings has now become the major rival of van der Linde/Rast with a deficit of only three points.

Max Sandritter (25, Germany) and Jens Klingmann (24, Germany / both PIXUM Team Schubert) finished fifth in the best-placed BMW Z4, while their team-mates Claudia Hürtgen (42, Germany) and Dominik Baumann (21, Austria) took the chequered flag in P15 after spinning off. Maro Engel (29, Germany) and Jan Seyffarth (28, Germany / ROWE Racing) in the Mercedes-Benz took sixth place from Robert Renauer (29, Germany)/Norbert Siedler (31, Austria / TONINO Team Herberth) in the Porsche 911 and from the two Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG driven by Alon Day (22, Israel)/Luca Ludwig (25, Germany / both BKK MOBIL OIL Zakspeed) and Mathias Lauda (33, Austria)/Luca Stolz (19, Germany / both HTP Motorsport). Patrick Assenheimer (22, Germany) and Diego Alessi (42, Italy / both Callaway Competition) booked tenth place in the Corvette. Winners of Saturday's race, David Jahn (23, Germany) and Sven Barth (33, Germany/ both RWT Racing Team), were unable to start in Sunday's race due to a defective fuel tank.

Handlos makes further progress in hunt for Gentlemen title

After three Corvette victories in recent fixtures, Herbert Handlos (31, Austria / TONINO Team Herberth) secured his seventh win of the season in the Gentlemen class to reclaim his position on the top rung of the Gentlemen podium. "I was beginning to get withdrawal symptoms in view of the fact that I've not had a win in a while," said Handlos with a chuckle. He has now taken another important step on his way to securing the Gentlemen title. Dominic Jöst (35, Germany) and Florian Scholze (41, Germany / both TONINO Team Herberth) in the Porsche 911 took second place from fellow Porsche drivers Anton Wossos (48, Greece) and Wolf Nathan (45, Netherlands / GW IT Racing Team, Schütz Motorsport).

The result of this season's twelfth race is provisional in view of an appeal that is still pending.

Media information

Result, Race 2 (Top Six):

1. Andreas Wirth/Daniel Keilwitz (Callaway Competition, Corvette Z06.R GT3), 36 laps
2. Kelvin van der Linde/René Rast (Prosperia C. Abt Racing, Audi R8 LMS ultra), +0.644 secs
3. Renger van der Zande/Maximilian Götz (HTP Motorsport, Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG GT3), +1.796 secs
4. Christian Engelhart/Jaap van Lagen (GW IT Racing Team, Schütz Motorsport, Porsche 911 GT3 R), +2.645 secs
5. Max Sandritter/Jens Klingmann (PIXUM Team Schubert, BMW Z4 GT3) +4.935 secs
6. Maro Engel/Jan Seyffarth (ROWE RACING, Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG GT3), +5.13 secs

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 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 (NED)
23/05 – 25/05/14	Lausitzring
06/06 – 08/06/14	Red Bull Ring (AUT)
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, E-mail: 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, E-mail: kay.langendorff@adac.de

www.adac.de/gt-masters