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Asch and Ludwig in Mercedes-Benz win rain-affected race at Spa

- Sebastian Asch and Luca Ludwig claim first win of the season for Mercedes-Benz
- Six different winners in as many races
- Maiden victory for Audi driver Weishaupt in Gentlemen class

Spa-Francorchamps, Belgium: Sebastian Asch (29, GER) and Luca Ludwig (26, GER) driving a Team Zakspeed Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG have notched up their first win of the campaign in an exciting rain-curtailed race at Spa-Francorchamps. The Zakspeed duo have thus continued an impressive run of results to further consolidate their championship lead. This was under the watchful eyes of FIA president Jean Todt who attended the Sunday session of the ADAC GT Masters in Belgium. Having so far consistently finished inside the Top Four, Asch and Ludwig this time ascended to the top rung of the podium, thereby becoming the sixth different winning pair in as many races. Daniel Keilwitz (25, GER) and Andreas Wirth (30, GER) in a Callaway Competition Corvette took second place on a rain-soaked track ahead of the kfzteile24 MS RACING Audi R8 driven by Florian Stoll (33, GER) and Marc Basseng (36, GER). "We finally managed an actual race win," said a delighted Asch. "We've been waiting for this a long time. It's great that we've been able to show what we and the car are capable of. The season has so far been textbook perfect."

Key facts, Circuit Spa-Francorchamps, Francorchamps, Belgium: Round 6/16

Track length: 7,004 metres

Weather: 16° C, rain

Pole position: Bernd Schneider (HP Racing, Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG GT3), 02:18.504 mins

Winners: Sebastian Asch & Luca Ludwig (Team Zakspeed, Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG)

Fastest lap: Christer Jöns (C.Abt Racing, Audi R8 LMS ultra), 02:38.524 mins

Battle of the Mercedes in first stint of race

The start turned into a test of nerves for the ADAC GT Masters drivers. On the formation lap it started to rain, whereupon the race director red-flagged the race while the formation lap was still under way in order to give all the teams a chance to safely switch to full wets. The race, now shortened to 51 minutes, got under way after a short break. Immediately after the start, Ludwig, who was placed fourth on the grid in the Mercedes-Benz, played his hand on the very first lap and began to hunt down fellow Mercedes driver Bernd Schneider (50, CH, HP Racing) in the lead. The two Mercedes-Benz drivers battled for the top spot until adverse weather conditions brought out the safety car, which effectively neutralised the race.

After the restart, the duel for the lead became a three-way battle, with Corvette driver Daniel Keilwitz entering the fray. Keilwitz managed to find a way past Schneider to take P1 before handing the car over to Wirth. Schneider's team-mate Hari Proczyk (39, AUT) retook the lead at the driver changeover, and the second-placed Corvette, now driven by Wirth, immediately came under pressure from Asch. Mercedes-Benz man Asch overtook the Corvette and subsequently inherited the lead with four laps to go after Proczyk had to serve a stop-and-go penalty for an infringement during the pit stop. Asch kept the lead and put 2.8 seconds between himself and Wirth to take his fifth podium in six races and secure the first victory of the season for Mercedes-Benz. Proczyk and Schneider trailed home in tenth after serving the penalty.

"Luca produced a strong performance during the start phase to hunt down Bernd Schneider and lay the foundations for victory," said Asch. "We know our car goes well in the rain, and I was certain of a podium on a wet track. As everyone is aware, there is something special about winning in the wet, so it's a very special success."

"This victory gives me a certain sense of satisfaction, because the past two years have not been easy and I've had to put up with some disappointments," said a relieved Ludwig. "It's absolutely

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fabulous that we're having so much success at the moment. This is a reward for a long fallow period. You just have to believe in yourself and keep going. That's what connects Sebastian and me, so we are especially proud of our win."

Third place also ended a losing streak for the kfzteile24 MS RACING team as Florian Stoll and Marc Basseng battled their way to third in their Audi R8. For the 2012 team champions, it was the first podium since winning the title and the first with an Audi. A strong performance was also put in by fourth-placed Jordan Lee Pepper (18, ZA) and Nicki Thiim (26, DK) sharing a C.Abt Racing Audi R8 – their best result since joining forces.

The two BMW Z4s entered by BMW Sports Trophy Team Schubert crossed the line next, with Dominik Baumann (22, AUT) and Jens Klingmann (24, GER) taking fifth place and Claudia Hürtgen (43, GER) and Uwe Alzen (47, GER) sixth. Philip Geipel (28, GER) and Rahel Frey (29, CH) in the YACO Racing Audi R8 came seventh. Martin Ragginger (27, AUT) and Klaus Bachler (23, AUT) had to contend with a severely misted-up windscreen in their GW IT Racing Team Schütz Motorsport Porsche 911 on the way to P8. Despite the inclement weather, all contestants saw the chequered flag.

Weishaupt claims first win of season for Audi in Gentlemen class

Andreas Weishaupt (42, GER) and Christer Jöns (27, GER) in a C.Abt Racing Audi lost sixth place after a minor collision on the last few laps, but despite finishing back in ninth, they still have good cause to celebrate, as Weishaupt celebrated his first victory in the Gentlemen classification ahead of Remo Lips (32, CH) who had won Saturday's race in his RWT Racing Team Corvette. The current leaders in the Gentlemen standings – Dominic Jöst (36, GER) and Florian Scholze (42, GER) – came fourth in their MRS GT-Racing Nissan GT-R.

Race 2: Result

1. Sebastian Asch / Luca Ludwig (Team Zakspeed, Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG GT3), 18 laps
2. Andreas Wirth / Daniel Keilwitz (Callaway Competition, Corvette Z06.R GT3), +2.874 sec
3. Florian Stoll / Marc Basseng (kfzteile24 MS RACING, Audi R8 LMS ultra), +5.219 sec
4. Jordan Lee Pepper / Nicki Thiim (C.Abt Racing, Audi R8 LMS ultra), +15.758 sec
5. Jens Klingmann / Dominik Baumann (BMW Sports Trophy Team Schubert, BMW Z4 GT3), +21.078 sec
6. Claudia Hürtgen / Uwe Alzen (BMW Sports Trophy Team Schubert, BMW Z4 GT3), +23.770 sec

Tickets, including access to the paddock, start at 20 euros

Fans who want to experience ADAC GT Masters action live at the track can now purchase tickets in advance. Prices start at 20 euros and include access to the paddock. ADAC members can take advantage of the ADAC preferential scheme. Tickets are available online at www.adac.de/gt-masters and at www.eventim.de, from any ADAC branch office and from more than 20,000 Eventim outlets throughout Europe.

The eight events and 16 races of the 2015 ADAC GT Masters season are to be staged at venues in Germany, Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands. ADAC GT Masters races will again be shown live by ADAC new live-TV exclusive partner SPORT1, who will broadcast all 16 ADAC GT Masters races live and in their entirety in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Broadcasts will normally begin at 1pm on race weekends.

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Race schedule and venues for the 2015 ADAC GT Masters:

24/04 – 26/04/2015	etropolis Motorsport Arena Oschersleben
05/06 – 07/06/2015	Red Bull Ring (A)
19/06 – 21/06/2015	Circuit Spa-Francorchamps (B)
03/07 – 05/07/2015	Lausitzring
14/08 – 16/08/2015	Nürburgring
28/08 – 30/08/2015	Sachsenring
18/09 – 20/09/2015	Circuit Park Zandvoort (NL)
02/10 – 04/10/2015	Hockenheimring Baden-Württemberg

Further information available at www.adac.de/gt-masters

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