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ADAC GT Masters eSports Championship 2021: high drama at the season-opener

- **Moritz Löhner and Nikodem Wisniewski triumph in Oschersleben**
- **Terrible luck for pole-sitter Jarschel in race 2**
- **Positive reaction to new race format**

Munich. It proved to be a thrilling and dramatic season-opener in the ADAC GT Masters eSports Championship powered by EnBW mobility+ in Oschersleben. Victory in the 20-minute sprint race went to reigning champion Moritz Löhner (Dörr Esports). Nikodem Wisniewski (Williams Esports) secured top spot on the podium in the 40-minute main race. Löhner and Jakub Brzezinski (Williams Esports) now top the championship standings, both with 61 points. However, Löhner has the edge thanks to his victory in the sprint race.

Löhner made a successful start to the first race day in the ADAC GT Masters eSports Championship. The Dörr Esports driver began the sprint race from pole position. This gave him a clear advantage in Oschersleben, as overtaking is very difficult on the tight and technically challenging circuit. The participants got their first chance to make a rolling start. Löhner got away well, putting himself on course for a neat start-finish win. "I made a really good start. I had seen that Pejic was a little slow off the mark and was able to make for the inside line in turn 1. That worked out really well," says a delighted winner. Brzezinski crossed the finishing line in second place. His Williams team-mate Jack Keithley claimed third position. Tim Jarschel (MRS Esports) finished the sprint race in tenth place, securing pole position for the main race as a result of the reverse-grid procedure.

Dramatic scenes at the start of the main race

However, his joy was short-lived: in first place after one lap, Jarschel turned into the start/finish straight in his Bentley but a disconnect meant that his race was over. "That was a tough blow," says the MRS driver. "It will be difficult to make up for those lost points. But I will push like never before." It was Gergo Baldi (M1RA Esports) who benefited from the retirement and moved into the lead. However, the Hungarian driver failed to take advantage of his opportunity, receiving a drive-through penalty for failing to adhere to the pit lane speed limit after his mandatory stop. This paved the way for Wisniewski to claim the lead, a position that he did not relinquish. "I am happy, but I had a bit of luck," explains the winner. "I am very sorry about what happened to Tim on the first lap. Then there were also penalties for other drivers. I didn't produce my best performance today but in the end it all went well for me." The two German drivers Florian Hasse (Dörr Esports) and Marko Pejic (MAHLE RACING TEAM) crossed the finishing line behind Wisniewski.

Löhner, who had started the race from tenth, lost any chance of a top position on the very first lap. The Dörr Esports driver spun out and fell back to 22nd place. However, the reigning champion did manage to work his way back up to the top 10. Thanks to some overtaking manoeuvres, a perfectly timed pit stop strategy and penalties for other drivers, he crossed the line in ninth position. "Of course, it was

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pretty bad to come off the track on lap one and that cost me a lot of points. I was at least able to perform damage limitation with the pit stop strategy,” says Löhner. However, his pole position for the sprint race and a lap time of 1:22.658 min. mean that he also receives the “Pole Position Award” and the “Fastest Lap Award”.

Innovations prove their worth

The new format, with the 20-minute sprint race and the 40-minute main race, proved popular with the drivers. “It definitely provides more entertainment and action,” says winner Wisniewski. Hasse adds: “I think that we will see better races as the season progresses. It is just difficult to overtake in Oschersleben.”

The new points system, with which can drivers score championship points down to 21st place, also worked well. Spectators were treated to numerous battles throughout the field. Another new feature for this season is that the sim racers can score points in qualifying. The pole-sitter is rewarded with five points, while the drivers behind receive each one point fewer, down to one point for fifth on the grid.

Tumultuous race in the GT4 championship

The first race in the brand-new GT4 championship also had plenty to offer: Turkish driver Emre Cihan (Team Fordzilla) was able to pull away from the field after starting from pole position, but an impressive three-way battle between Julian Kunze (EURONICS Gaming), Jonas Wanner (T3 eSports) and Adam Pinczes (Arnage Competition) developed behind him. Shortly before the end of the race, Pinczes managed to get past Wanner and secure third place behind Kunze. “That was a great battle and I am very pleased with the result,” is the post-match comment from the delighted Hungarian driver.

The four drivers, as well as Matija Marcovic in fifth, qualify automatically for the next race in the GT4 championship. The remaining drivers will have to compete for position on their own leaderboard to establish grid positions before the event.

The second event in the ADAC GT Masters eSport Championship powered by EnBW mobility+ takes place next week (Tuesday, 8th June 2021) at the Red Bull Ring in Austria.

All information and further dates on the calendar for the ADAC GT Masters eSports Championship powered by EnBW mobility+ 2021 are available online under adac.de/esports.

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