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Iconic teams Frikadelli and BWT Mücke triumph in Hockenheim

- **First win for Klaus Abbelen/Felipe Fernández Laser in the Prototype Cup Germany**
- **Julien Apothéloz/Riccardo Leone Cirelli win two races in Hockenheim**
- **Danny Soufi/Torsten Kratz head to the Nürburgring as championship leaders**

Hockenheim. Scorching temperatures, thrilling wheel-to-wheel duels, and plenty of action. The fourth race weekend of the 2024 Prototype Cup Germany at the Hockenheimring in Baden-Württemberg had everyone on the edge of their seats. There was also more track time than usual, with three instead of two races. Two races were held on Sunday – and iconic German teams won both. Julien Apothéloz (23/CHE) and Riccardo Leone Cirelli (16/ITA) in the Duqueine D08 of BWT Mücke Motorsport got the win in the morning. The two pacy youngsters had topped the podium on Saturday. Then it was Ligier duo Klaus Abbelen (63/Barweiler) and Felipe Fernández Laser (35/Leipzig) of the cult team Frikadelli Racing Team's turn to celebrate on Sunday afternoon.

BWT Mücke driver Cirelli started Sunday morning's race from pole position and initially kept the lead. Yet the man of the first lap was Frikadelli driver Fernández Laser in the Ligier JS P320, who started from fourth on the grid, but stormed towards the front of the field on the second lap. Behind the two leaders it was the Duqueine of Keanu Al Azhari (16/UAE, Mühlner Motorsport) and of ADAC Stiftung Sport sponsored driver Valentino Catalano (18/Westheim, Gebhardt Motorsport) who rounded off the top four in the first half of the race.

The mandatory pit stops halfway through the race shook up the order slightly. Catalano's team-mate Markus Pommer (33/Untereisesheim) got his Duqueine back on the track ahead of solo competitor Al Azhari. Klaus Abbelen, who took over from Fernández Laser, was behind them – and Cirelli's partner Apothéloz was embroiled in a battle with Ligier driver Antti Rammo (41/EST, MRS GT-Racing) up there at the front. However, the Estonian was awarded a drive-through penalty, which saw him drop back into fifth place temporarily. Apothéloz, Pommer, and Al Azhari did battle for the win lap after lap until the end of the race. But the positions remained unchanged. Cirelli/Apothéloz drove to victory and celebrated the win in the Junior standings. Rammo overtook Ligier brand colleague Abbelen in the final phase to secure victory in the trophy standings with fourth place.

Fifth place went to Sven Barth (43/Eberbach) and Michael Herich (47/Brühl, both Momo Gebhardt Racing) in the Ginetta G61-LT-P3. Fernández Laser/Abbelen finished the race in sixth place. Championship leaders Danny Soufi (21/USA) and Torsten Kratz (53/Mönchengladbach, both Konrad Motorsport) in the Ligier were unlucky. After a collision in the initial phase, Kratz had to make an unplanned pit stop to change a tie rod. The car was able to resume the race but was unable to improve on eighth place.

The race on Sunday afternoon was also an interesting one. Markus Pommer started from pole position and set the pace in the first stint. But after almost 20 minutes, fourth-placed Julien Apothéloz slid his Duqueine into the barriers at the turn into the finish line, triggering the red flags. The pit stop window

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opened shortly after the restart. This resulted in the still close field implementing different strategies. For example, Felipe Fernández Laser immediately took over from gentleman driver Abbelen in the Ligier cockpit. Leader Pommer handed over the Duqueine to team-mate Catalano a few minutes later.

After everyone had completed their stops, it was MRS driver Antti Rammo who was in the lead. But brand colleague Fernández Laser made up ground lap after lap and managed to overtake the Estonian on the approach into the elongated Parabolika turn on the penultimate lap to secure the win for himself and team-mate Klaus Abbelen, which also saw Abbelen win the trophy standings. Rammo initially finished in second place but was awarded a retroactive penalty for an offence during his pit stop. This pushed him back into fourth place in the rankings and meant that second place went to Danny Soufi/Torsten Kratz, enabling them to further extend their lead at the top of the table. Soufi also won the Junior standings. Pommer/Catalano finished in third place. Guest starters Suellio Almeida (30/BRA) and Luca Link (20/Günzberg, both DataLab Sports with Rinaldi) in another Duqueine rounded off the top five.

There's no break for the Prototype Cup Germany. The next two races are scheduled for the coming weekend as part of the DTM. The venue this time is the Nürburgring. There will be a very special guest start at the legendary track in the Eifel region. Former Formula 1 driver turned TV expert Ralf Schumacher will be sharing a Ligier of US Racing with his son David Schumacher and is looking to shake up the established field. This promises plenty of excitement and entertainment.

Julien Apothéloz – race 2 winner for BWT Mücke Motorsport

“After winning race 1 on Saturday, we weren't necessarily expecting the second win. However, I left the pit ahead of Markus Pommer. He started piling on the pressure immediately, but I was able to bring home the win safely.”

Riccardo Leone Cirelli – race 2 winner for BWT Mücke Motorsport

“I'm over the moon to have brought home the second win of the weekend. I'm very pleased with my stint. I kept out of the way at the start of the race and built up a lead over my direct rivals. It was quite difficult keeping up with the leading Ligier, but we also showed our speed.”

Valentino Catalano – second place in race 2 for Gebhardt Motorsport

“After yesterday I am very pleased with the result. We really put our foot down today. There was a lot of turmoil at the start. I set off with low air pressure so that Markus could really go for it in the second half of the race. The strategy paid off. We're happy to still be in the race for the title. Nothing has been decided yet.”

Markus Pommer – second place in race 2 for Gebhardt Motorsport

“The goal was definitely to get the win, but second place is good. We lost a bit of time during the pit stop and the Mücke car exited right in front of me. I was able to catch up slightly, but we had a very similar pace, so there was no opportunity to overtake.”



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Klaus Abbelen – race 3 winner for Frikadelli Racing Team

“We’re delighted with the win. Everything fell into place today. No doubt we benefitted from the red flag. But Felipe and I put in a strong performance. So, we deserved to get the win. Next up is my home event at the Nürburgring. We’re hoping to confirm the result there. Another podium would be great.”

Felipe Fernández Laser – race 3 winner for Frikadelli Racing Team

“I’m speechless, happy, and delighted. Today went perfectly. Klaus improved continuously throughout the race weekend. The red flag worked out well for us. Then I gave it everything in the final phase to overtake the leader. The win is special for everyone in the team.”

Prototype Cup Germany calendar (subject to change)

19.04. - 21.04.24	Spa-Francorchamps/BEL (24H Series)
24.05. - 26.05.24	Dekra Lausitzring (DTM)
12.07. - 14.07.24	Circuit Zandvoort/NLD (Summer Trophy)
09.08. - 11.08.24	Hockenheimring (ADAC Racing Weekend)
16.08. - 18.08.24	Nürburgring (DTM)
06.09. - 08.09.24	Sachsenring (DTM)

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