

23.6.2023

Mercedes-AMG bounces back in the DTM with Friday's fastest time

- **Maro Engel goes fastest in both free practice sessions at Circuit Zandvoort**
- **BMW driver Marco Wittmann sets the second-fastest time in the dunes on Friday**
- **Pure excitement: One and a half seconds separate the top eleven drivers**

Munich. Mercedes-AMG has kick-started its 2023 DTM campaign. After a disappointing opening weekend in Oschersleben, Maro Engel (Monaco) dominated free practice on Friday, as the series visited the Netherlands for its first foreign outing of the year. The 37-year-old from Mercedes-AMG Team Mann-Filter was the fastest racer in both sessions, setting the day's best time of 1:33.543 minutes in the afternoon. "That was a good start to the weekend in Zandvoort. Saturday and Sunday is when it really counts. We must enjoy this result with an air of caution, as I am sure that some were keeping their cards close to their chest. I like this circuit in the dunes. It is difficult, but it has a nice flow and some very fast sections. As a driver, you have to be brave if you want to be challenging at the front. We are definitely motivated going into the race weekend," said Engel.

Marco Wittmann (Fürth), at the wheel of the BMW M4 GT3 for the Project 1 team, was just 0.060 seconds slower and ended free practice on the Dutch North Sea coast in second place. Third fastest was Audi driver Kelvin van der Linde. "That was a positive day, we were in the top five in both sessions. Our goal is to consistently be in the top three. We have a good feeling and hope our race package is good enough," said the South African. The fastest Lamborghini driver was Mirko Bortolotti (I) of SSR Performance in fourth place. Reigning DTM champion Sheldon van der Linde (ZA) landed a second BMW M4 GT3 in the top five.

The second free practice on Friday afternoon was a shorter one, as some damaged concrete elements required replacing. This meant reducing the session from 45 to 32 minutes. Despite this, the times were still clearly faster than those set in the first session. Kelvin van der Linde set his best time on lap four and for a long time looked like being the fastest man. However, Engel and Wittmann moved above van der Linde on the timing sheet on lap 13 and 12 respectively. While no driver dipped under the 1:34.000-minute mark in FP1 on the 4.259-kilometre Formula 1 circuit, no fewer than eleven racers broke that barrier in the afternoon. Remarkably, Dries Vanthoor (B), who is replacing René Rast in the Schubert Motorsport team this weekend, set exactly the same top speed in session one as his teammate Sheldon van der Linde in session two: 258.99 km/h. You can find the full results of both sessions at dtm.com/en/results.

The first qualifying session of round two of this season's DTM gets underway at 09:35 on Saturday. Fans can follow the battle for the best grid positions in a livestream at youtube.com/@DTM. TV partner ProSieben is showing all 16 of the season's races live on free-to-air television. The DTM is also broadcast live in over 70 countries around the world.

Media Information

2023 DTM calendar

26.05. – 28.05.2023	Motorsport Arena Oschersleben
23.06. – 25.06.2023	Circuit Zandvoort / NL
07.07. – 09.07.2023	Norising
04.08. – 06.08.2023	Nürburgring
18.08. – 20.08.2023	DEKRA Lausitzring
08.09. – 10.09.2023	Sachsenring
22.09. – 24.09.2023	Red Bull Ring / A
20.10. – 22.10.2023	Hockenheimring Baden-Württemberg

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