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### Jusuf Owega: “I am confident that we can win”

- The driver from Cologne discusses his rookie DTM season ahead of his home event
- Mercedes-AMG Junior looks back at the season so far, highlights the key points on the Nürburgring, and reveals his goal for the season

Munich. Of all the DTM drivers, Jusuf Owega has the shortest journey to round four of the season at the Nürburgring (4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> August). The 21-year-old from Mercedes-AMG Team BWT was born in Cologne and is contesting his first season in the DTM. In an interview, Owega speaks about his special relationship with the Nürburgring, the role of ADAC racing series in his career, and wheel-to-wheel battles with his brother Salman Owega.

#### **As someone from Cologne, what connection do you have with the Nürburgring?**

First and foremost, they are two home races for me. The Nürburgring is also the first circuit, with which I came into contact as a young boy. In the past, I often drove on the Nordschleife with my father and brother. Together with the Nordschleife, the Nürburgring has an incredible history. Formula 1 raced there for many years, and the 24-hour race is one of the biggest sporting events in the world. When you think of motorsport in Germany, the first thing that enters your head is the Nürburgring. The circuit is famous all over the world.

#### **At the Nürburgring, we will discover who leads the DTM at the halfway point. What does the circuit have to offer?**

The combination of corners at the Nürburgring are very unique. Unlike in Oschersleben or at the Sachsenring, for example, the corners do not really flow into each other. That is very clear to see in the first section of the track, among other places. It starts with a hairpin, then there is a long left-hander into the Mercedes Arena. That is a slower but very technical sector. In the end, you want to be the fastest at every circuit – it doesn't really matter what the layout is.

#### **Where are the key areas at the Nürburgring?**

The last corner will be pivotal. If you do not exit it well, then you are lacking speed and can be overtaken towards the end of the start/finish straight. As a driver, you also have to carry your speed out of the Bit turn towards Hatzenbach, then you can go on the attack before or in the chicane.

#### **You arrived in GT racing via ADAC GT4 Germany – was that a key move in your career?**

Definitely. The move from Formula 3 to ADAC GT4 Germany was certainly challenging. For me, it was all about adapting quickly to the new conditions. For example, GT4 cars are far more closely based on production cars than Formula 3 race cars. That was my introduction to GT racing, so it was an important year for me.

### **What role did the ADAC GT Masters play in your development?**

I took the next step of my career in the ADAC GT Masters. During those two years, I also got to know a lot of drivers away from the track, who are now in the DTM. In my opinion, it is helpful to know the driving style of your opponents. Out on the track, that allows you to better gauge how a driver will react in certain situations. Plus, I led the ADAC GT Masters for the first half of the season – that is good for your confidence and I have taken that positivity with me into the DTM.

### **How would you sum up the season so far, after the first six DTM races?**

It is my first DTM season and also my first year as a Mercedes-AMG Junior driver. As such, the races have thrown up a lot of new things for me to take in. Despite this, we have already been able to show our potential. I have finished in the top ten twice – at the season-opener in Oschersleben and in Zandvoort. Everyone in the team goes about their job in a very focussed manner. For this reason, I am confident that we will get even better as the season progresses.

### **What can you still aim for this season?**

The goal is definitely to finish on the podium. I believe we are also capable of winning. The field is incredibly closely matched, so you obviously need a bit of luck on your side. However, if the overall package is right, we can mix it at the very front of the field.

### **Your brother Salman Owega drives in the ADAC GT Masters. Last season, you were rivals. How does that feel?**

It is quite fascinating to race against your own brother. We take no prisoners out on the track. However, I am relatively certain that my brother would not take me out. Salman and I get on superbly. I find it easier to clear up any contentious manoeuvres after a race with my brother than with a driver I don't know. We did once have a tricky encounter on the track: we were more or less door-to-door for a few corners, before I managed to overtake him.

### **It sounds as though motorsport is a hot topic in the Owega family?**

Definitely. I came from a family that is mad about motorsport. My father attends every race. He has always been very interested in motorsport and has taken part in a lot of tourist runs. We chat a lot and, with him being a psychologist and neurologist, I definitely have the best mental support on my side.

### **As someone who was born in Cologne, what connection to you have to carnival and 1. FC Cologne?**

I really like the city, but am not your typical person from Cologne. I am obviously pleased when 1. FC Cologne wins its matches. However, I follow the Premier League far more closely, particularly Liverpool. Unfortunately, I have not yet been to Anfield, but I definitely intend to at some point. The atmosphere there must be amazing.

Tickets for the weekend at the Nürburgring are available online at dtm.com. Access is free for under 16s when accompanied by a paying adult. ADAC members also benefit from a ten percent discount when purchasing tickets in advance online.

## Media Information

The two DTM races at the Nürburgring both start at 13:30 on Saturday (5<sup>th</sup> August) and Sunday (6<sup>th</sup> August). ProSieben is showing all of this season's races live on free-to-air German TV. The qualifying sessions are also streamed live at ran.de.

### 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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