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Unpredictable Eifel weather cannot stop Bortolotti

- **33-year-old Italian claims his maiden DTM victory at the Nürburgring**
- **New DTM record: Seven different winners in the first seven races**
- **Tactical prowess helps Lucas Auer to second place**

Nürburg. Celebration time for Mirko Bortolotti (I) and the SSR Performance team. The Italian, at the wheel of a Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo2, claimed his first DTM victory on Saturday at the Nürburgring. In doing so, he also climbed into second place in the overall standings. Bortolotti started from pole position and kept his nerve in a turbulent race, during which it rained intermittently. After 39 laps of racing, the Lamborghini took the chequered flag with a lead of 1.199 seconds. "I have waited a long time for this moment. So far, it has been a perfect weekend for me: fastest on Friday, and now pole position and victory on Saturday. It was important now the race winner on Saturday. On the one hand, it was important not to make any mistakes on the slicks during the short shower. On the other hand, I was also able to hold onto my lead," said Bortolotti. Lucas Auer (A) crowned an impressive tactical display with second place in the Mercedes-AMG GT3. His compatriot Thomas Preining came home third in a Porsche 911 GT3 R and was able to extend his lead at the top of the championship to 18 points.

Key facts, Nürburgring, race 7 of 16

- **Circuit length:** 3,629 metres
- **Weather:** 18 degrees, cloudy/light rain
- **Pole position:** Mirko Bortolotti (SSR Performance, Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo2 #92), 1:25.118 minutes
- **Winner:** Mirko Bortolotti (SSR Performance, Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo2 #92)
- **Fastest race lap:** Lucas Auer (Mercedes-AMG Team Winward, Mercedes-AMG GT3 #22), 1:26.667 Minuten

Bortolotti made a good start to the seventh DTM race of the season, after which he was able to control the field and gradually pull away. Behind him, Preining and Ricardo Feller (CH) held onto their positions ahead of Auer, who climbed from eighth to fourth place. Jack Aitken (GB) rounded out the top five in a Ferrari 296 GT3. Half an hour into the race, it began to drizzle. This was followed by a collision between Porsche drivers Christian Engelhart (Starnberg) and Ayhan Güven (TR), which resulted in a yellow phase that most drivers used to make their mandatory pit stops. Despite the rain, almost all the drivers opted for Pirelli slicks, which proved to be the right call on a track that was drying quickly.

It all got a bit eventful on lap 28. Alessio Deledda (I) skidded into the gravel bed and the safety car was called into action for two laps. It was now that Perera, down in 22nd place, played a key role: the Frenchman, who had already been lapped, returned to the track after his pit stop behind his team-

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mate and race leader Bortolotti, but in front of the pursuing Preining and Feller. When the race restarted, fourth-placed Auer overtook the two cars in front of him and was closing in on Bortolotti all the time. However, the Lamborghini works driver produced a flawless display and Auer had to settle for a fine second place. Behind Preining and Feller, Dennis Olsen (N) finished fifth after a controlled performance in his Porsche 911 GT3 R.

The best-placed BMW driver was Marco Wittmann (Fürth), who climbed from tenth on the grid to finish sixth. Fellow BMW racer Sheldon van der Linde (ZA) made up no fewer than eight positions to cross the finish line in seventh place. The fightback of the day, however, came from his brother Kelvin van der Linde (ZA). After a collision on the opening lap, the Audi driver found himself in last place. However, he gradually worked his way through the field with some spectacular overtaking manoeuvres and was rewarded for his effort with eighth place. Patric Niederhauser (CH) was ninth in the Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo2, while Thierry Vermeulen (NL) completed the top ten as the best of the Ferrari drivers.

Race two at the Nürburgring gets underway at 13:30 on Sunday. German free-to-air TV station ProSieben starts its comprehensive coverage from the Eifel at 13:00. Who starts Sunday's race from the front of the grid will be decided in qualifying, which begins at 09:05 and, like the race, is streamed live at ran.de and on the DTM YouTube channel. The DTM is shown live or replayed in full in over 150 territories around the world.

Lucas Auer: "What an intense race. It was important that my start and the re-starts were really good. The team also performed superbly in the pit stop. They were the key moments. I was obviously hoping for a mistake from Mirko Bortolotti towards the end, but he had everything under control."

Thomas Preining: "That was an exciting and chaotic race. I had to do a lot of defending, but did so successfully. Mirko Bortolotti and Franck Perera worked cleverly together at the second re-start. As a result, I suddenly had several cars alongside me and no chance of keeping Lucas Auer behind. Looking at the championship, third place is still a good result."

Result of race 1 at the Nürburgring

1. Mirko Bortolotti (I/SSR Performance)
2. Lucas Auer (A/Mercedes-AMG Team Winward), +1.199 seconds
3. Thomas Preining (A/Manthey EMA), +2.572 seconds
4. Ricardo Feller (CH/Abt Sportsline), +3.117 seconds
5. Dennis Olsen (N/Manthey EMA), +4.327 seconds

The full race result is available at dtm.com/en/results.

2023 DTM calendar

26.05. – 28.05.2023	Motorsport Arena Oschersleben
23.06. – 25.06.2023	Circuit Zandvoort / NL
07.07. – 09.07.2023	Norisring
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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