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Ninth race, ninth winner: Jack Aitken wins in the Ferrari

- Former Formula 1 driver celebrates commanding start-finish victory at the DEKRA Lausitzring
- DTM record extended with nine different winners in nine races
- Mirko Bortolotti closes the gap on championship leader Thomas Preining

Klettwitz. First pole position in the morning, first DTM win in a sizzling battle in temperatures just over 30 degrees Celsius in the afternoon: Jack Aitken (GB) came away with the ultimate haul for himself, Ferrari, and his team Emil Frey Racing at the DEKRA Lausitzring on Saturday. The former Formula 1 driver's commanding first win also extended the DTM record to now make it nine different winners in the nine championship races thus far. "It was incredibly hot in the car, but I really wanted to get my first DTM win in the new Ferrari 296 GT3. We had a fantastic pit stop and I drove a flawless race. Despite that, you spend a lot of time looking in the rear-view mirror, particularly towards the end of the race, to keep your eye on the gap between you and the cars behind," said the 27-year-old, who also recorded the fastest race lap. Mirko Bortolotti (I) finished in second place in the Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo2 of SSR Performance. This saw the number two in the table close the gap between him and championship leader Thomas Preining (A) to eight points. Audi driver Kelvin van der Linde (ZA) finished third to claim his first spot on the podium this season.

Key facts, Lausitzring, race 9 of 16 this season

- **Track length:** 3,478 metres
- **Weather:** 31 degrees, sunny
- **Pole position:** Jack Aitken (Emil Frey Racing, Ferrari 296 GT3 #14), 1:19.937 minutes
- **Winner:** Jack Aitken (Emil Frey Racing, Ferrari 296 GT3 #14)
- **Fastest race lap:** Jack Aitken (Emil Frey Racing, Ferrari 296 GT3 #14), 1:20.875 minutes

The ninth championship race of the DTM at the Lausitzring got off to a turbulent start on Saturday afternoon. Luca Engstler (Wiggensbach) was forced into the gravel in the Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo2, which brought the Cupra safety car onto the track shortly after the start. Pole sitter Aitken remained in the lead ahead of Bortolotti, the second-fastest driver in qualifying, after the re-start on lap five. Behind them in third to fifth place were Mercedes-AMG works driver Lucas Auer (A), Kelvin van der Linde in the Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo2 and his brother Sheldon van der Linde (ZA) in the BMW M4 GT3. Championship leader Preining was unlucky in the opening phase. The Porsche driver was awarded a penalty after a collision and dropped to the back of the field. The Austrian managed to pick up a point for finishing in 15th place, which was some consolation.

Shortly after the pit stop window opened, Aitken was one of the first drivers to switch his Pirelli tyres and he kept his commanding lead. Bortolotti completed his mandatory pit stop one lap later, but on his return to the track he faced fierce attack from Kelvin van der Linde, who had overtaken Auer. The

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Italian was able to fend off the attacks and retain second place. After 44 laps Aitken crossed the finish line with a lead of 2.4 seconds over Bortolotti. Kelvin van der Linde secured the third spot on the podium. Auer and current DTM champion Sheldon van der Linde finished the ninth DTM championship race in fourth and fifth place. Making it five different manufacturers in the top five.

In sixth place, Luca Stolz (Brachbach) made up three places in the Mercedes-AMG GT3 and pushed Audi driver Ricardo Feller (CH) down into seventh place. René Rast (Bregenz) also moved up the field; he has celebrated three prior victories at the Lausitzring. The 36-year-old moved his BMW M4 GT3 up from eleventh into eighth place. In ninth place, Thierry Vermeulen (NL) put the second Ferrari 296 GT3 of Emil Frey Racing in the top ten, Marco Wittmann finished the scorching race at the Lausitzring in tenth place in the BMW M4 GT3 of Project 1.

The second race at the Lausitzring gets underway at 13:30 CEST on Sunday. German free-to-view channel ProSieben starts their coverage at 13:00 CEST. The starting grid for Sunday's race will be decided in qualifying, which starts at 9:35 CEST and, like the race, will be streamed live on ran.de and the DTM YouTube channel. The DTM is shown live or on catch-up TV in more than 150 territories around the world.

Mirko Bortolotti: "We knew that it would be difficult to beat the Ferrari at the Lausitzring. Jack Aitken had the race under perfect control at the front, we got the most out of it we could with second place. The high temperatures in the car became a real strain in the final laps, this was the hottest race of the season so far."

Kelvin van der Linde: "After my difficult season thus far, third place almost feels like a win. The team came up with a fantastic strategy for the pit stop that allowed me to overtake Lucas Auer and finally get my first podium finish of the season. In the battle for second place, I knew that I had to directly attack Mirko Bortolotti before he got his tyres to the optimum temperature range. I tried all over the track, but unfortunately it didn't work out."

Results, 1st race, DEKRA Lausitzring

1. Jack Aitken (GB/Emil Frey Racing)
2. Mirko Bortolotti (I/SSR Performance), +2.394 seconds
3. Kelvin van der Linde (ZA/Abt Sportsline), +5.272 seconds
4. Lucas Auer (A/Mercedes-AMG Team Winward), +6.973 seconds
5. Sheldon van der Linde (ZA/Schubert Motorsport), +7.917 seconds

The full race results are available at dtm.com/en/results.

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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

Media Contact

ADAC e.V.

Oliver Runschke, phone +49 89 76 76 69 65, e-mail oliver.runschke@adac.de

Kay-Oliver Langendorff, phone +49 89 76 76 69 36, e-mail kay.langendorff@adac.de

dtm.com