

20.10.2023

Kelvin van der Linde opens DTM finale with the fastest time

- **Audi driver is the fastest man in both sessions on Friday**
- **Little to choose between title contenders Preining and Bortolotti in free practice**

Hockenheim. Kelvin van der Linde (ZA) made a strong statement of intent at the start of the DTM finale in Hockenheim. The Audi driver from Abt Sportsline was the fastest man in both sessions of the final free practice of the 2023 season on Friday. The 27-year-old set the fastest time of 1:38.591 minutes in the afternoon. That was roughly 15 seconds quicker than his best time from the morning session, when all the drivers took to the wet track on wet-weather tyres. "Almost every DTM driver knows the Hockenheimring really well, so it is always very close here. We were able to try out different set-ups on a wet and a dry track. That worked out superbly. We have found some momentum in the second half of the season. I hope the rest of the weekend continues this way," said Kelvin van der Linde (ZA).

A good tenth of a second slower than the South African was Dennis Olsen (N) in a Porsche 911 GT3 R. Franck Perera (F) from SSR Performance guided his Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo2 to third place. He was followed by the two title favourites, Thomas Preining (A) and Mirko Bortolotti (I), who were hard to separate in fourth and fifth place. Championship leader Preining, at the wheel of a Porsche 911 GT3 R, was just 0.026 seconds faster than his closest rival Bortolotti. The stage is set for a thrilling conclusion to the title race at the DTM showdown in Hockenheim.

The final free practice of the 2023 DTM season at the Hockenheimring was a slippery affair for the 28 drivers. While wet tyres were the only feasible choice on a wet track in the morning, light rain in the afternoon made life difficult for those drivers who had opted to start on slicks. The racing line was largely dry, but either side of that line was damp and caused several cars to come off the track – fortunately without any serious consequences. Ricardo Feller (CH), who currently lies third in the table, did damage his wing mirror and only completed five laps. The rain stopped towards the end of the session, and the times improved accordingly. The top three all set their fastest times in the final minute of the second practice session. The full results of both sessions are available at dtm.com/de/ergebnisse.

Qualifying on Saturday begins at 09:30. The battle for grid positions will be streamed live at ran.de. TV partner ProSieben is showing all 16 of this season's races live on free-to-air TV. The DTM is broadcast live or as a full replay in over 150 territories around the world.

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

Media Information

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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