

21.10.2023

Victory for Thomas Preining – Title celebrations put on ice

- **Championship leader on the cusp of his first DTM title after a commanding lights-to-flag victory**
- **Rival Mirko Bortolotti finishes fifth to prevent the Austrian sealing the title with one race to come**
- **Manthey EMA wraps up the Team Championship, Porsche wins the Manufacturer title**

Hockenheim. The coronation has been delayed. With just ten minutes remaining in Saturday's penultimate race of the championship at the Hockenheimring Baden-Württemberg, Thomas Preining (A) was on course to be crowned the new DTM champion. The championship leader held a commanding lead in his Porsche 911 GT3 R, while his closest rival in the title race, Mirko Bortolotti (I) was down in seventh place in the Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo2. That would have sufficed for the Austrian to win the title with one race still to come. However, Bortolotti battled his way back to fifth place and, now trailing Preining by 27 points, kept his title hopes alive – mathematically, at least. At the end of the 37 points, Preining not only celebrated his second win of the season, but second place for team-mate Dennis Olsen (N) meant his team Manthey EMA also claimed its first one-two in the DTM. That was enough to ensure the team from Meuspath won the Team competition, while Porsche took the Manufacturer title for the first time in the history of the DTM. "That was a mega race. It was less of a contact sport for me out in front than it was further back for a number of my rivals. Despite that, you always have to remain fully focussed in the DTM. We have now wrapped up the Team Championship, and hopefully that will be followed by the Drivers title on Sunday," said the Porsche works driver. Behind the two Manthey EMA drivers, Christian Engelhart (Starnberg) backed up his good form with third place in a Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo2 for GRT Grasser-Racing-Team.

Key facts, Hockenheimring, race 15 of 16

- **Circuit length:** 4,574 metres
- **Weather:** 18 degrees, sunny
- **Pole position:** Thomas Preining (Manthey EMA, Porsche 911 GT3 R #91), 1:37.148 minutes
- **Winner:** Thomas Preining (Manthey EMA, Porsche 911 GT3 R #91)
- **Fastest lap:** Thomas Preining (Manthey EMA, Porsche 911 GT3 R #91), 1:38.765 minutes

Pole-sitter Preining made a perfect start to the penultimate race of the season at the circuit near Mannheim, successfully defending his lead ahead of Olsen and Engelhart. They were followed by Jack Aitken (GB) in a Ferrari 296 GT3 and Ricardo Feller (CH), currently third in the standings, who was unable to find a way past the Brit in despite launching multiple attacks in his Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo2. The mandatory pit stops then shook the field up somewhat. Bortolotti came into the pits from seventh place, but promptly overtook Kelvin van der Linde (ZA) during the tyre change and also returned to the track ahead of Feller and Aitken in fourth place. However, both Feller and Aitken had come in one lap earlier for their tyre change, and were consequently able to regain their positions with some

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spectacular overtakes on Pirelli slicks that were already up to the optimum temperature. Kelvin van der Linde also passed the Lamborghini driver, who found himself back in seventh place.

At this point, the championship looked like a done deal for Thomas Preining, who not only held a comfortable lead but also set the fastest lap of the race. However, with ten minutes remaining, Bortolotti produced some hard but fair manoeuvres to overtake first van der Linde then Aitken. The 33-year-old eventually came home fifth behind Preining, Olsen, Engelhart and Feller. "We started from eighth place and produced a top performance to get the most we could out of the situation. Unfortunately, qualifying did not go entirely to plan and we had a pole lap ruled out for exceeding track limits. However, that is part and parcel of motor racing. The overtaking manoeuvres in the race were cool, and we will try to get the maximum out of the day again tomorrow," said the driver from SSR Performance, who sits second in the table. The title could be decided in Sunday's qualifying session, in which points are on offer for the fastest three drivers. A maximum 28 points are up for grabs on the final race day. Qualifying starts at 09:30 on Sunday and will be shown live at ran.de and youtube.com/dtm.

Audi driver van der Linde took sixth place ahead of Aitken and Luca Stolz (Brachbach), who was the best of the Mercedes-AMG drivers in eighth place. The fastest man in a BMW M4 GT3 was Marco Wittmann (Fürth) in ninth. Laurin Heinrich (Würzburg) ended the penultimate race of the season in tenth place in a Porsche 911 GT3 R run by Team75 Motorsport.

Race two at the Hockenheimring Baden-Württemberg gets underway at 13:30 on Sunday. Coverage on German free-to-air TV station ProSieben begins at 13:00. The DTM is broadcast live or as a full replay in more than 150 territories around the world.

Dennis Olsen: "We really wanted to win the Team Championship. It feels fantastic to have done that with a one-two in the opening race. I am delighted for the guys in our team, who found an outstanding set-up for my car."

Christian Engelhart: "It feels awesome to finish on the podium against this backdrop. Unfortunately, I did not get off to such a good start. However, the two Manthey Porsche have been really fast for almost the entire season. Despite that, I was still able to show what I am made of. I am very grateful to Gottfried Grasser and the team for that opportunity. I now want to do even better on Sunday."

Result of race 1 at the Hockenheimring Baden-Württemberg

1. Thomas Preining (A/Manthey EMA)
2. Dennis Olsen (N/Manthey EMA), +0.624 seconds
3. Christian Engelhart (D/GRT Grasser-Racing-Team), +3.203 seconds
4. Ricardo Feller (CH/Abt Sportsline), +12.923 seconds
5. Mirko Bortolotti (I/SSR Performance), +13.165 seconds

The full race result can be found at dtm.com.

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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

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