

8.6.2024

Assault on top spot in the DTM – Commanding lights-to-flag victory for Aitken

- Ferrari driver takes his third DTM victory on Saturday on the dune rollercoaster
- René Rast finishes runner-up to claim the first podium of the season for BMW
- Kelvin van der Linde just hangs onto the championship lead, ahead of team-mate Ricardo Feller

Zandvoort. That was an impressive performance from Jack Aitken (GB). The Brit produced a commanding display to win race five of the DTM season on Saturday in Zandvoort, the Netherlands. In doing so, he climbed into third place in the overall standings. “Three race weekends in and I already have two wins to my name, that is awesome. The key was that I managed to open a bit of a gap immediately after the start. After that, I could control the race from the front. I could often see René Rast in my mirror in the closing stages, but I did not let that distract me,” said the 28-year-old Ferrari driver from the Emil Frey Racing team. René Rast (Bregenz) from Schubert Motorsport came home second, three seconds behind Aitken. That gave BMW its first podium of the season, courtesy of the three-time champion. Arjun Maini (IND) from Mercedes-AMG Team HRT was rewarded for his impressive qualifying performances at the wheel of the Mercedes-AMG GT3 with third place. The Indian made it onto the podium for the second time in his DTM career.

Key facts, Circuit Zandvoort, race 5 of 16

- **Length:** 4,259 metres
- **Weather:** 17 degrees, cloudy
- **Pole position:** Jack Aitken (Emil Frey Racing, Ferrari 296 GT3 #14), 1:31.762 minutes
- **Winner:** Jack Aitken (Emil Frey Racing, Ferrari 296 GT3 #14)
- **Fastest lap:** Ben Dörr (Dörr Motorsport, McLaren 720S GT3 Evo #25) 1:33.614 minutes

The start at the dune rollercoaster in the Netherlands went to plan for pole-sitter Aitken on Saturday afternoon. The Brit was immediately able to pull clear of the opposition, with only the runner-up from qualifying Clemens Schmid (A) able to stay in touch in the McLaren 720S GT3 Evo of Dörr Motorsport. They were followed in third to fifth place by Maini, Audi driver Ricardo Feller (CH/Abt Sportsline) and Lucas Auer (A) from Mercedes-AMG Team Mann-Filter. However, Rast, who started the race from seventh on the grid, switched to attack mode after just a few laps and battled his way up to fourth place.

Aitken had a lead of roughly four seconds when he came in for his mandatory pit stop, and he still led the race when he headed back out onto the 4.259-kilometre Formula 1 track. A fast tyre change allowed Rast to gain over five seconds on second-placed Schmid. The BMW driver then overtook Maini, who, on cold tyres after a late pit stop, was unable to defend second place against the 37-year-old.

Media Information

After 39 laps of racing, Aitken took the chequered flag ahead of Rast and Maini. Schmid crossed the finish line in fourth place, followed by his compatriot Auer in fifth.

Sheldon van der Linde (ZA/Schubert Motorsport) came home sixth in the BMW M4 GT3. His team-mate Marco Wittmann (Fürth) produced an impressive fightback with several skilful manoeuvres to climb ten places and finish seventh. Feller followed in eighth, while Mirko Bortolotti (I) ended the fifth DTM race of the season in ninth place in the Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo2 of SSR Performance. Completing the top ten was Luca Stolz (Brachbach) in the second Mercedes-AMG GT3 run by Mercedes-AMG Team HRT. 13th place was enough for Audi racer Kelvin van der Linde (ZA) to hang onto the championship lead – however, the Abt Sportsline driver now leads team-mate Feller by just five points. Aitken is third, just two points behind the Swiss.

René Rast: “After our performance on Friday, it really did not look as though we would be on the podium. We made a few changes to the set-up, which worked out brilliantly. I knew that Arjun Maini’s tyres were a bit colder, due to the pit stop, and that I had to attack him straight away in the battle for second place. The race was really great fun.”

Arjun Maini: “I am finally back on the DTM podium. That feels super. I made a good start, and the pit stop was flawless. As the race progressed, I was hoping there may possibly be more in it for me. However, Jack Aitken and René Rast were faster than me at the end.”

Result of race five of the season, Circuit Zandvoort

1. Jack Aitken (GB/Emil Frey Racing)
2. René Rast (D/Schubert Motorsport), +2.924 seconds
3. Arjun Maini (IND/Mercedes-AMG Team HRT), +5.932 seconds
4. Clemens Schmid (A/Dörr Motorsport), +10.197 seconds
5. Lucas Auer (A/Mercedes-AMG Team Mann-Filter), +11.492 seconds

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

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SCHAEFFLER

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