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From 14th to victory – Wittmann wows in Zandvoort

- **BMW produces incredible fightback to claim first win of season for BMW**
- **Kelvin an der Linde defends his championship lead at the Formula 1 circuit**
- **28,000 visitors watch the DTM event in the Netherlands**

Zandvoort. Marco Wittmann put on an impressive show in the Zandvoort dunes: the driver from Fürth started the sixth race of the DTM season from 14th place on Sunday, and had already gained many positions in his BMW M4 GT3 by the halfway point of the race. The 34-year-old from Schubert Motorsport took the lead after a perfectly timed pit stop, and had extended his advantage to 7.239 seconds by the time he crossed the finish line to take victory. “I never thought I would come from so far back to win. After the contact with Mirko Bortolotti, my heart sank to the soles of my feet. There was so much smoke in the cockpit that I could hardly see anything at times. I am just overjoyed that I was able to bring home the win,” said Wittmann, delighted with his 19th victory in the DTM. Mirko Bortolotti (I) finished second in a Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo2 for SSR Performance. That was enough to move him into second place in the overall standings. Audi driver Kelvin van der Linde (ZA) from Abt Sportsline came home third and stretched his lead at the top of the table to eight points.

Key facts, Circuit Zandvoort, race 6 of 16

- **Length:** 4,259 metres
- **Weather:** 15 degrees, cloudy
- **Pole position:** Maximilian Paul (Paul Motorsport, Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo2 #71), 1:32.780 minutes
- **Winner:** Marco Wittmann (Schubert Motorsport, BMW M4 GT3 #11)
- **Fastest lap:** Nicki Thiim (SSR Performance, Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo2 #94) 1:34.609 minutes

The start was perfect from Bortolotti. Starting from second on the grid, the Italian passed pole-sitter and fellow Lamborghini driver Maximilian Paul (Dresden) from Paul Motorsport to take the lead in turn two. Not long after that, the safety car made its first appearance following crashes involving Mercedes-AMG driver Lucas Auer (A) and Clemens Schmid (A) in a McLaren 720S GT3 Evo. After the restart, local favourite Thierry Vermeulen (NL) in the Ferrari 296 GT3 of Emil Frey Racing and championship leader Kelvin van der Linde slotted in behind the leading duo. Even a further outing from the safety car on lap eleven did not change this order. However, it was well and truly shaken up after the mandatory pit stops.

Bortolotti initially held onto the lead, while a slow tyre change saw second-placed Paul drop back through the field. BMW racer Wittmann, who had already made up several positions, was the last driver in for a new set of Pirelli tyres, and rejoined the race at the front of the field. Despite initially

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being on cold tyres, the two-time champion was still able to hold off the charging Italian, who hit the rear left of Wittmann's car during an attempted overtake. Despite smoke coming from the rear of his car, Wittmann was able to steadily extend his lead and took the chequered flag in first place after 38 spectacular laps. Bortolotti finished runner-up after fending off several attacks from Kelvin van der Linde. Dutchman Vermeulen came home fourth, narrowly missing out on a podium at his home event. Luca Stolz (Brachbach) took fifth place in the Mercedes-AMG GT3 of Mercedes-AMG Team HRT.

Arjun Maini (IND) ended Sunday's race in sixth place in the second HRT Mercedes-AMG GT3. René Rast (Bregenz) produced a similar fightback on the dune rollercoaster to his team-mate Wittmann. The three-time DTM champion came through from 20th place to finish seventh. Sheldon van der Linde (ZA) was eighth in a third BMW, run by Schubert Motorsport. Pole-sitter Paul had to settle for ninth place. Reigning champion Thomas Preining (A) ended race six of the DTM season in tenth place in a Porsche 911 GT3 R for Manthey EMA. 28,000 spectators were treated to thrilling motorsport with many overtakes and exciting races that went right down to the wire at the first foreign event of the season at the Formula 1 circuit in Zandvoort.

Mirko Bortolotti: "When you take the lead in turn one and are out in front for so many laps, you obviously want to win. In the end, I have to settle for second place. The rear axle felt strange in the closing laps, and the drivers behind me put me under an awful lot of pressure."

Kelvin van der Linde: "The front of the field really bunched up in the closing stages. At times, I spent more time looking in the mirror than at the track in front. Thierry Vermeulen was really quick in the Ferrari behind me. I am particularly pleased with third place for our crew, who have been very busy recently, with two DTM events and the 24-hour race at the Nürburgring."

Result, race six of the season, Circuit Zandvoort

1. Marco Wittmann (D/Schubert Motorsport)
2. Mirko Bortolotti (I/SSR Performance), +7.239 seconds
3. Kelvin van der Linde (ZA/Abt Sportsline), +7.373 seconds
4. Thierry Vermeulen (NL/Emil Frey Racing), +7.592 seconds
5. Luca Stolz (D/Mercedes-AMG Team HRT), +8.001 seconds

The full result can be found at dtm.com/en/results.

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